Country Report

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

Country name

Kenya

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?

1. The team from Career Guidance Institute
2. The National Employment Authority
3. State Department of TVET, Ministry of Education
4. The ILO-Kenya office (our sponsors)

About you

Q6. What is your name?

Margaret Waithaka

Q7. What organisation do you work for?

Career Guidance Institute

Q8. What is your job title?

Projects Coordinator

Q9. What is your email address?

maggie.waithaka@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?

Kenya

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				
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?

Primary and Secondary Schools

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				X	

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

country are meeting the career needs of the population.					
School leavers in my country are well prepared for successful transitions to work or further learning.					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?

Not relevant

About your country

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

Kenya's career development system is undergoing a structural transformation, shifting from a traditional, purely academic framework to an agile, competency-based paradigm designed to meet modern economic demands.
At the foundational level, the system is driven by the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC). Managed by the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), this framework integrates career awareness early, intentionally guiding learners toward distinct pathways in Senior School based on their specific potentials, interests, and talents. Complementing this structural shift, the Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA) standardizes qualifications across academic and vocational tracks, validating diverse skills through frameworks like the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).
To bridge the gap between education and the labor market, institutions nationwide are formalizing systemic career support:
• Higher Education and TVETs: Universities and technical colleges have established dedicated Offices of Career Services (OCS) to provide localized career counseling, mentorship, and industrial linkages.
• Professionalization: Organizations like the Career Development Association of Kenya (CDAK) work to standardize practitioner ethics and expand training capacities, enhancing the overall quality of local career guidance.
• Labor Market Integration: The National Employment Authority (NEA) and private agencies work alongside these bodies to manage labor market information, facilitating transitions from school to employment or entrepreneurial innovation.
Driven by a strategic pivot toward market-driven skills, the system increasingly prioritizes technical proficiency, digital literacy, and entrepreneurship to combat graduate unemployment and formalize the informal Jua Kali sector. By shifting from rote selection to deliberate pathway discovery, Kenya's emerging infrastructure aligns individual human capital with national strategic goals, building a more resilient, future-ready workforce.

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]

* [KICD Basic Education Curriculum Framework

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]

(BECF)](https://kicd.ac.ke/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/CURRICULUMFRAMEWORK.pdf)
* [KNQA Alignment and Validation Platform](https://qa.knqa.go.ke/)
* [National Employment Authority Integrated Management System (NEAIMS)](https://neaims.go.ke/)
* [Diaspora Recruitment Verification Registry](https://www.diaspora.go.ke/verify)
* https://careerguidancecollege.com/
*https://cdak.co.ke/enlisted.php
https://repository.kippra.or.ke/items/f5a7877d-d02b-4d33-bbf9-5306b9f35fcb
https://cuk.ac.ke/national-guidelines-on-career/
https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000384978
https://careerguidancecollege.com/pubs

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]

While Kenya's career development system shows immense structural promise, its current landscape is defined by a critical tension: *transformative local innovations operating amidst heavily disjointed systemic efforts.*

On one hand, targeted interventions are successfully driving localized impact:

* *Marginalized & Refugee Integration:* In arid and semi-arid regions (ASALs), the *ILO PROSPECTS* program has pioneered *Job Search Clubs (JSC)* and digital local services marketplaces in *Turkana and Garissa, activating vulnerable youth through intensive peer coaching. Concurrently, DanChurchAid (DCA*) provides tailored career guidance training to equip marginalized communities with practical livelihood navigation skills.
* *Institutional Frameworks:* Through *UNESCO's BEAR 2* project, Kenya established the National Skills Gateway and trained over 250 TVET instructors in structured guidance. This aligns with the Ministry of Education's mandate pushing for *Offices of Career Services (OCS) in TVETs and Universities* to act as transition hubs, backed broadly by the overarching National Career Guidance & Guidelines Policy.
* *Professionalization:* The *Career Development Association of Kenya (CDAK)* continues to advocate for standardized practitioner ethics, professionalizing a workforce capable of managing these complex frameworks.

The Challenge of Disjointed Efforts

Despite these high-value components, the ecosystem suffers from fragmented execution. Interventions by international NGOs, state agencies, and private entities frequently operate in silos, creating localized "islands of excellence" without a unified national data infrastructure. For instance, a university OCS rarely connects seamlessly with a rural TVET repository or an ILO-backed digital registry.

Without an integrated national framework to harmonize these parallel pipelines, the system struggles to scale its successes, leading to duplicated efforts, underutilized market-driven data, and gaps in tracking graduate transitions nationwide.

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			

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 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]

Policies and practices governing career development services in Kenya are purposefully engineered to boost *macroeconomic productivity and labor allocation efficiency*. By shifting from historical "academic certificate" metrics to output-oriented outcomes, these frameworks optimize human capital utilization through three strategic mechanisms:

1. Eliminating Employability Gaps and Skills Mismatch

The primary systemic drag on Kenya's productivity has been a structural mismatch between graduate skills and real market demands. Guided by the Ministry of Education's directive, *Offices of Career Services (OCS)* across universities and TVETs act as institutional conduits to match talent supply with industry needs. By utilizing diagnostic tools and industrial trackers, these offices directly translate labor market demand signals into institutional training modifications. This systemic agility curtails structural underemployment and drives enterprise performance.

2. Streamlining Labor Allocation and Market Transparency

The *Kenya Labour Market Information System (KLMIS)* and the National Employment Authority (NEA) act as centralized nodes to optimize labor routing. These frameworks consolidate:

* *Real-time Vacancy Intelligence:* Pinpointing hard-to-fill positions and emerging opportunities within digital, green, and gig economies.

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]

* *Work-Based Learning Integration:* Coordinating national apprenticeships and attachment pipelines to shorten graduate-to-work onboarding cycles.

By mapping localized skills data, the system dramatically lowers search frictions for employers, directly boosting operational efficiency across the private sector.

3. Activating the Informal and Marginalized Economy

National policies—including the *Kenya National Productivity Agenda—deliberately aim to formalize and professionalize the vast informal *Jua Kali sector. Frameworks like *Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)* validate the competencies of non-traditional learners, integrating them into the formal value chain. Concurrently, hyper-local interventions like *ILO PROSPECTS Job Search Clubs* in ASAL regions mobilize vulnerable youth into structured economic pathways. This shifts labor from subsistence activities toward high-yield, market-driven innovation, maximizing the country's collective demographic dividend.

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]

In Kenya, career development policies and practices are intentionally evolving to drive an inclusive economy, ensuring that marginalized populations, women, youth, and refugees are integrated into the formal financial fabric of the country. This economic democratization is driven by three main progressive frameworks:

1. Geographic and Refugee Inclusion via the Shirika Plan

A major milestone in structural inclusion is the integration of refugee and host community dynamics into subnational development frameworks. Anchored by the *2025 Shirika Plan, Kenya is transitioning traditional refugee camps in Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs)—such as Kakuma in Turkana and camps in Garissa—into integrated socio-economic settlements. Supported by the National Employment Authority's (NEA) **Rural Employment Services*, basic career counseling, digital skills training, and job-placement infrastructure are extended directly to these remote areas, bridging the historical urban-rural opportunity gap.

2. Equalizing the Informal Sector through RPL and Micro-Credentials

The informal Jua Kali sector employs a vast majority of the Kenyan workforce, historically locked out of formal career progression. Through the *Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)* framework and the emerging micro-credentials policy, the government certifies competencies acquired through informal experience. This process allows artisans, youth, and forcibly displaced persons to secure recognized, stackable certifications, instantly opening doors to regulated employment, public tenders, and structured financial credit.

3. Target-Driven Frameworks for Women and PWDs

Collaborating with bodies like the *National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC)*, modern youth employment and skills frameworks mandate targeted career interventions. These policies actively expand gender-equitable access to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) mentoring, inclusive dual-training standards, and technical apprenticeships. By purposefully designing career pathways that accommodate persons with disabilities (PWDs) and low-income demographics, Kenya is shifting its demographic trajectory away from systemic inequality toward shared national prosperity.

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]

* [Kenya National Productivity Agenda Launch](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-WiAJ6xY2sg)
* [Vision 2030 Productivity Management Pillar](https://vision2030.go.ke/project/raise-the-countrys-productivity-levels-and-competitiveness/)
* [UNHCR Shirika Plan Progress Report](https://www.unhcr.org/ke/sites/ke/files/2026-04/SHIRIKA

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]

%20PLAN%20UPDATE_0.pdf)
* [Strathmore Law School Shirika Plan Evaluation](https://law.strathmore.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Shirika-Plan-Summary.pdf)
* [KNQA Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Platform](https://knqa.go.ke/service/recognition-of-prior-learning/)

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
Career development practitioners do not know enough about TVET pathways and the occupations they lead to
High rates of drop-out from TVET
Lack of career development services for learners considering TVET
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?

18yrs

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]

NO

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]

Kenya's career development policies serve as an indispensable steering mechanism that enhances and operationalizes its *National Skills Development Policy*, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) frameworks, and lifelong learning agendas. Rather than operating in isolation, career services translate broad educational goals into individual and macro-level economic value through three clear policy pathways:

1. Activating Competency-Based Education and Training (CBET)

Within TVET institutions, institutional career development services bridge the gap between academic theory and industry reality. Under current Ministry of Education mandates, institutional *Offices of Career Services (OCS)* utilize market data to actively orient students toward high-demand, practical tracks. This targeted guidance supports the implementation of the CBET curriculum by ensuring learners select specializations that directly respond to real-time industrial shortages, maximizing the state's massive infrastructural investments in TVET.

2. Operationalizing Lifelong Learning via Credit Accumulation

Career development services give functional utility to the *Kenya Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (KCATS)*. By providing continuous professional orientation, career practitioners assist adult learners and workers in navigating stackable credentials and institutional transfers. This systemic support ensures that upskilling and reskilling are not sporadic, but rather follow a deliberate pathway, enabling continuous learning across different life and career stages.

3. Creating Clear Trajectories for Prior Learning (RPL)

The *Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)* framework requires active, high-quality counseling to transition informal Jua Kali competencies into formal qualifications. Career development policies ensure that candidates seeking certification receive proper diagnostic profiling, portfolio-building advice, and post-certification career tracking. This direct synergy converts raw, uncertified workforce experience into highly mobile, standardized human capital.

[Kenya TVET Quality and Credit Accumulation Reforms](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X7WjXcvhmeI)
This brief broadcast highlights state updates on the Credit Accumulation and Transfer policy, demonstrating how the synchronization of industry inputs, institutional adjustments, and continuous qualifications builds a unified, globally recognized framework for lifelong learning.

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]

* [KNQA Credit Accumulation and Transfer System Platform](https://knqa.go.ke/service/kenya-credit-accumulation-and-transfer-system/)
* [KNQA KCATS Continental Policy Inventory](https://acqf.africa/resources/nqf-inventory/countries/kenya/kenya-credit-accumulation-and-transfer-system-1st-edition-knqa-2021/@@display-file/file/kenya-credit-accumulation-and-transfer-system-1st-edition-knqa-2021.pdf)
* [Vocation Hub TVET Reform Analysis](https://www.vocationhub.co.ke/kenya-credit-accumulation-and-transfer-system-loading/)
* [KEBS KCATS Requirements and Guidelines (DKS 3047:2026)](https://www.kebs.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/DKS304_2.pdf)
* [Kenya TVET Quality and Credit Accumulation Reforms](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X7WjXcvhmeI)

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

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		
Other		

If Other, please specify:
non

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]

N/A

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]

N/A


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CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC POLICY


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