

**COST Action CA17114**

**Transdisciplinary solutions to  
cross sectoral disadvantage  
in youth (YOUNG-IN)**

**WG5**



**Working paper series**

# **Youth-oriented policies beyond ideal-typical welfare regimes in Europe:**

## **Situation and initiatives from the perspective of youth transition regimes**

### **Switzerland**

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This WP series contributes to the main aims of YOUNG-IN and WG5 (Knowledge-based social investment policy for youth) by aiming to:

- 1) Describe today's situation of youth in our nine case countries based on characteristics perceived to be the most relevant by the literature of Youth Transition Regimes (YTR);
- 2) Give an overview of the main policy initiatives targeted at youth within key policy areas relevant for YTR.

This WP is structured as follows: Part I gives a harmonised comparative overview of the existing situation in the analysed nine countries in comparison with EU28 (the analyses cover period before Brexit, thus kept EU28 instead of EU27). Part II consists of nine chapters about youth-oriented policy initiatives in those countries in two recent decades across policy areas especially relevant for youth (education, labour market, social inclusion, participation and housing). Part III concludes with an executive summary that compares the countries' youth-oriented policy directions in the modified framework of YTR.

The structure and authorship of respective chapters are as follows (current chapter highlighted):

- ▶ Part I: A comparative introduction of situation of youth, Triin Lauri
- ▶ Part II: Country reports on youth oriented policies:
  - Youth-oriented policies in Bulgaria (BG), Veneta Krasteva
  - **Youth-oriented policies in Switzerland (CH), Berihun Wagaw, Matthias Drilling, Semhar Negash**
  - Youth-oriented policies in Estonia (EE), Anu Toots and Triin Lauri
  - Youth-oriented policies in Spain (ES), Francisco Javier Moreno-Fuentes, Pau Marí-Klose
  - Youth-oriented policies in Lithuania (LT), Daiva Skučienė, Natalija Mažeikienė
  - Youth-oriented policies in Latvia (LV), Anna Broka
  - Youth-oriented policies in Moldova (MD), Crismaru Mariana
  - Youth-oriented policies in Malta (MT), Sue Vella
  - Youth-oriented policies in Turkey (TR), Hande Barlin, Nilufer Korkmaz Yaylagul
- ▶ Conclusion, Anu Toots, Triin Lauri

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## Brief Information on Switzerland

**Switzerland** is one of the smallest and wealthiest nations located in Central Europe. It shares a border with Italy in the south, France in the west, Germany in the north and Austria and Liechtenstein in the east. The population is 8.5 million, out of which foreign national permanent residents compose 37% (FSO 2018). The total share of young people aged 15-29-years was 17.6% in 2018 and 17.3 in 2019 (Eurostat 2020, data for 2018 and 2019). The aging population 65+ composes 19% (BFS 2019 projection scenario) of the population.

Switzerland is a federal republic created by the confederation of 26 Cantons and exercises direct democracy. Switzerland has four national languages: German, French, Italian and Romansh. Switzerland is not a member of the EU but is a member of different regional organisations such as the OECD and has strong economic cooperation within Europe. Switzerland ranks second on the world's human development index in HDI 2019.

## Part II. Main youth related initiatives in key policy areas

Switzerland has complicated policy-making processes because of its advanced federal structure and higher cantonal autonomy. Public policy-making responsibility is divided between the confederation, cantons and municipalities, i.e. the three levels of government. Indeed, policy making in Switzerland is multi-level and multi-actor (Bonvil and Dahmen, 2017). Furthermore, NGOs and private initiatives have significant involvement in policy outcomes and initiatives, and some stakeholders even have significant veto power (Bonoli, 2007).

In the area of child and youth policy, the Federal Social Insurance Office (FSIO) is responsible for the advancement of children and young people in the context of extracurricular youth work, advancing opportunities for children and young people, and promoting the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The FSIO is also responsible for promoting measures to prevent violence and improve the protection of children and young people. In general, the FSIO is the confederation's specialist office on matters that deal with child and youth protection, promotion and participation. Nevertheless, most youth-oriented policy areas are under cantonal jurisdictions.

In Switzerland, youth policy is a recent phenomenon (Dahmen, Bonvin and Beuret, 2017). In recent years, the Confederation shows a strong commitment in same youth policy areas. The major policy document available at the federal level is the "Strategy for a Swiss Child and Youth Policy" adopted on 27 August 2008. The strategic policy paper defined child and youth protection, promotion and participation. A federal law aimed at the strategy of violence prevention on "... different settings; family, school, community and media" was adopted on 20 May 2009. Furthermore, the additional federal law "Child and youth promotion Act" was adopted on 30 September 2011 (SR 416.1). The goal of this Act was to promote extra-curricular work with children and youth. Since 2011, FSIO implemented nationwide child and youth preventive programmes. Another federal law on "Violence and Neglect in the Family: necessary measures in the area of child and youth welfare and state sanctions" was adopted

on 27 June 2012. This law targets financing cantonal programmes to help the cantons to develop further child and youth protection programmes. On 1 January 2013, the Youth Promotion Act was completely revised and substituted by "Child and Youth Promotion Act".

## **2.1. Education policy beyond the lower secondary level**

In Switzerland, education is mostly the responsibility of the cantons. However, there are some regulations at the federal level, such as the 1990 Federal Law on grants and compensations (616.1) to subsidise cantons and municipalities, and the 2002 Federal Law on vocational training (412.10), which regulates the content of education and training, learning location, and responsibilities (Art. 16 a-c). Moreover, there are also federal-level programmes like that of The Swiss Service Centre for Vocational Training, Study and Career Counselling (SDBB) established since 2007 to "provide services in areas of responsibility that have been delegated to the cantons" by the 2002 Federal Vocational and Professional Education and Training Act.

In Switzerland, compulsory and lower secondary education ends after 9 years, when students are between 15 and 16 years old (OECD, 2018). Educational tracking starts at the early lower secondary education level. After completing lower secondary education, students have the chance to choose between the two tracks of education at the upper-secondary level: general education or vocational education and training VET.

The VET is nationally standardised and has become common place at the upper secondary level. The Swiss upper secondary education is a dual track one, which students may attend either as exclusively school-based or company-based (Hupka-Brunner, Sacchi and E. Stalder, 2010). Nevertheless, VET is most commonly company-based dual-form (Meyer, 2009), combining theoretical education at school and a practical, paid apprenticeship training in the firms.

On areas of VET, the state, companies and professional associations are working together to ensure educational quality and play different roles (Imdorf, Helbling and Inui, 2016). Moreover, employers are highly involved in determining the training content of VET (Helbling, Sacchi and Imdorf, 2019), based on market demand.

In Switzerland, students' enrolment at tertiary level education is relatively low and restricted (Meyer, 2019) because of a standardised and successful VET programs in the upper secondary level (Picol, Hou et la, TREE vol.2 2016), which provide reasonable income to live.

### **2.1.1. Policies against school drop-out, low achievement & NEET**

Policies against disadvantaged young people mostly focus on creating capabilities through prevention and reorientation measures. At the lower education level, special education professionals counsel and support students who have personal-behavioural, socio-cultural, psychological, or linguistic problems. Through occupational guidance support, young people are encouraged to choose their first profession, course of study or career planning. The focus area of student and youth guidance is the working world, continuing education and training and career reorientation. Even at the early lower secondary level, pupils are encouraged and

have access to attend career guidance and vocational preparation classes to think about the future. Therefore, the focus area is creating capabilities at an early stage through providing information to enable young people to make reasonable choices. The Act of the Federal Vocational and Professional Education and Training regulates the cantons in their provision of occupational, educational and career guidance.

Moreover, there are schemes such as the motivation semester, pre-motivation semester and pre-apprenticeship that are implemented to prevent the occurrence of school dropouts, NEET and disadvantaged youth at risk (Duell et al., 2010). The school case management programme particularly prevents school dropouts at the upper secondary level through early intervention. In addition, the introduction of a 2-year EBA vocational training in the VET system encourages low achievers and disadvantaged youth to have at least a minimum specific skill (OECD, 2019).

### **2.1.2. Access to different tracks and levels**

Access to education is open for everyone at all levels. However, there are strict tracking requirements at each level of education. The Swiss education system leaves no one without an alternative. The education system provides different qualification opportunities at different levels. Students with learning difficulties, linguistic, cultural and socio-economic problems are assisted to achieve a certain qualification, so that they will have a better future. The transition from compulsory to upper secondary school is strongly shaped by the student's social origin and cultural background (Sacchi et al. 2011, as cited in Auer et al. 2017). Generally, the social background is more closely linked to success at school in Switzerland (OECD, 2018). Moreover, a student's preference at the upper secondary level shifts to VET than general education because VET is not considered a second-rank education option (Pisoni, 2018), like it is in many other countries.

The apprenticeship market is highly competitive (Pisoni, 2018) and finding an apprenticeship is mostly an individual responsibility, even though professional assistance is available. The main goal of the Swiss VET apprenticeship system is to prepare young people for a specific occupation. The VET diploma not only gives young people the chance to enter into the labour market, but also opens the chance for further lifelong learning at a higher education level (Korber, 2019). In terms of future employment opportunities, the VET programme is the best option in Switzerland. That is why about two thirds of young people choose VET pathways every year (Imdorf, Helbling and Inui, 2016) and VET remains "the backbone of the school-to-work transition" in Switzerland (Meyer, 2009).

### **2.1.3. Policies on educational quality**

The [State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation \(SERI\)](#) and [Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education \(EDK\)](#) are the organs responsible for education at the federal level. Hereby, we sum up some of the laws that are made to standardise teachers' qualification from pre-school to upper secondary level, subject to transition as of January 2020. The regulations on the recognition of higher education diplomas for teachers at the pre-school and primary level entered into effect on 10 June 1999. In addition, on 26 August



1999, regulations on the recognition of higher education diplomas for secondary school teachers have been enacted. A regulation on the recognition of teaching diplomas for Matura schools was enacted on 4 June 1998. Moreover, a "Guidelines for the Recognition of Teaching Qualifications for Additional Subjects and Additional Class Levels at Pre-primary and Primary Level and for Additional Subjects at Lower Secondary Level of Education" as well as "Guidelines for the recognition of training as a secondary school teacher at Master's level for pre-school, primary and lower secondary school teachers" has been regulated on 28 October 2010. Besides the regulations and guidelines, there are also other legal settings aimed at standardising education at the national level. One of the legal bases for the development and application of the national educational standard is the "The Intercantonal Agreement on the Harmonisation of Compulsory Education" (HarmoS Agreement).

The federal constitution under article 61a clearly states that the Confederation and the cantons should ensure high quality in the education system. Thus, the confederation and the cantons are working jointly to ensure educational standards. In order to monitor the development of education, the Swiss Education Report is published every 4 years. The Education Report covers all aspects of data and information from education statistics, research and administration, etc. The findings of the Swiss Education Report may affect decision-making and education policy. Instruments and measures for quality development and quality assurance can be used at the system (international, national and cantonal standard monitoring), institutional (schools, training companies and university quality standards) and individual (teacher and student assessment) levels.

The Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (EDK) is responsible for recognising teaching qualification programmes from the pre-school level to baccalaureate, as well as those for special needs teachers. The Diploma Recognition Agreement and the recognition regulations on teaching qualifications issued by the EDK give the legal basis. The law on diploma recognition regulates the Swiss-wide professional recognition of qualifications and the quality control of education, training and qualifications. Moreover, the Federal Act on Funding and Coordination of the Swiss Higher Education Sector (Higher Education Funding and Coordination Act, HFKG), which entered into force on 1 January 2015, places higher education institutions (universities, universities of applied sciences, universities of teacher training) under obligation to apply for institutional accreditation. Furthermore, some of the measures to ensure educational quality target the students directly at the lower secondary level. For instance, the new arrangement of the final years of the lower secondary level aims at preparing pupils for their transition to the upper secondary level based on assessing the pupils' state of knowledge and skills. This arrangement includes intervention measures based on specific individual learning deficiencies, since many young people face difficulties in their transition from compulsory education to upper secondary level. In addition, the Federal Vocational and Professional Education and Training Act of 2002 introduced bridge-year courses as an interim solution to prepare students for VET. Likewise, the Case management programme at the vocational education level prevents school dropouts and provides guidance and support for students whose transition to the labour market is hindered.

#### 2.1.4. Social support to learners

In Switzerland, public school at the compulsory level is free of charge. The cantons and municipalities are responsible for financing public education from primary school to the upper secondary level. However, students in the upper secondary level share some of the public school expenses, such as school materials and special course fees. Parents are legally obliged to pay for their children's first professional training. Yet, students and apprentices from low income families are entitled to scholarships. The education department of each canton has an office responsible for answering questions about educational funding. They also provide the addresses of foundations and private trusts. Scholarships are either one-time or recurring educational contributions without a repayment obligation. Nevertheless, if the beneficiaries achieve a good financial situation in the future, they are obliged to make a full or partial repayment. Students must pay back loans with an interest rate. In addition to scholarship and loans, the federal law provides families an educational allowance for each child aged between 16 and 25 if they are still studying or in vocational training.

Higher education institutions such as universities, universities of applied sciences, and other cantonal adult education and further education institutions are subsidized by the confederation. However, students have to make a higher financial contribution at this level of education. The annual expenses of students who live out of the parental home is expected to be approximately from CHF 20,000 to 30,000. The amount includes housing/dormitory expenses and school fees. The cantons provide grants and loans to students at the upper secondary and tertiary levels. Some of the cantons are more generous even by giving students a grant or loans for their continuous education and further training. Grants/loans for students are dependent on parents' financial circumstances. Moreover, should the grants and loans be approved, the students must submit a detailed budget plan. In 2018, the cantons allocated 364 million francs for training contributions. From this, 95 % (346 million francs) was paid out to scholarship applicants and 5 % were paid out in the form of loans (18 million francs). From the 364 million francs, only 25 million francs were subsidised from the confederation. When we see the rate of receivers, 61% of them were upper secondary-level students and 39% were at the tertiary level. The proportion of scholarships paid was 46 % at the tertiary level and 53 % at the upper secondary level. In general, 45 938 students received a scholarship in 2018 (FSO, 2019). In addition to the state grants, there are also institutions, private foundations and communities supporting students. The students who have not received grants or loans work part-time work to cover their expenses – about 3/4 of the students are in employment (FSO, 2019).

**Table 1. Mapping education policy initiatives in Switzerland**

Issue in education	Main instruments to address it	Direction
Drop-outs, NEET and low achievements	Counselling, special support, guidance, reorientation, creating capabilities, etc.	Prevention
Access (migrants with language deficit do not pass through the normal strict tracking requirements)	Preparation, pre-motivation, motivation semester, pre-apprenticeship schemes, etc.	Capacity-building, lifelong learning, and compensation
Quality (teachers, link b/n education and Labour market)	standardisation through guidelines for recognition, and institutional accreditation	Preparation, enhancement, and employability
Social support	Compulsory level is universal; upper secondary & higher education are parental income related	De-commodification; Stratification

  

	Low stratification	High stratification
High commodification		
Low commodification		X

Source: Busemeyer, 2014

## 2.2. Labour market policy for youth

In Switzerland, unemployment insurance has a long history. However, it emerged nationwide after 1950 without binding obligation for all. In 1977, compulsory unemployment insurance came into effect for the first time in the federal constitution (Duell et al., 2010). Moreover, the first Unemployment Insurance Act with an element of activation approaches was adopted in 1982, and it was aimed at specific training and public sector job-creation measures. The Job Placement Act was enacted in 1989 to regulate rather the relationship between public and private employment services than public sector job-creation measures. A labour market policy aimed at establishing a regional job placement office by cantons (RAV) came into effect in 1996. All public employment services at local levels were replaced by RAV (Duell et al., 2010). The cost is covered by the unemployment insurance fund.



Reforms have been made since 2000, aimed at regulating the eligibility requirement for unemployment benefit. In 2011, the fourth revision of the unemployment act came into effect. One of its aims was to limit the duration of insurance recipients, targeting re-integration measures (Makaus, 2008; Confédération Suisse, 2010; as cited in Duell et al., 2010). The youth labour market policy focuses on reintegrating youth into VET and the labour market. There are different youth-oriented programmes at federal and cantonal levels.

### **2.2.1. Unemployment protection (PLMP)**

Unemployment benefit is accessible for all, but the beneficiaries should provide evidence about their job search effort and motivation (OECD, 2014). The highest share of unemployment expenditure goes to the disabled and to other disadvantaged groups within the programme "Supported employment and rehabilitation" (Duell et al., 2010). Unemployment is higher among people who are foreign nationals, low-skilled and youth (Duell et al., 2010). The Unemployment Insurance Act (UIA) aims to guarantee insured persons appropriate compensation for loss of income due to unemployment, short-time work, inclement weather conditions, and employer insolvency (FSO, 2019). Moreover, the main goal of unemployment insurance is to prevent 1) pending unemployment and to combat existing unemployment; 2) to encourage prompt and long-term reintegration of insured persons into the labour market with labour market measures such as temporary employment, internships and training grants. The unemployment insurance is financed from the Confederation and the cantons, but is mainly paid by insured persons and employers' contributions. Furthermore, the unemployment benefit is accompanied by strict job search requirement conditions. If the beneficiaries are not willing to show individual cooperation, sanctions become one of the implementation mechanisms.

### **2.2.2. Active labour market policy (ALMP)**

Switzerland has strong overall levels of activation measures. On the one hand, the activation measures focus on enabling and capacitating young people who lack qualifications from IVET. On the other hand, a work-first activation approach applies to skilled young workers (Helbling, Sacchi and Imdorf, 2019). Moreover, the labour market regulations and other legal frameworks focus on easing young people's transition to VET and the labour market. Based on this, we can say that the Swiss activation measures emphasise prevention. One of the early ALMPs transition approaches is a motivation semester that targets young people's transition to VET. These activation measures must be implemented by the employment services to promote youth transition (Duell et al., 2010). Moreover, the Swiss labour market authority and Swiss unemployment compensation fund implements the 1982 and 1989 Acts to their ALMPs. The key agency for unemployment at the federal level is the "Directorate of Labour of the State Secretary for economic affairs" (Duell et al., 2010). The cantons are responsible for administration of the ALMPs, whereas the local employment services implement activation strategies at the local level (Duell et al., 2010). Therefore, the federal government is responsible for making laws on activation measures. The cantons take the responsibility of developing placement strategies to deliver ALMPs. Because of such strict and coordinated activation

measures, passive benefits have declined since 2008. At the same time, expenditure on active labour market programmes is rising (Duell et al., 2010). Therefore, Switzerland is categorised as having a low unemployment rate, in line with Nordic countries and the Netherlands.

The Swiss ALMPs intensively focus on job search assistance, training courses, rehabilitation, internship, transient employment, reemployment, and shortening unemployment duration. Furthermore, unemployed jobseekers receive an extensive assistance package to join or re-join the labour force. However, the unemployment duration varies across Swiss welfare cantons (Buchs, Buchman, 2017). Therefore, Switzerland represents "a collectivist skill formation regime embedded in a liberal, but occupationally segmented, labour market ('qualification space')" (Imdorf, Helbling and Inui, 2016). The VET system is the main strategy for implementing youth ALMPs because employers show more demand for young VET graduates who have specific occupational skills than general skills (Imdorf, Helbling and Inui, 2016). Therefore, VET and short higher education offer the best chance for standard employment upon labour market entry. Furthermore, in Switzerland, non-standard jobs of young academics may be viewed as a stepping-stone rather than as dead-ends (Greppi et al. 2010; as cited in Imdorf, Alexandra Helbling and Inui, 2016) and may be combined with further training.

### **2.2.3. Industrial and other labour relations**

In addition to the labour market policy, there are also guidelines to regulate the safety of young people at the workplace. The guidelines oblige the employer to take all necessary measures to maintain and improve the protection of physical and mental health. The 2000 federal law on the general part of social security law (830.1) coordinates federal social security law by defining the principles, terms and institutions of social insurance law, establishing uniform social security procedures and services. The law also regulates the responsibilities of employees and employers. Moreover, this law provides social security right for accident injury, maternity, disability, incapacity to work, invalidity, etc. The "Youth Employment Protection Ordinance 822.115.2" from the Federal Department of Economics, Education and Research (WBF) regulates dangerous work for young people since 2007. The law strongly underlines that youth must not undertake dangerous work. Furthermore, the 2011 Ordinance (822.115.4) of WBF on derogations from the prohibition of night and Sunday work during basic vocational training regulates working hours and conditions of certain ages and sectors.

When it comes to wages, low-skilled workers and people with a migration background are paid less. There is no minimum wage in Switzerland. An initiative on minimum wage has been rejected by popular referendum some years ago. Working hours are regulated in Switzerland according to the employment percentage.

**Table 2. Mapping youth-oriented labour market policy initiatives in Switzerland**

Issues in labour market	Main instruments to address it	Direction
High PLMP (mandatory unemployment insurance; the largest benefit goes to disadvantaged and disabled groups).	Compensation for income loss with a strict job search requirement condition.	Prevention and reintegration (youth targeted)
ALMP (for low-skilled - enabling & capacitating; for high-skilled - work-first approach)	Individualised job search assistance, training course, rehabilitation, reemployment & internship	Prevention & compensation
EPL and labour relations	Strict regulation for youth on what jobs, when and where to work and not to work.	Young people's protection and safety: physical and mental health; accident insurance

  

	Compensatory	Preventive
Structure-related	Education allowance	Self-employment assistance
Individualising	X pre-VET, training, workfare	X counselling

Source: Pohl and Walther, 2007

## 2.3. Social welfare policy

### 2.3.1. Access and eligibility to social assistance

Social assistance in Switzerland is governed by cantonal laws. The confederation does not contribute to social assistance, except for asylum seekers (OECD, 2010). Every person aged above 18 who lives in Switzerland has the right to apply for survival (or basic as is more common wording in other countries) social assistance. However, social assistance eligibility is age and income dependent. Moreover, the amounts of social assistance may also differ based on the person's status, age and number of family members. Social benefits are more likely individualised, though there are some signs of familialised welfare regime typology. In the Swiss welfare system, the interchangeability and switchovers between social security are intense, especially from unemployment benefit to social assistance benefit. Some people are also transferred from social assistance to disability benefit (OECD, 2014). Many of the people leaving social assistance remain in either benefits.

### 2.3.2. Access and eligibility to social services

Access and eligibility to social assistance is status and income dependent. A person who has no minimum basic income has housing rights. Nevertheless, there is no social housing provision in Switzerland. Instead, the Swiss welfare municipalities provide certain amounts of money for individuals so that they can pay their rent. The provision of shelter is only accessible for people who are in an emergency. Furthermore, psychological counselling is normally covered by health insurance providers. The state covers basic health insurance for those who have no financial capacity. Moreover, legal counselling is also provided in cooperation with non-state actors such as NGOs. Sometimes the municipalities also pay public transport for young people who are in education and training. The country's transport service providers also have discounts for young people under the age of 25, even extended to 30 years old if they are in higher education.

Young people between the ages of 18 to 25, low-skilled individuals without post-compulsory education (Pisoni, 2018) and young people who migrated during their childhood (Gomensoro, Bolzman, 2019) are the dominant social assistance beneficiaries. Indeed, social assistance dependency is always associated with low income.

**Table 3: Mapping youth-oriented social welfare policy initiatives in Switzerland**

Individualised	X
Familialised	

Source: Chevalier, 2016

## 2.4. Housing policy

### 2.4.1. Access to public housing

The federal housing policy is based on a constitutional mandate (Article 108 BV). Article 109 of the Federal Constitution also mandates the federal government to issue regulations against abuses in the rental sector. The implementing legislation is the Code of Obligations (Rent) of 15 December 1989 and the Federal Act on Framework Tenancy Agreements and their Declaration of General Applicability of 23 June 1995 are some of the federal housing policies. Before its replacement by the Federal Act on the Promotion of Low-Cost Housing (Housing Promotion Act, WFG) on 21 March 2003, the federal government was also implementing the Housing and Property Promotion Act (WEG) of 4 October 1974. Based on the new Housing Promotion Act, the Confederation can promote the construction or renovation of rented housing for low-income households, access to housing, the activities of non-profit housing construction organisations and research on the housing sector.

## 2.4.2. Access to and affordability of commercial housing

The initiative on “More affordable homes” was rejected on 9 February 2020 by public referendum. The goal of the initiative was to encourage the building of more affordable homes for rent, by making at least 10% of newly built houses by non-profit developers. Before the public referendum was conducted, the federal council and parliament rejected the initiative (BFS, 2020). However, the rejection of the popular initiative will force the federal government to deliver its promises to subsidised municipalities and housing developers in terms of finance.

**Table 4: Mapping youth-oriented housing policy initiatives in Switzerland**

	Universal access	Selective/targeted access
High commodification		X low income households
Low commodification		

Source: Olsen, G. (2013)

## 2.5. Health policy

In Switzerland, basic health insurance is compulsory. A person may also have voluntary complementary health insurance. The Swiss welfare system provides subsidies for low income people. Health insurance providers are private companies. The Swiss health insurance sector provides lower insurance coverage for young people.

On 6 December 2019, the Federal Council adopted the Health Policy Strategy 2020-2030 to further improve the system. The aim of the strategy was sustaining a good and affordable healthcare system for all people in Switzerland in the future. Moreover, the strategy aims at providing better health for children and youth. The strategy underlines that childhood life is “a crucial prerequisite for a healthy adult life and health promotion and prevention should start at young age if possible”. The strategy urges the Confederation, the cantons and all institutions of education and training of children and young people to develop measures for the use of “untapped potential in pregnancy, the early childhood, in kindergarten, at school and in the transition to work” with a special priority for mental illness (Federal Council’s health policy strategy 2020-2030).

### 2.5.1. Access to public health care

Healthcare providers such as hospitals receive direct public funding from tax revenue. Moreover, the health treatment and health sector is financed from mandatory health insurance premiums and social insurance contributions from health-related coverage of accident insurance, old-age insurance, disability insurance, and military insurance (Swiss Health Observatory)

## 2.5.2. Public health and awareness raising

Legal protection of minors from addictive substances gets special priority from the Confederation. The Tobacco Ordinance of 27 October 2004 (TabV), the Alcohol Act of 21 June 1932 (AlkG) and the Narcotics Act of 3 October 1951 (BetmG) show that the Confederation's priority against addictive substances is prevention among youth. The cantons also have their own provisions in these areas. Moreover, the 2015 health literacy programme was aimed to help young people to avoid bad individual behaviour and bring a positive effect to their health by making responsible everyday decisions and by utilising health services and information (Population survey "Health Literacy 2015").

**Table 5: Mapping youth-oriented health policy initiatives in Switzerland**

	High (universal) access	Low (status-related; i.e. student, employee) access
High commodification		
Low commodification	X (median)	X

Source: Bambra 2005; Wendt 2014

## 2.6. Active citizenship

Young people in Switzerland pay less attention to politics. Many of the "municipalities face what can be called a local citizenship crisis". Recruiting motivated young people for public office is a serious challenge. Moreover, only one out of five young people is willing to take part in local politics. From over 2000 Switzerland's municipalities, more than two thirds of struggle to motivate their young citizens (defined as 25- to 35-year-olds) to run for and hold public office.

### 2.6.1. Regulations on youth involvement in decision making

Young people in Switzerland are encouraged to participate in matters that affect or interest them. They are considered an interest group, influencing (political) planning and decision-making processes, as well as appropriate forms of participation. Their right to be heard is admitted. The promotion of extra-curricular youth work on 18 December 1987 addressed youth participation. Moreover, the 2008 Youth Strategy Policy Paper and the 2013 Youth Promotion Act promise to deliver youth participation.

In Switzerland, there are many initiatives and programmes that target young people at federal and local levels. At the federal level, the Federal Youth Session is an annual youth platform for young people to discuss political issues and express their opinions. In addition to the Federal Youth Session, there are six umbrella organisations of extra-curricular child and youth work that represent the interests of young people at the national level. At local and regional levels, a number of political participation opportunities have emerged, often institutionalised in the



form of youth councils and youth parliaments. Cantonal child and youth commissions as well as cantonal child and youth parliaments are some of these institutions.

### 2.6.2. Programs on advancing youth citizenship and political participation

To promote youth political participation, there is still the ongoing issue of reducing voting age to 16 at the cantonal level. Moreover, the Federal Youth Session is a valuable political platform programme for advancing youth political participation. Every year, the Youth Session gives over 200 young people an insight into the processes of Swiss politics. In this way, the young people are given the opportunity to make their voice heard and get a taste of the political processes and opportunities for participation.

**Table 6: Mapping youth-oriented Active citizenship policy initiatives in Switzerland**

High involvement	
Low involvement	X

## Part III. Migrant Youth Policy

As we have discussed so far, migrant groups are highly disadvantaged both in education and the labour market. In addition to a linguistic integration framework for migrants, Switzerland has two major strategic policy papers on migrants, which include youth. The first strategic policy is the Cantonal Integration Programme (KIP). This policy has two phases (KIP I & II). KIP I has been implemented in 2014-2017. KIP II is still in implementation (2018-2021). In addition to KIP, in 2018 the Confederation came up with the second strategic policy paper called "Integration Agenda", which came into effect in 2019. The integration agenda shows the generosity of the Swiss welfare state towards migrants by tripling its investment in integration. The failure of years-long integration efforts forced the country to commit by tripling its investment in integration (6000 CHF to 18000 CHF) per head. The major aim of this huge investment is to enable 95% of young refugees aged below 25 years old to attain upper secondary education qualification by their 5th year of arrival (OECD, 2019). Aimed at raising refugee employment, most of the investment goes to VET (Swiss confederation, 2018; cited in OECD 2019).

In Switzerland, most of the migrants, especially first-generation migrants, are dependent on social assistance. According to OECD data, after 10 years of their arrival, about 60% of migrants are still unemployed (OECD, 2019). The Integration Agendas concretely target capacitating young refugees by increasing their language skills, upper secondary education enrolment, and labour market participation. These are the main concerns of youth refugees. Even though young migrants have access to education and training, most of them could not realise VET due to the lack of educational background and language skills. If one is lucky to have a VET chance, finding matching market-based apprenticeship is challenging. Therefore, the implementation of KIP and the Integration Agenda to fill these gaps is crucial. Some of the

programmes applied to youth migrations are: pre-apprenticeship bridge courses that target new arrivals. Preparatory pre-apprenticeship transition programmes take from 6-12 months, combining language, work and interview preparation. Pre-apprenticeship is combined with school-based training. In the case of youth refugees, upper secondary level education and training goes up to 35 years old. Nevertheless, the main target age range is between 16-26 years old (OECD, 2019). After pre-apprenticeship, young refugees may get the chance to join 2-year EBA VET programmes (OECD, 2019). This programme opens access to education and training without seeking formal requirements of entry and reduces the duration of training (OECD, 2019). For students with a migration background, the dropout rate in a 3-4-year VET apprenticeship is about 2/3. Contrarily, this rate is only 1/5 for Swiss nationals. Comparatively, migrant students perform well in the 2-year EBA VET programmes. Indeed, the 2-year EBA programme addresses youth refugee problems by giving them access to short-term training to achieve a minimum qualification for the labour market (OECD 2019).

Furthermore, students who enrolled in 2-year VET apprenticeship programmes are entitled to public funding for individual coaching and remedial courses, namely language skills and psychological counselling (OECD, 2019). To solve socio-cultural problems, their teaching personnel includes social workers and therapists specifically trained for the Integration Schools.

Education and training that targets youth refugees is mostly known as bridge or transition (INVOL – in German). More than 10% of students with foreign nationality attend transition programmes (SKBF-CSRE, 2018), and more than 50% of students in these programmes are foreigners (FSO, 2018). The bridge or transition can also be pre-apprenticeship training. Pre-apprenticeship focuses on labour market relevance and work-based prevocational learning to strengthen general skills in combination with career guidance. In this sector, the participation of social partners is high (OECD, 2019).

## Conclusion

Even though youth policy is a new phenomenon in Switzerland, the commitment to address youth problems is inspiring. The policy areas are corresponding to youth problems. However, addressing the problem of youth refugees is still challenged by anti-migrant political parties and some structural problems. In addition to that, policy approaches applied to Swiss nationals might not be applied to youth refugees. Moreover, youth refugees do not have the same capabilities and freedom to utilise or claim their rights and opportunities. Therefore, the interferences in the following table summary may not seriously indicate the case of youth refugees. Most policy approaches to youth refugees are structure-related and the tendency to see investments in this area as consumption instead of social investment is high.

**Social welfare (transfers/compensation):**

Individualised	X
Familialised	

Source: Chevalier, 2016; 2018

Education (in case of stratification, both the importance of VET and educational inequality in general could be taken into account; in case of commodification the share of private provision is the main indicator):

	Low stratification	High stratification
High commodification		
Low commodification		X

Source: Busemeyer, 2014 (pg: 29-33)

**ALMP:**

	Compensatory	Preventive
Structure-related		
Individualising	X	

Source: Pohl and Walther, 2007

**Health policies:**

	High (universal) access	Low (status-related; i.e. student, employee) access
High commodification		
Low commodification	X	

Source: Bambra 2005; Wendt 2014

**Active citizenship:**

High involvement	
Low involvement	X

## Housing:

Commodified/de-commodified (or market –based vs public sector). Commodified/de-commodified can include also subsidies to maintain housing (rent control, housing subsidies), not just for buying it.

	Universal access	Selective/targeted access
High commodification		X
Low commodification		

Source: Olsen, G. (2013)

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