



**Living and Learning  
in an International Community**

*The Spirit of Learning*

*Ecole*  
d'Humanité

## A World Village: opening the mind, realizing the self in an international community



Located in the mountain village of Hasliberg-Goldern in the heart of the Swiss Alps, the Ecole d'Humanité lies between Lucerne and Interlaken surrounded by the awe-inspiring, world-famous peaks of the Bernese Oberland. Tucked into this picturesque landscape, our international village for living, learning and growing is home to children and adults from some 25 different countries. The tranquil natural setting provides a wholesome learning environment while the mountains provide superb opportunities for outdoor activities such as rock climbing, kayaking, hiking and skiing/snowboarding.

One hundred and fifty students of varying ages live in the Ecole d'Humanité's twenty houses and chalets. Each student is in one of the fifteen "families" and usually shares a room with one roommate. Each family has two teachers as "family heads," lives together in one of the school houses and eats together in the common dining room. The family spends one evening a week together playing games, cooking, or working on a project. Living with a mixed group including both sexes and various cultures helps everyone to see beyond stereotypes and to appreciate individual differences. These small living units are responsible for organizing many activities on their own and the familiar atmosphere they engender helps new students to feel at home within a short period of time.

In the living community of the Ecole d'Humanité students take charge of such important tasks as organizing job rotations and managing committees which run the library, entertainment programs, fire brigade, etc. Some are active in the Student Council or involved in peer counseling. Everyone participates in weekly community meetings chaired by a student in which individual and community concerns can be addressed. Each individual is encouraged to take initiative and develop self-responsibility. In such an environment self-confidence develops naturally and this makes it possible for a young person to discover and unfold his or her individual personality.

The Ecole d'Humanité strives for a simple, environmentally responsible lifestyle.





3



«School-assemblies; rucksack and hiking boots; the intense debate on women’s rights in class; waking up to a Swedish tradition; a Japanese roommate and sharing our daily life of meals, cleaning, conflicts and fruitful discoveries in an international community have broadened my spectrum of learning beyond the classroom.»

Djahane Salehabadi (23) Student, Dartmouth College, USA

## Discover, experience, grow : living and learning in small, diverse groups



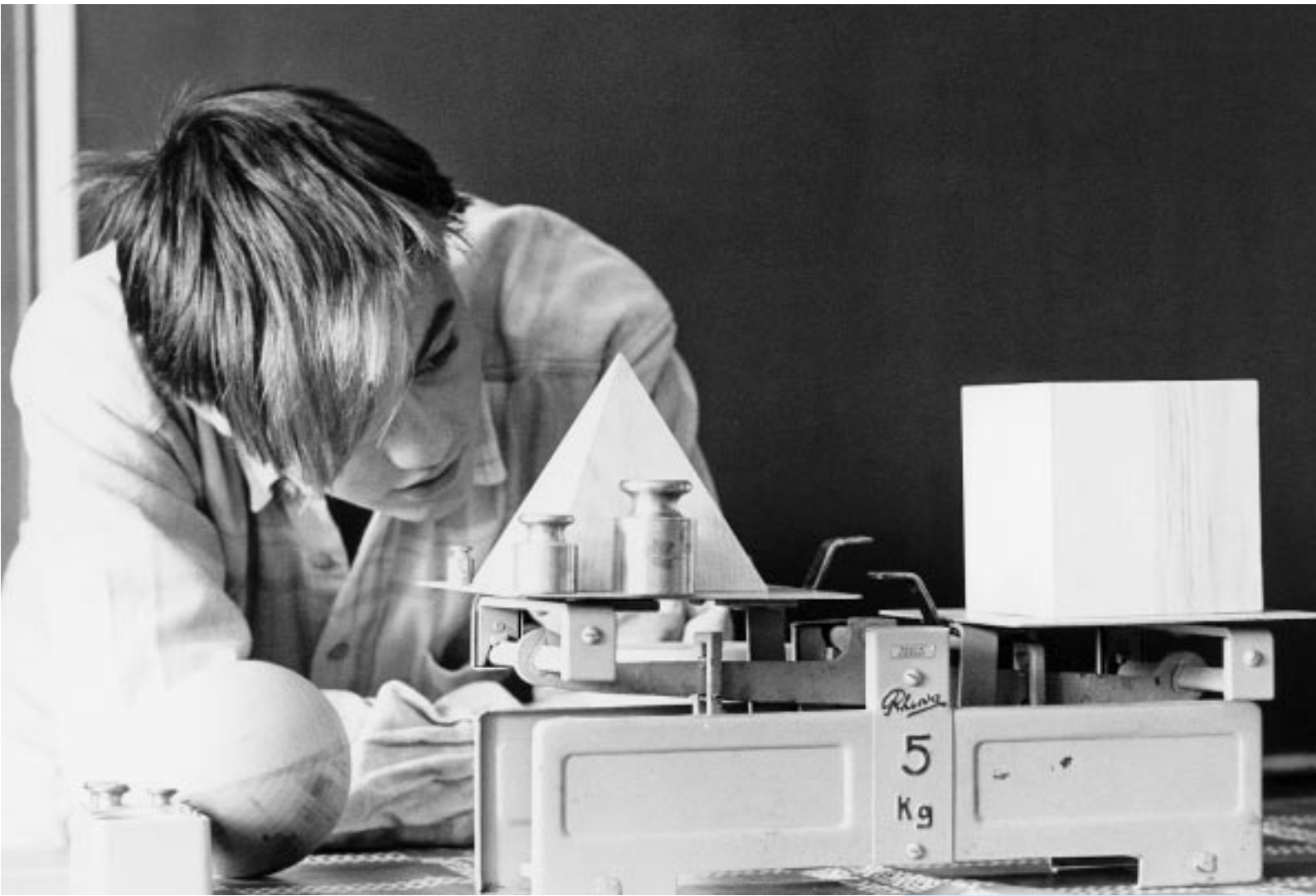
The academic program manifests the school's emphasis on the development of the whole person. Students concentrate on only three academic subjects per trimester. To balance this intensive academic program, they devote their afternoons to art, music, theater, sports and crafts, selecting from some eighty possible courses. The unique course system of the Ecole d'Humanité has won praise and recognition from prominent educators around the world.



Small classes (student-teacher ratio of 5:1) allow individualized instruction and demand students' active participation. Pupils are grouped according to ability and interest rather than by age categories and are taught to determine the most effective learning methods for themselves and to organize a balanced schedule. Class periods of 55–75 minutes encourage depth and varied approaches to the subject matter. Neither grades nor final examinations are given, though quizzes, oral presentations and papers are common. Teachers communicate regularly with the students about their work and evaluate each one's performance every six weeks in a special "blue book." Students also evaluate themselves which is essential for them in order to see their education as primarily their own responsibility.



The small classes, longer class times and an emphasis on learning by doing lead to more joy in learning, to deeper understanding, and therefore provide a foundation for a lifetime of continued learning.



5



«No other place on earth is as dear to me as the Ecole d'Humanité. During my three years there I felt my world opening in countless ways. I've never found another place that is half as good at educating the whole person, and promoting the integration of learning with the head, heart, and hand.»

Dennis Shirley (46), Professor and Chair of the Department of Teacher Education at Boston College, Boston

# Diplomas and vocational perspectives

The Ecole d'Humanité offers academic programs in English and German. The English program places special emphasis on preparation for the SAT's. North American and other colleges around the world readily accept students who have had a thorough U.S. high school education combined with the experience of living abroad. Recent graduates have attended Bennington, Dartmouth, Marlboro, Hampshire, International Christian University (Japan), Boston Conservatory of Music, Knox, University of Michigan, New York University, Reed, University of Southampton (England), Richmond (England).

A graduating student must have at least 4 credits of English, 2-3 credits of laboratory science, 1 credit of social science, 1 credit of history, and 1 credit of humanities. Arts,

sports and music courses are required throughout the student's academic career. Electives include ecology, pre-calculus, physics, creative writing, philosophy, psychology, French, Latin, choral and instrumental music, folk dancing, painting, woodworking, theater, computers, pottery, rock climbing, skiing and snowboarding, kayaking, weaving, and more.

In the German program, our primary, normal secondary, and upper secondary school diplomas are recognized throughout Switzerland. Older students can prepare for university via the Swiss Matura exams or via the GCE O and A-Level exams, or they can take courses that increase their chances of winning a place in a more demanding apprenticeship or in a vocational college.

## Our diplomas at a glance

- American high school diploma and College Board exams (SAT's) for admission to universities and colleges in the United States, Canada, Great Britain and other countries around the world.
- GCE O and A-Level exams for admission to Swiss and other universities (courses primarily in German, exams in English)
- Swiss Matura for admission to Swiss universities (in German)
- Preparation for Swiss apprenticeships and vocational colleges (in German)

**An Opportunity for the Environment  
Presentation of an "Ecology Scholarship" to Al Gore by students from  
the Ecole d'Humanité on September 20, 2001**



Students from the Ecole d'Humanité presented Al Gore with a coupon for a year's study at their school as part of the sun21 in Basel, Switzerland. The recipient of the award will join the student environmental group that works to raise the conservation consciousness of the school population, will study how the school's solar photovoltaic panels and solar heaters work, and will acquire an understanding of ecological principles in our environmental science

course. The selected candidate will acquire a foundation in ecological humanism, very much in the spirit of what Al Gore believes.

At the check presentation, reference was made to a metaphor from Al Gore's book *Earth in the Balance – Ecology and the Human Spirit*. There he mentioned that laboratory frogs realize they are in danger when placed in hot water and save themselves by jumping out. However, if they are placed in

warm water that is successively heated, they do not perceive the danger and must be rescued or they are cooked to death. Humankind is behaving in a similar manner. We react to sudden disasters, but not to the creeping dangers caused by global warming. The "Frog Effect" is part of an ecology project taken as an example for learning at the Ecole d'Humanité. The jumping frog design was created by a student in an art class.



**«Life at the Ecole was made up of many shared moments: learning, achieving and reflecting.**

**Those moments have made me a more understanding person and provided me the opportunity to become a more complete musician.»**

Li-Ling Liao (26), Violinist, Taipei and Boston



*The Spirit of Learning*

*Ecole*  
d'Humanité

*Ecole d'Humanité  
CH-6085 Hasliberg Goldern  
Switzerland*

*Phone +41 33 972 92 92*

*Fax +41 33 972 92 11*

*us.office@ecole.ch*

*www.ecole.ch*