

Doing a job or pursuing a career?

Can you go from washing dishes to being a hotel director? Can you move on from stacking shelves to become a supermarket manager?

Such career paths are also possible in Switzerland, but they are very rare.

Young men and women, some of whom moved to Switzerland only recently, tell us that it is better to pursue skills development. They all had their own reasons for choosing vocational education and training, or a similar path:

*"If you lack education and training in Switzerland, then you're headed for a dead end. You end up spending your entire life doing the same job. **I wanted to get a good job, to take on responsibility at work, and to pursue a professional career.**"*
Khyber Ahmadzy

*"I want to blend in as quickly as possible in Switzerland both in my private and working life. **For this reason, I am doing a traineeship to prepare for enrolment in a VET programme.**"*
Ruth Girmay

*"I used to earn a living through unskilled labour. There were actually a lot of things that I was interested in, but I never had the time to ask questions. I had to work quickly and efficiently. **As an unskilled worker, I earned very little and was laid off when business was slow.** This happened to me on two occasions."*
Luis Neto

*"**As a Muslim woman, it is important to me to show others that I am employed and that I earn my own money.**"*
Gul Afroz Haidari

*"**I chose an occupation where I could use knowledge and skills I already had.** I'll be working for a year now to earn an income. After that, I'm going to study at a university of applied sciences."*
Preethy Vadakkadath

*"My father always encouraged me to learn. He came to Switzerland back in the 1960s and did unskilled labour. He used to always say to me: **Do better than I did, don't always work for others.**"*
Marius Pinsini

*"Now that I have graduated from the VET programme, I have specific professional knowledge. This gives me self-confidence in looking for a job. I can earn money and take care of myself. **I know I have achieved something, and I can now make plans for the future holding a VET degree.**"*
Farhan Abdi Omar

Would you like to find out more about these young men and women and understand why they felt vocational education and training was so important? Their profiles can be found in the guide "What happens after school?"

A few years of hard work – benefits that last a lifetime

"Why do I need to speak the language well if I want to do an apprenticeship in retail? I see a lot of people working at the cash register at the supermarket who don't either."

Or: *"Why do I need to know maths? – I'll never use it ever again in my life."*

Or: *"During my training, I will earn no money or only a little."*

Most people devote two, three or more years to initial training. They want to learn a profession. They are not just looking for a job or unskilled work.

The decision that you make right now of pursuing or not pursuing skills development will shape your entire working life. What is important to you? How will you make your decision?

I undergo skills development first

- I have a solid mastery of the language and also have a good general education.
- I don't do the same work every day. My work is varied.
- I can speak with other members of the team and even share in decision-making.
- I can take responsibility.
- My supervisors place a great deal of trust in me.
- My supervisors appreciate it when I work hard
- I am often able to plan my work on my own.
- I have a good salary.
- Even working part-time, I earn enough to make a good living.
- I can change jobs if I wish to learn something new.
- I can plan my career and progress step-by-step.
- I can pursue more advanced training.
- If I like, I can do something entirely different, change occupational fields and start a new training programme.

I get a job without skills development

- I earn money right away.
- I do the same thing every day.
- My work is simple and it didn't take me long to learn the ropes.
- My work is more physically demanding than that of my co-workers who did an apprenticeship.
- I rarely get a pay increase.
- Even if I change jobs, my income will not increase.
- Even if I change jobs, my work will not become more interesting.
- Everyone else tells me what I have to do.
- I am often bored.
- I am unable to pursue more advanced training because I lack initial training
- If business is slow, then my trained co-workers are less likely than I am to be laid off.
- If I become unemployed, it will be difficult for me to find a new job. There are no longer many jobs for unskilled workers.