

REPORT

24 Hours of Learning in Switzerland, Adult Learner's day

(www.lernfestival.ch)



13.9.2009

SVEB invited us to bench mark and evaluate their Adult Learner's week in Switzerland in September 2009. Switzerland used to have their adult learner's week (10 days) every three years, but recently they changed that into an event of *24 Hours of Learning*. The aim is to have the event every year. The innovative person behind these ideas is Ruth Jermann (Stellvertretende Direktorin, SVEB).

SVEB helped the regions to organize their program and gave them minor financial support. In addition to this SVEB collected the programs together and printed them as leaflets, posters and post cards. There were 24 printed programs in 3000 copies.

Touring and learning in Switzerland

There were hundreds of events around the country, but we could only take part in some of them. This is our tour program.

11.09.2009

17.00 St. Gallen



First event we attended was in St. Gallen, a region in Eastern Switzerland. We met several entrepreneurs owning one-woman-enterprises. NEFU (das Netzwerk der Einfrau-Unternehmerinnen, www.nefu.ch) was an interesting concept which seemed to have a very positive impact on co-operative work, especially in organizing events together. The opening speaker was RR Heidi Hanselmann from the Cantonal Government. The women were enthusiastic and had different ideas on life-long learning and their companies were from different fields, for example marketing, mentoring, life-coaching and well-being.

19.00 Seedamm Plaza, Pfäffikon

Federal minister Doris Leuthard was interviewed by regierungsrat Walter Stählin on every day learning. There were over hundred people in the audience and they seemed to enjoy the easy-going, interesting and partially even humoristic discussion.

Afterwards we met German and Swiss delegations and had dinner at the distinguished restaurant *Pur* situated in the venue. The conversation, company and the food were all excellent.



24.00 Pit stop at the Hotel Coronado

After a busy day we visited briefly at the hotel to prepare for the Zürich by night tour at two o'clock. The group decided to stay awake until the nightly tour and headed towards the Old Town sleepy but determined.

02.00 Zürich by night

The meeting point was outside the hotel Sweitzerhof near the main railway station. There was also a young Swiss couple waiting for the tour with us. Unfortunately the tour guide never showed up and was out of reach even after our host Marcel Allenspach tried to call him several times. Fortunately Marcel took over and gave the tour himself. The tour included history, literature, and some touristical attractions. The highlight was a very special barber shop where you can have beer waiting for your three-hour hair cut filled with interesting conversations. The tour ended in the only bar open, a former varietee theater which was changed into a salsa club.

12.09.2009

11.00 Percussion session in Fahrwangen, in front of the super market Coop



After having breakfast at our hotel we drove to the hills to play percussion in front of a super market. We arrived a little late and the drumming had already started but we were kindly invited to join in. The local music school was involved in the happening. The charming teacher handed us instruments. He conducted the newly-formed percussion orchestra by using sign and body language surrounding him in a circle. The method has been proved to work when there are a few or thousands of participants. Rhythm and drumming are universal! The idea behind was to bring people of all ages together to enjoy and take part

in music. The message was that no matter what nationality or age we come from, we can all speak music.

12–15.00 Open doors at Chalet Elim

We spent a lovely afternoon at the art therapist Heike Dahm's place. She showed us around in her lovely home and gave us the opportunity to take part in work shops. We did clay work in pairs. The pairs did not necessarily know each other from before. We were asked to work together with our "new best friends": to express different feelings and communicate through the work. The idea was to mold a piece of art together in a therapeutic way. The



experience was very special and made us realize a new concept of learning by doing. After the clay work shop Heike offered us a delicious and healthy lunch. The organic food was produced in the farms close by. Even the pottery we ate from was self-made. Before we left we had the chance to try Alpine horns and listen to the music played with them. This visit was definitely one of the brightest highlights in our visit.



15.30 A brief visit in the Schloss Hallwyl



After art therapy we didn't have so much time at the castle, but it was nice to see the old beautiful building and the great water barrier surrounding it. During the day they had free entry for all visitors.

16.30 Afro dance, percussion and a Nobel Prize winner

In the Kulturhaus Helferei Kapelle was the closing ceremony for the *24 Hours of Learning*. The Nobel Prize winner, prof. Dr. Richard R. Ernst had given a speech on physics and chemistry before we arrived. There were not that many people but the atmosphere was very supportive. The speeches were optimistic and the speakers were filled with enthusiasm.

Conclusions and tips for the future

We think that the concept worked out fine and we were surprised that there were so many different kinds of events on offer. Some of the events seemed to lack participants. Maybe there is an extra need for marketing and active communication between organizers. It will help to market the round'-a-clock events if the *24 Hours of Learning* will be organized steadily every year. The idea of the leaflets and common programs were good, but maybe there were too many same-looking leaflets or a problem occurred while distributing them. Anyhow, for a coordinator it is certainly not easy to hold together and market different events in this number. The organized events themselves were innovative and creative.

Over all we were surprised by the Swiss speakers' energy. It would be nice to see Finnish politicians and professors working in the field performing with that kind of motivation and spirit, and to profoundly support the important issue of adult learning. This is definitely something we need to learn from Switzerland.

We thank kindly for the opportunity given to us by SVEB. It was a great pleasure to take part in the *24 Hours of Learning* in Switzerland. We hope to continue this co-operation in future. We have invited the Swiss experts to visit our main event on our Adult Learner's week on October the 6th-7th. It is very important to learn from each others' experiences.