Country Report

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

Country name

Nigeria

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?

Don't know yet

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

No Response

About you

Q6. What is your name?

Olawale Joseph OLATUNDE

Q7. What organisation do you work for?

PACE Career Centre

Q8. What is your job title?

Employability & Career Readiness Professional/ Country Director for PACE Career Centre

Q9. What is your email address?

olawale@pacecareers.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?

Nigeria

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)				
Adults in education		X		
Adults in work				
Adults not in education or work (e.g. unemployed workers and the economic inactive)				
Migrants				
People in the criminal justice system		X		
Employers/businesses				

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

No Response

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	
There is a strong evidence base to				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	
support the provision of career development services in my country.					
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.					

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]

Nigeria's career development system is best understood as a school-embedded guidance and counselling system rather than a stand-alone career service. It grew out of the wider guidance and counselling movement and remains institutionally housed within education, with weak statutory regulation, no structured guideline, and uneven implementation.
According to records, organised career guidance began in 1959 at St. Theresa's College, Oke-Ado, Ibadan, where the Catholic Reverend Sisters invited successful professionals to give career talks and information to final-year students in the college. This led to a major outcome in which the dissemination of career information enabled about 54 out of 60 graduating students to gain employment after graduation. This model spread to other schools in Ibadan, Lagos, Enugu, Kaduna and Kano, leading to the formation of the Ibadan Careers Council in 1962 and later the Nigerian Careers Council in 1967.
Institutionalisation. The first Vocational Guidance Officer was appointed by the Federal Ministry of Education, Lagos, in 1961. His name is C. I. Berepiki, and he authored a career guidance book titled An Approach to Guidance in Schools. After the Nigerian civil war, interest in career development gained fresh momentum, as post-war social, economic and educational problems grew too enormous for the less-trained career masters and counsellors to cope with, prompting a shift toward professionalisation. This culminated in the founding of the Counselling Association of Nigeria (then known by the acronym CAN) in 1976 at the University of Ibadan.
Policy framework. The Nigeria National Policy on Education (1977 edition) noted that, given young people's ignorance about career prospects, careers officers and counsellors would be appointed in post-primary institutions; the 1981 edition made provision for effective counselling services in schools. Current policy directs that government shall continue training teachers in guidance and counselling, establish counselling clinics, career resource and information centres, and that school proprietors should provide an adequate number of counsellors.
Regulation and the professional bodies. Regulation for the training of counsellors runs mainly through the National Universities Commission (NUC), which sets standards and accredits programmes. The professional bodies include the Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON) and the Association of Professional Counsellors in Nigeria (APROCON). CASSON certifies qualified practitioners as Certified Counsellor of Nigeria (CCN) through its Certification and Licensure Committee, and licenses those meeting the Certification and Licensure Policy as Licensed Professional Counsellor of Nigeria (LPCN). Critically, though, the regulatory architecture is weak: there is currently no law sanctioning anyone who practises as a counsellor without a license, and the registering bodies operate with very thin structures.

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

The literature is consistent about the poor implementation of NPE policy directives, which is attributable in part to the lack of a clear structure or framework for career guidance in schools. The services of a career or vocational counsellor have largely become neglected in most schools, and where they exist they are often combined with classroom teaching; this is compounded by high student-to-counsellor ratios. However, efforts are currently being made by professional associations, practitioners and researchers in career development in Nigeria, in partnership with international organisations, to develop a career guidance framework or structured career development system for use in Nigerian schools.

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]

Policy and government
National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 6th ed., 2013) — the foundational instrument. It mandates the training of guidance counsellors and the establishment of counselling clinics and career resource and information centres. Published by NERDC Press, Lagos.
https://nerdc.gov.ng — Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (policy publisher).
https://education.gov.ng — Federal Ministry of Education.
Professional and regulatory bodies
https://cassonnigeria.org — Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON), the foundational professional body, founded in 1975; the site covers its certification and licensure structure.
https://aprocon.org.ng — Association of Professional Counsellors in Nigeria (APROCON); useful on the profession's regulatory gaps and current advocacy for a counselling bill.
https://jpc.aprocon.org.ng — Journal of Professional Counselling, for current Nigerian research on counselling practice and policy.
Key report — CEIAG / system-level relevance
United Nations Industrial Development Organization. (2017). Skills gap assessment in six priority sectors of Nigeria's economy. Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment.
https://www.itf.gov.ng/ftp/Skills_Gap_Assessment.pdf.
Fieldwork was conducted in 2016 (2017 UNIDO copyright). CASSON served on the Project Advisory Group, alongside the NUC, NBTE, NABTEB, NECA, MAN, SMEDAN and the Bank of Industry. Although framed as an industrial skills study, the report contains a dedicated chapter on Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) for Nigeria. It treats career guidance as a system-level policy instrument, calls for 'a major culture change' in provision
Key scholarly sources
Raji, M. N. (2019). Issues around vocational and career counselling in Nigeria. International Journal of Contemporary Management, 18(2), 47–69. Open-access synthesis of the system's history, policy basis, and a benchmarking critique against an international model.
https://doi.org/10.4467/24498939IJCM.19.006.11415.
Omoniyi, M. B. I. (2016). History and development of guidance and counselling: The missing dimension of Nigeria school counselling services. International Journal of Education and Research, 4(11). Historical-development analysis of the system's origins and institutional evolution.
Aluede, O., et al. — historical-development analyses of guidance and counselling in Nigerian schools, providing the system's origins and institutional evolution (available via ResearchGate).
Oladele, J. O. (2007). Guidance and Counselling: A Functional Approach, Focus on the 6-3-3-4 Educational System (4th ed.). Lagos: Johns-Lad Publishers Limited.
Alao, I. (2009). Counselling and Nigeria National Policy on Education: The question of relevance and competence. Nigerian Journal of Guidance and Counselling, 14(1).
https://doi.org/10.4314/njgc.v14i1.47648.
Ahmadu, Y. (2009). Indigenous counselling: A needed area in school counselling in Nigeria. Nigerian Journal of Guidance and Counselling, 14(1). https://doi.org/10.4314/njgc.v14i1.47651.

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]

Nigeria does not operate a single, consolidated national career development strategy, nor a dedicated government portal. Career guidance sits within the wider education and counselling system, governed by the National Policy on Education and shaped in practice by professional bodies and academic research. In schools, the National Policy on Education acknowledges the importance of career guidance and requires proprietors to make provision for it. In reality, that provision falls to school counsellors, whose responsibilities extend well beyond careers to behavioural, mental-health, educational and social matters,

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]

and who in many schools also teach a full subject load. Career guidance consequently competes for attention within a generalist counselling role, rather than being handled by dedicated career professionals. Since career development forms only one part of guidance and counselling as a whole, delivery remains dispersed across professional associations and academic institutions, with regulation still maturing. No central career-development agency or unified national framework has yet emerged, and that structural gap is itself a defining feature of the Nigerian system.
At tertiary level, the National Universities Commission (NUC) has made graduate employability a focus of its recent reforms. Its Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards now embed employability and entrepreneurial skills across university programmes, and the Commission is working with the Commonwealth of Learning to develop and roll out a National Graduate Employability Framework for Nigerian universities. Dedicated career services are beginning to take shape within higher education institutions, although properly structured, professionally staffed career development centres are not yet common. Complementary work is also progressing at school level, driven by Nigerian practitioners and researchers alongside international partners, towards an evidence-based career guidance and employability skills framework for Nigerian secondary and technical schools. These developments reflect a growing recognition that career development deserves structured, coordinated and professionally grounded approach, rather than remaining a secondary function of general counselling.

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]

Nigeria's policy framework provides a nominal mandate for career development, but its contribution to productivity remains largely aspirational rather than realised. The National Policy on Education explicitly provides for guidance and counselling services in schools, tying them to learners' educational, vocational, and social adjustment, and frames technical and vocational education as instruments for producing skilled manpower and self-reliance. Supporting institutions include the National Board for Technical Education, the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council with Federal Ministry of Education which introduced trade and entrepreneurship subjects into the secondary school curriculum.

Two complementary developments are currently shaping provision. At the policy level, a National Career Guidance and Counselling Policy Framework is being developed through a UNESCO-led process involving the Federal Ministries of Education, Labour and Employment, and Youth Development, supported by UNESCO's BEAR III initiative and GIZ; it remains at consultative-draft stage and is not yet enacted. At the technical level, an independent initiative led by PACE Career Centre, in collaboration with a voluntary network of Nigerian career development practitioners and researchers, together with international academic partners (Career LEAD), is developing an Evidence-Based Career Guidance and Employability Skills Framework for secondary and technical schools, addressing the instruments, professional standards, and evidence base needed to operationalise policy intent.

In practice, the chain from policy to productivity is broken at almost every link. Many schools lack trained specialist career counsellors, and where they exist, they are absorbed mostly into behavioural, disciplinary, or teaching duties. There is no dedicated funding, no rule on students per counsellor, and no labour market information system linking schools to occupational demand. Guidance stays mostly detached from economic reality, and students are channelled by available courses, finances, socioeconomic background, parental wishes, BECE, UTME or WASSCE results, regardless of aptitude or whether jobs exist.

The productivity rationale is theoretically sound and internationally evidenced. Effective guidance improves the fit between a young person's attributes and a suitable occupational pathway, reduces costly course-switching and dropout, shortens school-to-work transition, and lowers the incidence of not in education, employment, or training (NEET). Nigerian data underscore the cost of the gap. Informal employment represents about 93 percent of total employment, approximately 12.5 percent of youth are NEET, and unemployment is highest among holders of post-secondary and senior secondary qualifications (National Bureau of Statistics, Nigeria Labour Force Survey Q2 2024).

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]

Nigeria's policy architecture carries a strong formal commitment to inclusion, but that commitment, as with productivity, is largely undelivered at the level of career guidance practice. The National Policy on Education guarantees education for all without discrimination, and the Universal Basic Education Act of 2004 makes basic education free and compulsory for every child. Inclusion is institutionalised further through the National Policy on Special Needs Education of 2015 and the National Policy on Inclusive Education of 2017, revised in 2023. These adopt the principles of zero reject, least restrictive environment, and total inclusion, and they widen the meaning of marginalised learners beyond disability to take in out-of-school children, children in child labour, minority groups, and children living in poverty. Nigeria has also signed the Salamanca Statement of 1994, the Dakar Framework for Action of 2000, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of 2006, and Sustainable Development Goal 4.

The mechanism that should turn this commitment into fair economic participation is weakest where inclusion is needed most. Specialist career guidance, where it exists at all, sits mainly in better-resourced urban and private schools. Rural learners, girls, students with disabilities, and students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are the least likely to meet a trained career guidance counsellor. With no effective labour market information reaching schools, pathway choices fall back on what families can afford and what examination results allow. This narrows aspiration and repeats existing inequality instead of breaking it.

The labour market figures show the cost. Women record higher underemployment and higher NEET rates than men. Informal employment, which carries no social or legal protection, accounts for about 93 percent of total employment, concentrating the most vulnerable workers in the least secure work.

An inclusive economy therefore rests on career development services that are deliberately built for equity: career development practitioners posted to underserved schools, provision that is gender-responsive and disability-inclusive, and validated assessment tools that can identify potential regardless of a young person's background.

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]

https://nigerianstat.gov.ng/pdfuploads/NLFS_Q2_2024.pdf
The survey design, methodology, and sex and disability disaggregation behind the headline figures.
https://microdata.nigerianstat.gov.ng/index.php/catalog/152
Women constitute roughly 48 per cent of the total labour force, with a long time series for context.
https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.TOTL.FE.ZS?locations=NG
The UNESCO-led consultative workshop with the Federal Ministries of Education, Labour and Employment, and Youth Development, supported by BEAR III and GIZ. Replace with the official framework document once published.
https://von.gov.ng/unesco-nigeria-back-career-guidance-policy-framework/
UNESCO (official project page), 2023–2027
Confirms BEAR III operates in Nigeria and links technical and vocational education to labour market alignment and youth employability.
https://www.unesco.org/en/skills-work-life/bear-project
The primary government source for the revised inclusive education policy, adopting zero reject, least restrictive environment, and total inclusion.
https://education.gov.ng/national-policy-on-inclusive-education-in-nigeria-2023/
Federal Ministry of Education. (2023). National policy on inclusive education in Nigeria (Rev. ed.). Abuja, Nigeria: Federal Ministry of Education.
https://education-profiles.org/sub-saharan-africa/nigeria/~inclusion. National Bureau of Statistics. (2024). Nigeria labour force survey, Q2 2024. Abuja, Nigeria: National Bureau of Statistics.
UNESCO. (1994). The Salamanca statement and framework for action on special needs education. Paris, France: UNESCO. https://www.unesco.org/
UNESCO. (2000). The Dakar framework for action. Education for all: Meeting our collective commitments. Paris, France: UNESCO. https://www.unesco.org/

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
School staff do not know enough about TVET pathways and the occupations they lead to
Lack of career development services for learners considering TVET
Lack of ongoing career development support for learners studying TVET pathways
The influence of gender stereotyping on TVET choices
Poor alignment between TVET provision and employers' needs

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?

14

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

No

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

In the formal education system, young people join the TVET pathway after completing Junior Secondary School 3 (JSS3), which typically happens around age 14. At this JSS3 (Basic 9) transition point, the policy intention is that students branch into one of several streams. These include Senior Secondary School (the academic route, covering Science, Humanities, and Business), technical colleges (the core formal TVET route, leading to NABTEB awards such as the National Technical Certificate), vocational enterprise institutions, and apprenticeship or other skills routes.
However, some young people follow non-formal routes. Some drop out of Junior Secondary School before sitting the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE), and others leave after completing primary education, usually after the first six years of schooling (Basic 6). Some leave even after Senior Secondary School, owing to an inability to progress to higher education on account of poor grades or financial difficulties. These young people often begin informal TVET training under a skilled expert, commonly known as apprenticeship. The learner acquires various skills over a set number of years under a master craftsperson, mainly through observation and hands-on involvement. In time, the apprentice becomes proficient, completes the training, and graduates to establish their own vocation or trade.

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]

No Response

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]

No Response

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	X
Women and girls		
Men and boys		
Ethnic minorities	X	
Religious minorities		
Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people		
People from low-socio-economic backgrounds	X	
People with low skill levels		
Migrants		
People with disabilities		
People with health and mental health challenges		
Younger people		X
Older people		
Other		X

If Other, please specify:
Student in TVET

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]

Mojibola, S., & Idera, F. (2025, June 29). Interview: Nigeria's TVET programme set to take off, enrollees to receive N22,500 monthly stipend—NBTE boss [Interview with I. Bugaje]. Development Reporting. https://devreporting.com/interviews/9723/
Nigeria Education News. (2025, May 30). Federal Government launches TVET initiative to empower Nigerian youth with industry-relevant skills. https://thenigeriaeducationnews.com/2025/05/30/federal-government-launches-tvet-initiative-to-empower-nigerian-youth-with-industry-relevant-skills/
United Nations Country Team Nigeria. (2023). Situational analysis on the rights of persons with disabilities in Nigeria: Country full report. United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD). https://globaldisabilityfund.org/new/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/SITAN-Nigeria.pdf
International Labour Organization. (2025, September 23). Nigeria rallies stakeholders for inclusive jobs future at NEC capacity workshop. https://www.ilo.org/resource/news/nigeria-rallies-stakeholders-inclusive-jobs-future-nec-capacity-workshop
Network of Youth for Sustainable Initiative. (2025, September 3). Unlocking youth futures with Nigeria's new employment policy. NGYouthSDGs. https://nigerianyouthsdgs.org/unlocking-youth-futures-with-nigerias-new-employment-policy/
News Agency of Nigeria. (2026, June 23). Sightsavers empowers 2,878 women, girls with disabilities. https://nannews.ng/sightsavers-empowers-2878-women-girls-with-disabilities/


ICCDPP
THE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR
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CATE
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Tertiary Education
Commission
Te Amorangi Mātauranga Matua