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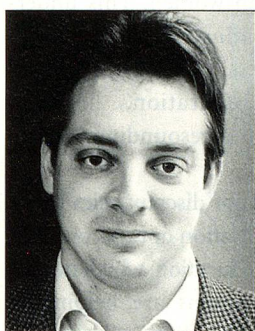
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Sentenced to study

Whether learning a foreign language, familiarising oneself with the functions of a computer or increasing knowledge of one's own professional field, further education is playing an increasingly important role in our society. Over 40 percent of the Swiss population are currently in further education.

The reasons for this thirst for knowledge vary enormously. Courses are visited due to personal interest or because they are required for work. Over the past few years it has become increasingly clear that what we learned at school is not enough for a professional career. So is our society slowly but surely being sentenced to lifelong learning? Although half the adult Swiss population is attending further training courses, there is another side to the coin:



Dario Ballanti

"Further education is playing an increasingly important role"

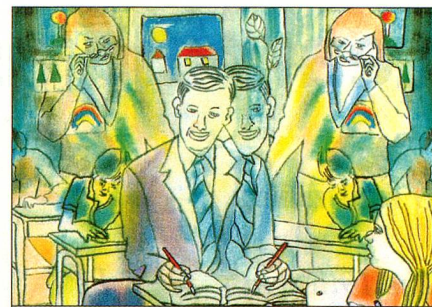
the other half of the population refuses to undergo further training. Experts are aiming to change this attitude and motivate more people to go back to school.

The main goal is to encourage young people who have completed an apprenticeship to continue their education rather than accept that their formal education is at an end, with no thought of further training which might enhance their job opportunities. A number of studies show that the inclination to let books gather dust on the shelf is particularly high among young people. Added to this is the fact that, despite the unemployment level among young people, it is difficult to find enough skilled staff for certain types of job. This is particularly true of the information technology sector, where young people above all have a major chance of finding work.

Further training in new technologies could truly work wonders and offer many young people the possibility of retraining, thereby increasing their chances on the job market. With this sector developing at an unprecedented rate, it is even more important to be flexible and continually acquire new knowledge. In other words: learning is purely a matter of routine and we must exercise it to the full.

It is not up to the individual alone to seize the day. The government also needs to act, as shown by the recently published report on "Education in Switzerland: Situation and Recommendations" which states that further education courses are primarily offered by private companies and associations. The government and cantons are aware of the importance of further education. But they are not yet doing enough to promote it.

Dario Ballanti



FOCUS	
Further education	4
OFFICIAL NEWS	11
OSA NEWS	14
MAILBAG	16
SRI NEWS	17
ECONOMY	
Boom in Switzerland	18
POLITICS	
Naturalisation problems	20
POLITICS	
Swiss image promotion	22
VOTING	
Preview of 24 September 2000	24
MOSAIC	26



Further education is popularly regarded as the key to the 21st century. Yet not everyone is willing to go back to school. People with a modest basic education are particularly in need of additional qualifications.

(Cover: MARTIN MÖLL)

SWISS REVIEW

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Editors: Lukas M. Schneider (LS), Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad (Chairman); Alice Baumann (AB), Press Bureau Alice Baumann Conception, Berne; Pierre-André Tschanz (PAT), Swiss Radio International, Berne; Dario Ballanti (DB), parliamentary correspondent of Corriere del Ticino; Editor of Official News: Robert Nyffeler (NYF), Service for the Swiss Abroad, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, CH-3003 Berne. Translator: Nicolette Chisholm.

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