Country Report

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

Country name

Switzerland

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?

No

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

As President of the Swiss Conference for Lifelong Guidance, I am very familiar with the situation and framework conditions in Switzerland. If in doubt, I contact the person responsible in each case.

About you

Q6. What is your name?

Daniel Reumiller

Q7. What organisation do you work for?

Schweizerische Konferenz für Berufs-, Studien- und Laufbahnberatung SK BSLB

Q8. What is your job title?

President

Q9. What is your email address?

daniel.reumiller@be.ch

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?

Switzerland

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 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			

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?

Not relevant

About your country

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

Switzerland has a decentralised lifelong guidance system in which the 26 cantons are responsible for organising and delivering public career guidance services. Federal legislation defines the general mandate for vocational, educational and career guidance, while the cantons determine how services are organised and funded. As a result, organisational structures and service portfolios vary across the country, although all cantons provide public guidance services for young people and adults.

Career guidance plays a particularly important role within Switzerland's dual vocational education and training (VET) system. Young people typically make their first major educational choice at the age of 14–15, deciding between vocational education and general education. Career guidance is therefore closely integrated into compulsory schooling through collaboration between schools and cantonal guidance centres.

Public guidance services combine information, counselling and career development support. All cantons operate publicly funded guidance centres, complemented by a national online information portal (berufsberatung.ch), which provides comprehensive information on occupations, education and training opportunities, apprenticeships and labour market issues. The portal is managed by the Swiss Service Centre for Vocational Education and Training | Vocational, Educational and Career Guidance (SDBB) on behalf of the cantons.

At national level, the Swiss Conference for Lifelong Guidance (SK BSLB) coordinates cooperation between the cantons and advises the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (EDK). Since the adoption of the National Lifelong Guidance Strategy in 2021, the cantons have been working together to strengthen quality, career management skills, evidence, digitalisation and intercantonal harmonisation while respecting cantonal autonomy.

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]

The following reports and websites provide comprehensive information on Switzerland's career development system and policies:

Cedefop (2025). Inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices – Switzerland
Comprehensive English-language overview of the Swiss lifelong guidance system, including governance, access, quality assurance, career management skills, funding, ICT and guidance provision.
https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/country-reports/inventory-lifelong-guidance-systems-and-practices-switzerland

Swiss Conference for Vocational, Academic and Career Guidance (SK BSLB). National Strategy for Vocational, Academic and Career Guidance (2021)
National strategy adopted by the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (EDK), defining common objectives for the development of lifelong guidance in Switzerland.
https://edudoc.ch/record/216772

berufsberatung.ch – Official Swiss Career Information Portal
Switzerland's national trilingual information portal on occupations, education and training, higher education, continuing education, apprenticeships and career planning.
https://www.berufsberatung.ch

Swiss Service Centre for Vocational Education and Training | Vocational, Educational and Career Guidance (SDBB)
National competence centre responsible for guidance resources, publications, practitioner training and operation of the national guidance portal.
https://www.sdbb.ch

Swiss Conference for Vocational, Academic and Career Guidance (SK BSLB)
Information on national projects, policy papers, quality development, statistics and cooperation between the cantons.
https://www.edk.ch/en/about-edk/boards/vacc

State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) – VPET 2030
National vision for the future development of vocational and professional education and training, highlighting lifelong guidance as a key supporting element.
https://berufsbildung2030.ch/en

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]

No Response

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			

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 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]

Career development policies in Switzerland contribute to productivity primarily by supporting the efficient functioning of the education and labour market rather than through direct labour market interventions.

A central feature is the close integration of career guidance with Switzerland's dual vocational education and training (VET) system. Career guidance helps young people make informed educational and occupational choices, supports successful transitions from compulsory education to upper-secondary education, and contributes to matching individuals with apprenticeship opportunities across approximately 240 occupations. This helps reduce mismatches between young people's aspirations and labour market needs while supporting the supply of skilled workers.

Career guidance also promotes lifelong learning and labour market adaptability. Public guidance services support adults in reviewing their skills, identifying further education opportunities and managing career transitions. This has become increasingly important in response to demographic change, digitalisation and structural changes in the labour market.

A key national initiative is viamia, introduced as part of the VPET 2030 strategy. It offers adults aged 40 and over a structured career review and guidance process aimed at maintaining long-term employability and encouraging timely upskilling or reskilling.

The National Strategy for Vocational, Academic and Career Guidance (2021) further strengthens the contribution of career guidance to productivity by promoting the development of career management skills, improving quality and evidence-based practice, strengthening digital services, and fostering closer cooperation between the cantons. These measures are intended to enhance individual career resilience while improving the responsiveness of the education and training system to changing economic and labour market needs.

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]

Switzerland's lifelong guidance system supports an inclusive economy by ensuring broad access to career development services across the life course and by reducing barriers to education, training and labour market participation.

Public lifelong guidance centres are available in all 26 cantons and provide services for both young people and adults. Guidance for young people is free of charge throughout the country. While access arrangements for adults vary between cantons, fees are generally waived for people without an upper-secondary qualification, individuals facing financial hardship, unemployed people referred by the public employment service, and clients referred by disability insurance. This helps ensure that those most in need of guidance can access services regardless of their financial situation.

Career guidance is also closely linked to inclusion within the education system. Through systematic cooperation with compulsory schools, all young people receive career education and have access to professional guidance during the transition from compulsory education to upper-secondary education. Particular attention is given to supporting successful transitions and preventing young people from leaving education without a qualification.

Interinstitutional cooperation further strengthens inclusion. In many cantons, lifelong guidance centres work together with public employment services, disability insurance, social welfare agencies and other partners to support people facing labour market disadvantages. In 2024, the Swiss Conference for Lifelong Guidance (SK BSLB) and the Swiss Conference for Social Welfare (SKOS) signed a Letter of Intent to facilitate access to career guidance for recipients of social assistance throughout Switzerland.

Finally, the national viamia programme provides free career reviews for adults aged 40 and over, helping experienced workers remain employable and participate actively in a changing labour market.

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]

Although Switzerland has no single publication specifically addressing the relationship between career development, productivity and the inclusive economy, the following reports and policy documents provide important insights into these links:

VPET 2030 – Vision and Strategic Guidelines (SERI)
Describes the long-term development of Switzerland's vocational education and training system and highlights lifelong guidance as an important instrument for lifelong learning, labour market adaptability and skills development.
https://berufsbildung2030.ch/en

National Strategy for Vocational, Academic and Career Guidance (SK BSLB, 2021)
Sets out national objectives for strengthening lifelong guidance, with particular emphasis on career management skills, lifelong learning, quality development, evidence-based practice and intercantonal cooperation.
https://edudoc.ch/record/216772

Cedefop (2025): Inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices – Switzerland
Provides a comprehensive overview of how Swiss lifelong guidance supports educational transitions, employability, labour market participation and social inclusion.
https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/country-reports/inventory-lifelong-guidance-systems-and-practices-switzerland

viamia – Career Guidance for Adults 40+
National programme supporting employability, career resilience and participation in a changing labour market through free career reviews for adults aged 40 and over.
https://www.viamia.ch

berufsberatung.ch – Official Swiss Career Information Portal
The national guidance portal providing equitable access to high-quality information on occupations,

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]

education, training and career development opportunities throughout Switzerland.
https://www.berufsberatung.ch

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.]

The practice of compulsory assignment of students with academic challenges to TVET programmes
High rates of drop-out from TVET
The influence of gender stereotyping on TVET choices

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?

Young people in Switzerland generally enter a TVET pathway at the age of 15 or 16, immediately after completing compulsory education (lower-secondary school). Career guidance and educational choice typically begin between the ages of 13 and 15.

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]

No Response

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 is closely embedded in Switzerland's education and training system and plays an important role in supporting skills development, vocational education and training (TVET) and lifelong learning.

For young people, career guidance is an integral part of the transition from compulsory education to upper-secondary education. Through close cooperation between schools and cantonal guidance centres, pupils receive structured career education, information and individual counselling before choosing between vocational education and general education. This contributes to informed educational choices and to successful matching between young people, occupations and apprenticeship opportunities.

Career guidance also supports permeability within the Swiss education system. Guidance practitioners help individuals understand the wide range of educational pathways, including transitions between vocational and academic education, professional education and training, higher education and continuing education. This reflects the growing flexibility of the Swiss education and training system.

For adults, career guidance promotes lifelong learning by helping individuals assess their competencies, identify upskilling and reskilling opportunities, and manage career transitions throughout working life. The national viamia programme, introduced as part of the VPET 2030 initiative, provides free career reviews for adults aged 40 and over to strengthen long-term employability.

The National Strategy for Vocational, Academic and Career Guidance (2021) further reinforces these objectives by promoting career management skills, quality development, digitalisation, evidence-based practice and stronger coordination between the cantons. Together, these measures position career guidance as an important enabling service for lifelong learning and skills development.

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]

The following reports and websites provide further information on how career development services contribute to skills development, TVET and lifelong learning in Switzerland:

VPET 2030 – Vision and Strategic Guidelines (SERI)
National strategy describing the future development of Switzerland's vocational education and training system and the role of lifelong guidance in supporting lifelong learning and employability.
https://berufsbildung2030.ch/en

National Strategy for Vocational, Academic and Career Guidance (SK BSLB, 2021)
Defines the common national objectives for strengthening career guidance, career management skills, lifelong learning and quality development.
https://edudoc.ch/record/216772
berufsberatung.ch – Official Swiss Career Information Portal

Comprehensive national information portal on occupations, apprenticeships, education and training, higher education and continuing education.
https://www.berufsberatung.ch

Swiss Service Centre for Vocational Education and Training | Vocational, Educational and Career Guidance (SDBB)
Develops national information resources, guidance tools and continuing professional development for practitioners.
https://www.sdbb.ch

Cedefop (2025). Inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices – Switzerland
Comprehensive overview of the Swiss lifelong guidance system and its links to vocational education, skills development and lifelong learning.
https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/country-reports/inventory-lifelong-guidance-systems-and-practices-switzerland

viamia – Career Guidance for Adults 40+
National initiative promoting lifelong learning, upskilling and career resilience for adults.
https://www.viamia.ch

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

Switzerland’s lifelong guidance system primarily follows a universal approach rather than providing separate career guidance services for specific target groups. Public lifelong guidance centres are open to all citizens, while additional support is provided where individual needs or social circumstances require it.

For young people, universal access is ensured through close cooperation between schools and cantonal guidance centres. This enables all pupils to receive career education, information and individual guidance during the transition from compulsory education to upper-secondary education.

For adults, access arrangements vary between cantons. However, people without an upper-secondary qualification, individuals experiencing financial hardship, unemployed people referred by the public employment service, and clients referred by disability insurance generally receive guidance free of charge. In many cases, the costs are covered by the referring institution.

Career guidance also supports vulnerable groups through interinstitutional cooperation. Depending on the canton, guidance centres work with public employment services, disability insurance, social welfare agencies, migration services and other partners to facilitate labour market participation and educational inclusion. In 2024, the Swiss Conference for Lifelong Guidance (SK BSLB) and the Swiss Conference for Social Welfare (SKOS) signed a national Letter of Intent to facilitate access to career guidance for recipients of social assistance.

Rather than focusing on narrowly defined target groups, the Swiss system seeks to combine universal access with targeted support according to individual needs, thereby promoting equal opportunities in education, training and employment.

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]

The following reports and websites provide further information on how Switzerland’s lifelong guidance system supports vulnerable and disadvantaged people:

Cedefop (2025). Inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices – Switzerland
Comprehensive overview of access arrangements, fee exemptions, interinstitutional cooperation and services for different target groups.
https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/country-reports/inventory-lifelong-guidance-systems-and-practices-switzerland

National Strategy for Vocational, Academic and Career Guidance (SK BSLB, 2021)
National strategy promoting equal access to lifelong guidance, lifelong learning and career development throughout the life course.
https://edudoc.ch/record/216772

berufsberatung.ch – Official Swiss Career Information Portal
Provides free, nationwide access to comprehensive information on occupations, education, training and career opportunities for all citizens.

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]

https://www.berufsberatung.ch

viamia – Career Guidance for Adults 40+
National programme providing free career reviews for adults aged 40 and over to strengthen employability and participation in the labour market.
https://www.viamia.ch

Letter of Intent between the Swiss Conference for Lifelong Guidance (SK BSLB) and the Swiss Conference for Social Welfare (SKOS) (2024)
National agreement to facilitate access to career guidance for recipients of social assistance across Switzerland.
https://skos.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/skos_main/public/pdf/grundlagen_und_positionen/themen/Bildung/2024-06-14_Letterofintent_SKBSLB_SKOS.pdf


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Careers and Transition Education Association NZ


Tertiary Education
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