ICCDPP
THE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC POLICY

CATE
Ngā Kaitohutohu Rapuara Aotearoa
Careers and Transition Education Association NZ

Tertiary Education Commission
Te Amorangi Mātauranga Matua

Country Report

10th International Symposium on Career Development and Public Policy, Auckland, New Zealand, November 2026

Country name

Sri Lanka

This country report has been prepared for discussion and information purposes in connection with the 10th International Symposium on Career Development and Public Policy. It draws on an online questionnaire on the Symposium themes, which national teams were invited to complete in advance.

ICCDPP: Navigating new horizons - Country perspectives survey

Introduction

Q1. Do you agree to participate in this survey?

Yes

Q2. I confirm that I am providing a response on behalf of my country.

Yes

Q3. I confirm that I am happy for the responses to this survey to be shared publicly.

Yes

Q4. Is your country going to participate in the 2026 ICCDPP symposium in New Zealand?

Yes

Q5. Who have you consulted with before completing this survey?

By field experts in Sri Lanka

About you

Q6. What is your name?

S.D.Gamini Jayasooriya

Q7. What organisation do you work for?

Wayamba University of Sri Lanka

Q8. What is your job title?

Career Adviser

Q9. What is your email address?

gaminij2025@gmail.com

Q10. Are you happy for your contact details to be published on the ICCDPP website/ relevant documents as part of the publication of this data?

Yes

About your country

Q11. What is the name of your country?

Sri Lanka

Q12. Which groups can access career development services in your country?

	Accessible and free to everyone	Accessible and free to some groups	Accessible to those who can pay	Not accessible
Indigenous people	X			
Young people in schools	X			
Young people in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)	X			
Young people in university or higher education	X			
Young people not in education or work (e.g. NEETs)		X		
Adults in education		X		
Adults in work	X			
Adults not in education or work (e.g. unemployed workers and the economic inactive)		X		
Migrants	X			
People in the criminal justice system		X		
Employers/businesses		X		

Q13. Are there any other groups in your country, not listed in Question 12 above, that can access career development services?

no

About your country

Q14. How far do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The career development policies, programmes and services in my country are meeting the career needs of the population.		X			
School leavers in my country are well prepared for successful transitions to work or further learning.				X	

Q14. How far do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The career development policies, programmes and services in my country are meeting the career needs of the population.		X			
There is a strong evidence base to support the provision of career development services in my country.				X	
AI is having a major impact on the education system in my country.				X	
AI is having a major impact on labour market in my country.				X	
AI is having a major impact on the provision of career development services in my country.			X		

Q15. Are indigenous groups involved in the design of career development services in your country?

Yes, to some extent

About your country

Q16. Please provide a short summary of your country's career development system. [Up to 300 words]

The cornerstone of this reform is a new dual-pathway system introduced from secondary school. Starting in Grade 10, a mandatory skills pathway will be integrated, formally splitting after O/Ls into a traditional academic stream (A/Ls to university) and a dedicated vocational skills stream leading directly to the workforce . This aims to equip all students with practical skills and reduce the sole focus on university entrance .

Significant investment is being directed to the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector, including a Rs. 42 billion allocation for 2027–2031 to upgrade curricula and infrastructure . The goal is to increase annual intake from 75,000 to 175,000 students . New competency-based National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) are being prioritized to meet global and local industry demands, with a focus on collaboration with the private sector .

To connect these pathways to opportunities, government agencies offer public employment services like job matching and career guidance . A micro-credential system is also being introduced, allowing students to earn degree credits by demonstrating specific skills, making qualifications more dynamic and industry-responsive

Q17. Please provide links to any key reports, articles or websites that provide insights into your country's career development policies and systems. [Up to 300 words]

Key Policy & Strategy Documents
1. National Career Guidance Strategy 2025-2029
This is a core document providing a comprehensive framework for career guidance services. Developed by the National Career Guidance Steering Committee under the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC), it outlines strategies for integrating career guidance into the education system and leveraging technology.

2. Strategic Framework for TVET (2026–2035)

Q17. Please provide links to any key reports, articles or websites that provide insights into your country's career development policies and systems. [Up to 300 words]

Recently approved by the Government, this is the national strategic guideline for building a skilled labour force. It was developed with Asian Development Bank assistance to address the gap between training and labour market needs.

3. National Human Resources and Employment Policy
This foundational policy document outlines challenges, such as youth unemployment and "brain drain," and sets the agenda for creating a network of one-stop career centres for guidance and employment services.

💻 Key Government Institutions & Platforms
4. CareerOne Platform (www.careerone.gov.lk)
The official career guidance platform launched by TVEC in February 2025. It connects TVET trainees, graduates, career guidance officers, and businesses to streamline career development and recruitment. It was developed with funding from the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA).

5. Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC)
This is the main body overseeing the TVET sector and the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) system. TVEC plays a monitoring role, accredits training institutes, and is responsible for issuing NVQ certificates.

📈 Industry & Sector-Specific Reports
6. SLASSCOM Compensation and Benefits Report 2025
Published by the Sri Lanka Association for Software and Service Companies (SLASSCOM), this report offers a comprehensive industry benchmark on salaries, benefits, and workforce trends in the IT, BPM, and tech-enabled sectors, highlighting skills enhancement and career development priorities.

🤝 International Development Partner Projects
7. GIZ Vocational Training in Sri Lanka (VTSL) Phase II
A project implemented by GIZ with German and Swiss government support to strengthen the TVET sector. This includes developing digital curricula, information management systems, and the GuideMe App for vocational training information.

Q18. Do you have any other comments that you would like to make about the way in which your country organises its career development services? [Up to 300 words]

Sri Lanka's career development system is a complex network that, while comprehensive in reach, faces significant structural and cultural hurdles. Its organization is characterized by two main features: a multi-layered institutional framework and persistent systemic challenges.

Institutional Structure and Service Delivery
The delivery of services is spread across several key bodies. The Department of Manpower and Employment (DME) serves as the primary public employment service, operating through a network of District Job Assistance Centers and its brand "Rakiya Kendraya" to offer job matching, career guidance, and training referrals . The Vocational Training Authority (VTA) works in parallel, providing a vast network of training centers across the country, from national institutes to rural centers . At the university level, Career Guidance Units (CGUs) with dedicated advisory boards are established, featuring members from industry . Furthermore, professional bodies like the Organization of Professional Associations (OPA) also play a role in providing career awareness and vocational guidance .

Persistent Challenges and Systemic Issues
Despite this multi-agency structure, the system struggles with significant problems. A major issue is the "skill mismatch," where the output of the education system often fails to meet labour market demands . This is compounded by a cultural preference for public sector jobs among youth and parents, while formal private sector opportunities remain less attractive, partly due to lower entry-level pay . Delivery is often described as fragmented and geographically uneven, with rural areas facing challenges related to access and coordination of services . The system's reliance on traditional methods and infrastructure barriers (such as limited internet access and language difficulties) also hinders the adoption of modern solutions like AI-based career guidance tools, which many users find inaccessible .

Productivity and the inclusive economy

Q19. To what extent do policies for education, training, and employment in your country reflect the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Career development services contribute to economic growth.			X		
Career development services contribute to workforce productivity.		X			
Career development services deliver a positive return on investment on public spending.		X			
Career development services support entrepreneurialism.				X	
Career development services help to address employers' skills and labour needs.		X			
Career development services can be accessed by small and medium sized businesses (SMEs).		X			
Career development services improve levels of job satisfaction.		X			
Career development services contribute to decent work (jobs with access to training, a living wage and other benefits).			X		
Career development services support equality of access to learning and work opportunities.			X		
Career development services contribute to the green transition.				X	

Productivity and the inclusive economy

Q20. Provide further information about the way in which policies and practices for career development services in your country support productivity. [Up to 300 words]

Sri Lanka's career development policies increasingly prioritize productivity by directly addressing the nation's critical skills gap, a key barrier to economic growth. The core strategy is to transform the workforce from one defined by academic credentials to one defined by demonstrable, industry-relevant competencies .

A primary tool for this is the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Framework. By providing nationally recognized, competency-based qualifications, the NVQ system ensures that training is directly aligned with industry demands, creating a workforce that is "job-ready" from day one . The recent awarding of one million NVQ certificates signifies a major national investment in building a skilled workforce for sustainable economic growth . This is a direct response to the paradox of 400,000 job vacancies existing alongside high unemployment, a situation caused by a mismatch between worker skills and industry needs .

New initiatives are further cementing this productivity focus. The micro-credential system allows individuals to earn degree credits by proving specific skills, making qualifications more dynamic and responsive to rapid changes in industry needs . This helps workers adapt and upskill continuously. Furthermore, the government is strengthening the link between education and employment through the CareerOne digital platform, which connects learners with employers and training providers to streamline

Q20. Provide further information about the way in which policies and practices for career development services in your country support productivity. [Up to 300 words]

the path from education to productive work . These efforts, supported by a new National Productivity Master Plan, are designed to shift the economy from crisis recovery to long-term, productivity-led growth by prioritizing human capital development as a core pillar of national competitiveness .

Q21. Provide further information about the way in which policies and practices for career development services in your country support an inclusive economy. [Up to 300 words]

Sri Lanka's career development system is increasingly built around a "leave no one behind" philosophy, with policies and practices designed to uplift groups historically excluded from formal employment . This is pursued through targeted initiatives for persons with disabilities, women, and marginalized youth.

One core approach involves integrating disability inclusion into training and hiring. The Reasonable Adjustment framework, adopted by the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission, ensures vocational training and assessments accommodate participants with disabilities . This is complemented by direct employer engagement, such as the recent "Embracing Diversity" recruitment drive which linked over 100 jobseekers with disabilities to leading companies . The EQUITAS program pioneered skills matching and career paths specifically for this group .

To address gender and economic gaps, projects target women and vulnerable youth through place-based and sector-specific interventions. The "Skills for Inclusive Growth" (S4IG) program boosted tourism by training women and people with disabilities . Similarly, the TUI Academy provides hospitality training for disadvantaged youth , while a World University Service of Canada project aims to improve market-relevant TVET for young women in the Northern and Eastern Provinces .

Systemic reforms support these efforts. Major education changes will introduce vocational pathways to ensure every child receives either a higher education or vocational qualification . Programs also challenge traditional norms, such as the ILO's work-based learning initiative that empowers women to enter male-dominated maritime careers . These examples show a clear strategy to build an inclusive economy by connecting skills training with real employment for all segments of society.

Q22. Please provide links to any key reports, articles or websites that provide further insights into the relationship in your country between policies for career development, and policies for productivity and the inclusive economy. [Up to 300 words]

Sri Lanka's career development policies are explicitly designed as a bridge between productivity goals and an inclusive economy, with several key documents and reports detailing this relationship.

Linking Skills to Productivity
National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Framework: The NVQ system is the bedrock for boosting productivity. It is a competency-based, industry-led framework that ensures training directly meets labour market demands, creating a skilled, "job-ready" workforce . The awarding of one million NVQ certificates is celebrated as a major investment in human capital for sustainable economic growth, with every graduate contributing directly to national productivity .

National Productivity Master Plan 2024-29: This official roadmap explicitly prioritizes human capital development by aligning skills with economic opportunities in key tradable sectors like tourism and ICT .

Strengthening the Inclusive Economy
The S4IG Program: The "Skills for Inclusive Growth" (S4IG) program, funded by the Australian Government, is a flagship initiative that directly connects skills development with inclusive growth . Its final evaluation report provides insights into how targeted vocational training in the tourism sector aimed to boost incomes for marginalised groups, particularly women and people with disabilities .

The EQUITAS Initiative: A key S4IG innovation, EQUITAS, provides a concrete example of inclusive policy in action. This vocational training program, developed with the Vocational Training Authority, is designed for people with Autism Spectrum Disorder and Down Syndrome . It includes a "Reasonable

Q22. Please provide links to any key reports, articles or websites that provide further insights into the relationship in your country between policies for career development, and policies for productivity and the inclusive economy. [Up to 300 words]

Adjustment" framework to adapt training and assessments, aiming to integrate these individuals into the workforce .

🌐 High-Level Strategic Frameworks
World Bank Country Partnership Framework (2026-2030): This major policy document from the World Bank identifies private sector-led job creation as central to Sri Lanka's future, emphasizing that employment provides "dignity, purpose and opportunities for social mobility" . It targets support for inclusive growth, particularly for women, youth, and vulnerable communities .

Decade of Skills Development: Government policy explicitly states that labor productivity, enhanced by skill development, is a key factor in economic development, aiming to improve workers' salaries and create a "productive citizen" .

Enhancing skills and developing technical and vocational education and training (TVET)

Q23. To what extent do policies for education, training, and employment in your country reflect the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Career development services support people to develop skills			X		
Career development services support people to access training		X			
Career development services support the uptake of TVET pathways		X			
Career development services support lifelong learning		X			

Q24. What are the biggest challenges for participation in the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) system in your country? [Please tick all that apply.]

School leavers do not see TVET pathways as attractive
Parents do not see TVET pathways as attractive for their children
The practice of compulsory assignment of students with academic challenges to TVET programmes
School staff do not know enough about TVET pathways and the occupations they lead to
Career development practitioners do not know enough about TVET pathways and the occupations they lead to
Falling numbers of adult learners
Shortage of employers offering training placements

Enhancing skills and developing technical and vocational education and training (TVET)

Q25. At what age do young people generally move onto a TVET pathway if that is the path they take?

The age at which young people in Sri Lanka generally start a TVET pathway typically falls into a broad range, from around 16 to 24 years old. The specific entry point depends on whether they are continuing from secondary school or joining as an adult trainee.

Q25. At what age do young people generally move onto a TVET pathway if that is the path they take?

Secondary School Pathways (Ages 16-19)
The most common entry point is after completing the GCE Ordinary Level (O/L) examination, when students are around 16 years old. They have two main options at this stage:

A/L Vocational Stream: This is a direct route where students who have just taken their O/Ls can join the GCE Advanced Level (A/L) Vocational Stream. This program allows them to gain both academic and technical knowledge, typically progressing to an NVQ Level 4 qualification .

General TVET Programs: Many state-run training institutes offer courses to those who have completed year 10 (the equivalent of O/Ls). A minimum age of 16 or 17 is often stated, with some institutes giving preference to those under 22 years old .

Specific Institute Age Requirements
Different TVET institutes have specific age brackets for their courses. For example, the Ceylon German Technical Training Institute (CGTTI) specifies that applicants should be between 16 and 22 years of age . Similarly, the Sri Lanka German Training Institute (SLGTI) in Kilinochchi sets an age limit of 16 to 24 for its NVQ Level 4 courses .

📋 Broader Adult Training Opportunities
TVET is not just for school leavers. For those who do not follow this path immediately, the system remains accessible. Many technical and vocational training programs accept applicants up to the age of 35 , and some specialized courses may accept candidates up to 29 years old .

Q26. Does the age of pathway selection cause challenges for your TVET system?

Yes

Q27. Is there anything else that you would like to say about the age of pathway selection? [Up to 300 words]

Beyond the general entry points, the age at which young people join TVET pathways in Sri Lanka is defined by specific, course-level requirements and selection policies. These criteria often vary significantly between institutions, creating a nuanced selection landscape.

Variation in Age Limits
Different institutes set distinct age brackets for their courses. For instance, entry requirements often specify particular age ranges:

Ceylon German Technical Training Institute (CGTTI): Applicants must be between 16 and 22 years of age.

Sri Lanka German Training Institute (SLGTI) in Kilinochchi: The age limit is set between 16 and 24 years.

Department of Technical Education and Training (DTET): Some courses are open to those between 17 and 29 years. Other courses for students who have completed year 10 require candidates to be no less than 17 years old.

National Apprentice and Industrial Training Authority (NAITA): The general age requirement is broader, typically between 16 and 35 years.

Qualifications and Selection
Eligibility is tied to both age and educational qualifications:

Post-Ordinary Level (O/L): Many courses require a pass at the G.C.E. O/L examination, often with specific subjects like Mathematics and the mother tongue. Some programs for Year 10 completers may also give preference to those under 22.

Q27. Is there anything else that you would like to say about the age of pathway selection? [Up to 300 words]

Post-Advanced Level (A/L): Higher-level programs, like those offered by SLIATE (Sri Lanka Institute of Advanced Technological Education), require A/L passes. For some of these competitive courses, priority is given to applicants who are below 23 years of age.

No Age Limit for Some Pathways
It is important to note that not all pathways are constrained by an upper age limit. The A/L Vocational Stream offered by the Ministry of Education, for instance, has no age limit, providing a flexible entry point for students who have sat the O/L examination, regardless of their age.

A Flexible System
Overall, the system provides a flexible framework that accommodates different age groups. Younger students often enter through school-based vocational streams, while a broader range of trainees, including older adults and persons with disabilities, can access programs through various other institutes dedicated to vocational training.

Q28. Provide further information on the ways in which policies for career development services in your country enhance policies for skills development, TVET, and lifelong learning. [Up to 300 words]

Career development policies in Sri Lanka act as a strategic bridge, connecting individuals to skills development and lifelong learning opportunities through a cohesive national framework.

The National Strategic Plan for Career Guidance (2025-2029) establishes a vision where career guidance is integrated into the education system, working in tandem with the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector and national economic goals. This integration is a two-way process: career services raise awareness of vocational pathways as a respected and viable option, while TVET provides the structured pathways for those interests to become tangible skills.

This relationship is operationalized through several key mechanisms:

Guiding Individuals into TVET
A primary function of career development is to help individuals navigate the education system and choose appropriate training. Initiatives like incorporating vocational education into the school curriculum ensure early exposure, making TVET a recognized and equal pathway to higher education and employment. Digital tools like the CareerOne platform and the GuideMe App connect job seekers with training providers and employers, streamlining the transition from guidance to skill acquisition.

Strengthening Skills and Lifelong Learning
Career guidance policies are not just about entry into TVET; they support progression and lifelong learning through several reinforcing systems:

National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) System: The NVQ framework allows individuals to gain nationally and internationally recognized, competency-based certifications. Career guidance helps individuals understand these qualifications and chart a path through them.

Lifelong Learning Pathways: A joint model with DVV International creates "second chance" opportunities, offering flexible, short courses tied to community needs and national qualifications. Career counselling and life coaching at its start help learners build motivation and identify suitable paths.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL): The RPL mechanism allows experienced workers without formal qualifications to gain certification, formalizing their skills and enabling career advancement. This is a critical bridge between informal work and formal skills development.

Furthermore, the introduction of a micro-credential system allows individuals to earn degree credits by demonstrating specific skills, making qualifications more dynamic and responsive to industry needs. This policy directly encourages continuous upskilling throughout a career, embedding lifelong learning as a core principle of career development.

In essence, these policies create a dynamic ecosystem where career guidance is the starting point, TVET

Q28. Provide further information on the ways in which policies for career development services in your country enhance policies for skills development, TVET, and lifelong learning. [Up to 300 words]

provides the skills, and a variety of flexible learning and certification systems enable growth throughout a person's working life.

Q29. Please provide links to any key reports, articles or websites that provide further insights about how career development services can enhance skills and support TVET. [Up to 300 words]

While direct policy documents linking career guidance to productivity and inclusion are not yet available in a single source, key reports and strategic documents provide deep insights into this connection through specific initiatives and system reforms.

Key Strategy and Policy Documents
The National Strategic Plan for Career Guidance (2025-2029) by the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC) provides the official roadmap . It details how career guidance supports national goals, including vocational education and lifelong learning.

Digital Platforms Connecting the Dots
Several platforms function as the practical bridge between policy and implementation:

CareerOne Platform: This official TVEC initiative connects TVET trainees and graduates with businesses. It provides career guidance, job matching, and internship opportunities, directly linking skills development to productive employment .

GuideMe App: This national vocational training discovery platform, launched with GIZ support, helps users find TVEC-accredited courses and institutes. A standout feature is its integration of labour market intelligence from the Department of Census and Statistics, enabling decisions based on actual job demand .

Building a Skilled Workforce for Productivity
The National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Framework is the national benchmark for competency-based TVET . Achieving one million certificates signifies a major investment in human capital to boost national productivity . The system provides pathways from school to jobs for those who might otherwise leave education .

Professionalizing the TVET Sector
Institutions like the University of Vocational Technology (UoVT) and its Human Resource Development Center (HRDC) enhance sector quality by offering specialized training for TVET trainers, assessors, and career counselors. Programs include diplomas in Career Guidance and Counseling and courses on AI and digital skills, ensuring practitioners can guide students effectively .

Ensuring disadvantaged and vulnerable groups can thrive

Q30. To what extent do policies for education, training, and employment in your country reflect the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Career development services help vulnerable and disadvantaged groups to thrive.			X		
Vulnerable and disadvantaged groups can access career development services.			X		
Career development services support		X			

Q30. To what extent do policies for education, training, and employment in your country reflect the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Career development services help vulnerable and disadvantaged groups to thrive.			X		
vulnerable groups to access decent work.					
Career development services support vulnerable groups to access the education and training system.		X			
There is adequate funding for career development services targeting vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.			X		
Policies for social inclusion intersect with policies for education, training, and employment.		X			

Q31. Which disadvantaged and vulnerable groups does your government have policies to support and which are provided with bespoke or targeted career development services. [Tick all that apply]

	Government has policies to support	Provided with bespoke or targeted career development services
Indigenous people	X	
Women and girls	X	
Men and boys	X	
Ethnic minorities	X	
Religious minorities	X	
Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people	X	
People from low-socio-economic backgrounds	X	
People with low skill levels	X	
Migrants		X
People with disabilities	X	
People with health and mental health challenges	X	
Younger people	X	
Older people	X	
Other		

Ensuring disadvantaged and vulnerable groups can thrive

Q32. Can you provide any further information about the way in which policies for career development in your country support vulnerable and disadvantaged people? [Up to 300 words]

No Response

Q33. Please provide links to any key reports, articles or websites that provide further insights into the way that your country's career development system supports vulnerable and disadvantaged people. [Up to 300 words]

No Response


ICCDPP
THE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR
CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC POLICY


CATE
Ngā Kaitohutohu Rapuara Aotearoa
Careers and Transition Education Association NZ


Tertiary Education
Commission
Te Amorangi Mātauranga Matua