

Looking back on the first integration seminar "Zurich for Newcomers"

Mirjam, a native Swiss, longterm WAC-member and coach for English-speaking people living in Switzerland led the event. As a teacher in the Swiss school system she could give helpful information about the system from kindergarten through to apprenticeship and university, and answer individual questions.

With the help of a Powerpoint presentation she illustrated the customs within the annual cycle and told funny stories e.g. about the Sechseläuten, Zurich's spring festival. And she explained why some people aren't amused if Samichlaus and Santa Claus are mixed up.

There were critical thoughts when it came down to the Swiss being both independent and neutral (or maybe sometimes a bit stubborn and "gutless" as Mirjam described it...)

During a Swiss snack with homemade "Zopf", different kinds of cheese, carnival food and chocolate, the participants learned more about Swiss specialities and why you should never eat an Olma Bratwurst (grilled sausage) with mustard. They talked about table manners and drank Rivella, Switzerland's fizzy drink made with milk whey. The food was prepared and presented with a lot of love.

As a handout there were brochures with useful information from the department for integration of the canton of Zurich as well as information sheets from the school's department. At the end of the course, the participants could take home a useful give-away, a wooden spoon with a cut out Swiss cross.

Time passed really fast and even though overran, there would have been still so much more to talk about. This is why more time will be allocated for the next seminar (autumn 2016). And the new title "How the Swiss work" shows that the seminar is well suitable not only for newcomers but also for people like Amanda who have lived here for longer.

The event is open to both members and non-members.



Amanda: "Excellent presented, gave a profound insight into the Swiss Culture. Very helpful even after living here for 9 years!"



"I would recommend the seminar very much."

Gillian: "Really helpful, loads of useful information. Very glad I've come. Thank you for a fantastic evening."

