

Zeitschrift: Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad
Herausgeber: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad
Band: 44 (2017)
Heft: 4

Rubrik: OSA news

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An account of a grant recipient's experiences

Today, we feature an account by a young Swiss person abroad who grew up in Brazil. Paulo Wirz came to Switzerland as an 18-year-old to discover his grandparents' native country. He recently graduated with a bachelor's degree from Zurich University of the Arts (ZhdK).

"I was born in São Paulo, Brazil's largest city, but grew up in a small town with the exotic name of Pindamonhangaba. There was no cinema, theatre or shopping centre, and the only museum closed down, but there were outdoor activities to enjoy. [...] I encountered Switzerland for the first time in Pinda, as my grandfather's chair was in our living room. [...] I would never have thought at that time that I would ever learn to speak my grandparents' language. But straight after high school I had the chance to visit Switzerland for the first time in 2008 [...] after deciding to study photography. First, however, I had to do military service, where I was trained as a paramedic at the recruit school in Airolo. [...] So, I began my degree in Lausanne and learned to speak French fluently. Everything was going according to plan. However, I was unable to work enough because of studying full-time and would have been forced to drop out of my course due to a lack of money. My parents were unfortunately unable to provide me with much financial support, so I searched the internet for foundations. After lots of rejection letters, I came across AJAS (now educationsuisse) and finally saw a glimmer of light at the end of the tunnel. Thanks to the support of educationsuisse and a grant from my home canton of Zurich, I was able to put all my energy into studying.

I will be eternally grateful for this opportunity. Without the support of

the educationsuisse staff and the grant office – which also helped me transfer to ZhdK – I would probably be somewhere else now. [...] The land of my grandparents has shown me so much and opened up so many prospects. All the different cultures and languages in one country taught me how important tolerance is and how well people can live together. It has definitely had a positive impact on my development. It is here that I first realised that you have to pursue your dreams and never give up."

Paulo Wirz wrote this article on his experiences for our 2015 annual report. You will find the annual report and his full article (p. 20-21) in German on our website at www.educationsuisse.ch. (<http://www.educationsuisse.ch/de/publikationen>)

If you have any questions about education in Switzerland, please contact our staff in Berne via email, by telephone or visit in person (by appointment). Our employees speak German, French, English, Italian and Spanish.

info@educationsuisse.ch
www.educationsuisse.ch
Tel. +41 (0)31 356 61 04

Winter camp for children aged 8 to 14

Whether skiers or snowboarders, novices or at an advanced level, 8 to 14-year-old Swiss children abroad will have a great time at our winter camp.

Winter camp in Valbella (Grisons)

Date: Wednesday, 27 December 2017 to Friday, 5 January 2018

Number of participants: 42

Cost: CHF 900 camp fee

Ski or snowboard hire: around CHF 150

Registration deadline: 15 October 2017

Registration

More precise information on the winter camp and the registration form can be found from 15 September 2017 at <http://sjas.ch/en/camps/registration/>. Reduced rates are offered in justified cases. The required form can be requested on the registration form. We would also be pleased to post you our information brochure on request.

Information:



Stiftung für junge Auslandschweizer
Fondation pour les enfants suisses à l'étranger
Fondazione per i giovani svizzeri all'estero
Fundaziun per giuven svizzers a l'ester

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Area for the Swiss Abroad – a big thank-you to everyone who donated!

We ran a campaign from May 2015 to autumn 2016 calling upon the Swiss Abroad to make a contribution to the renovation of the Area for the Swiss Abroad on Lake Lucerne. This area was acquired in 1990 – thanks to a collection raised amongst the Swiss Abroad, which was doubled by federal government – and officially inaugurated in 1991 as part of the 700th anniversary celebrations of the Swiss Confederation.

After 25 years, usage and the passage of time have left their mark. Our area therefore underwent extensive renovation in 2016. The existing grass pavers were repaired and their area doubled, and the power distribution was brought into line with modern standards and extended. This cost a total of around 231,000 Swiss francs, most of which was provided by the canton of Schwyz and local sponsors. However, the Swiss Abroad also played their part. A total of 114 donors from every continent contributed 70,879 francs. We wish to express our most sincere gratitude to them for their support.

While the collection is over, we would be happy to accept further donations. The bank account details are:

Stiftung Auslandschweizerplatz Brunnen, Kantonalbank Schwyz, IBAN: CH91 0077 7002 0398 2195 1, BIC: KBSZCH22XXX.

The foundation will install a donor plaque for amounts over 5,000 francs on the memorial stone marking the foundation and inauguration of the area at the entrance.

Thank you all once again.

Alex Hauenstein,
President of the Area for the Swiss Abroad Foundation Board,
Robert Engeler,
Foundation Board member, Swiss Abroad sponsorship

IMPRINT:
"Swiss Review", the magazine for the Swiss Abroad, is in its 43rd year of publication and is published in German, French, Italian, English and Spanish in 14 regional editions. It has a total circulation of 400,000, including 165,000 electronic copies. Regional news appears four times a year. The ordering parties

are fully responsible for the content of advertisements and promotional inserts. This content does not necessarily represent the opinion of either the editorial office or the publisher.
EDITORS: Marko Lehtinen (LEH),
Editor-in-Chief: Stéphane Herzog (SH);
Marc Lettau (MUL); Jürg Müller (JM);
Peter Zimmerli (PZ), responsible for

"news.admin.ch", Relations with the Swiss Abroad, FDFA, 3003 Berne, Switzerland
TRANSLATION: CLS Communication AG
LAYOUT: Joseph Haas, Zürich
PRINT: Vogt-Schild Druck AG, 4552 Derendingen
POSTAL ADDRESS: Publisher, editorial office, advertising: Organisation of the

Swiss Abroad, Alpenstrasse 26,
3006 Berne, Tel.: +41313566110,
Fax: +41313566101, Postal account
(Swiss National Giro): 30-6768-9.
Email: revue@aso.ch

COPY DEADLINE for this edition:
31.5.2017

All Swiss Abroad who are registered with a Swiss representation receive the magazine free of charge. Anyone else can subscribe to the magazine for an annual fee (Switzerland: CHF 30 / abroad: CHF 50). Subscribers are sent the magazine direct from Berne.
www.revue.ch

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The OSA's offers for young people this winter:

New Year's ski camp for young people in Les Diablerets (Vaud) from 27.12.2017 to 5.1.2018

Participants can look forward to a wide programme of activities in the heart of the Vaud Alps. As well as skiing or snowboarding lessons in small groups and a highly varied fringe programme, there will also be time to make new friendships. Those taking part will be looked after by a well-trained and highly motivated team of leaders. This offer is aimed at young people aged 15 to 18.

www.lesbosquets.ch and www.villars-diablerets.ch

Winter sports camp for adults in Saas-Grund (Valais) from 27.12.2017 to 05.01.2018

The winter camp for adults in Grächen was a resounding success. This winter too we are holding a winter sports camp in the Valais Alps for young adults aged 18 and over and the young at heart. This year's skiing and snowboarding camp is taking place in Saas-Grund. You can get a preview of the accommodation and ski resort at:

www.ferienhaus-schoenblick.ch and www.saas-fee.ch

German course in Lucerne from 8.1. to 19.1.2018

Four lessons of language teaching in the morning, joint activities in the afternoon and a welcoming host family. We will inspire participants to learn German, which is one of the four national languages.

Subsidy

The Youth Service has funding available to provide support for financially disadvantaged participants. Applications can be made via the following link:

www.swisscommunity.org/en/youth/reduction-of-fees

Registration start date

Registration for the winter sports offers begins on 15 September 2017. Further information on the offers and registration can be found on our websites

www.aso.ch and www.swisscommunity.org.

Youth Service contact details

youth@aso.ch / +41 31 356 61 00

OSA advice

I have heard from various sources that tax has to be paid on the second-pillar pension and on old-age and survivors' insurance (AHV). Is this tax paid in my country of residence or in Switzerland, and what is the procedure?

AHV pensions are not subject to tax in Switzerland for people residing abroad and are not taxed at source. However, they must be declared in the country of residence where they may be taxed. You need to contact the tax authority in your country of residence for a definitive answer. In the case of second-pillar pensions, this depends on whether or not you receive a pension from a public service employment relationship (federal government, canton, commune).

Pensions from public service employment relationships are generally subject to withholding tax in Switzerland. They are therefore not generally taxed in the country of residence or if they are the tax paid in Switzerland is taken into account. However, there may be exceptions depending on any double taxation agreements in force and, in particular, on the recipient's nationality (this concerns dual citizens holding the nationality of the country of residence). There may also be double taxation in countries with which Switzerland has not concluded a double taxation agreement if the country of residence also levies a tax on these pensions.

Pensions from employment relationships under private law are subject to withholding tax in Switzerland if Switzerland has not concluded a double taxation agreement with the country of residence or if this is provided for by any applicable double taxation agreement. Double taxation may occur if the country of residence also levies a tax on these pensions which is not prevented by any double taxation agreement.

The principle that applies to taxation of second-pillar capital is that these capital payments are subject to withholding tax in Switzerland. Several double taxation agreements nevertheless provide for the opportunity to apply for reimbursement of this tax. Reimbursement is not an option in countries with which Switzerland has not concluded a double taxation agreement. Double taxation may occur if the country of residence also levies a tax on these capital payments which is not prevented by the applicable double taxation agreement.

You can obtain detailed information from the Double Taxation Agreement Department of the State Secretariat for International Financial Matters (SIF):

State Secretariat for International Financial Matters (SIF)

Double Taxation Agreement Department

Bundesgasse 3, 3003 Berne

Tel.: +41 58 462 71 29

Email: dba@sif.admin.ch

www.sif.admin.ch

Offers from partners:

Schweizer Jugend Forscht (Swiss Youth in Science): <http://sjf.ch/nationaler-wettbewerb-2018/>

Easyvote: <https://www.easyvote.ch>

www.facebook.com/ASOyouth