



The apprenticeship project 16+ by the Swiss Conference of Gender Equality motivates girls to choose open-mindedly their further education and boys to develop broader perspectives for life.

A project within the framework of the second federal order of apprenticeship of the Federal Office for Professional Education and Technology OPET

From School to Occupation

Information for parents (englisch)

Dear Parents

You have a daughter or a son in the 7th, 8th, 9th or 10th class. Your son or your daughter must now decide on -an occupation or a school for further education.

The perspective of a broad variety of occupations and a carefully-considered career plan can lead to successful entry into the job market. The open-minded choice of further education is particularly important for girls in order to be trained for an occupation which has a future.

School and vocational guidance assist young people in the choice of training. However, the responsibility as well as the principal work remain with those concerned. Therefore your son or your daughter must do a lot for himself or herself, until he or she finds a place for further education.

For many, this is difficult. There is a lot that they have never done before. It is, therefore, very important for mothers and fathers to support their children.

How does the school help?

The school prepares students from the 8th and 9th classes for the choice of an occupation or a school for further education. Ask the teacher what exactly this preparation is.

How does the vocational guidance help?

The vocational information centres (BIZ) provide information about all kinds of occupations and trainings. Students can receive advice during a personal discussion at the vocational guidance offices. This service is free of charge.

What must young people do for themselves?

LOOK FOR SUPPORT AND ACCEPT HELP

Linda wants to be a poly-mechanic. „Good heavens“, says her father. „In our culture women do not learn men’s jobs.“ Even her brother – himself in the fourth year of apprenticeship as a poly-mechanic - confirms: „That won’t do. You will only work with men for the whole day. You would not like it. You would not have anybody to talk to. To be accepted by your colleagues you will have to work harder than all of them. I know that because there is a woman with us who is learning to be an electrician .“

In spite of these objections, Linda applied to do a trial practical work experience. „In one way you were both right“, said Linda at the end of her trial week.. „I am the only girl in the firm. But that is all the same to me. I like the work with machines and the work with metal. I want to be a poly-mechanic. If you will both support me, I know I can manage it.“

Get to know myself

What do I enjoy doing (general interests, hobbies, favourite school subjects)? What am I good at in school, what have I learnt in my free time or from my family? e.g. to speak other languages, repair household equipment, look after children, mend bicycles, do the shopping.

- ✓ Discuss jobs with my parents and ask them: what kind of work would suit me?
- ✓ Ask the teacher: am I good enough in German, French, mathematics? Where are my weak points? In school, how can I prepare for further education?

Get to know occupations!

What kind of occupations are there? What does one do there? What kind of interests are required? What do I need to be good at?

- ✓ Go to the BIZ, get information, read about different kinds of occupations, look at videos
- ✓ Make an appointment with the vocational guidance officer and ask: am I sufficiently well prepared for the occupation I would like to learn? What can I do if I have gaps in my knowledge?
- ✓ Go to exhibitions about occupations and vocational trainings
- ✓ Get some trial practical work experience

Choosing an occupation or school

Do my interests and abilities match the requirements of my dream job?

- ✓ Choose an occupation that suits you with at least 1 or 2 alternatives or choose a school for further education

Make enquiries and learn from them

Django has only lived in Switzerland for a little while and goes to the C Sec. That limits his choice of further education a great deal. His dream was to become a chemistry laboratory assistant. In spite of his schooling handicap, he applied for an apprenticeship. The firm offered him a trainee job as a technical employee. His parents thought he should do this training, for then he would at least have found his way into the workforce. „But I can do much better. I know it,” he complained. After much discussion in the family, Django called the trainee department and asked what he was lacking for an apprenticeship as a laboratory assistant. The reply was that he was very weak in his knowledge of mathematics and German.

His parents paid for courses at a private school. He studied and studied. After a few months he contacted the trainee department and was able to repeat his aptitude test. He got such good marks that Django's contract as a technician was changed into an apprenticeship as a chemistry laboratory assistant..

Look for a place for further education

(generally in the Autumn of the 9th class)

- ✓ Where are there trainee positions in which I can learn my chosen occupation?
- ✓ Where are the schools for further education?
- ✓ What must I do to get a trainee position?

At the second attempt

Actually, Hyrie knew exactly what she wanted to learn: to be an engineering draftswoman. Her father found her some trial practical experience through colleagues of a friend. „She certainly has talent;” agreed the architect after the trial week. “But employ her! She always waited until we explained something to her. She never asked any questions herself.” Her father was very disappointed.

And so Hyrie ended up with a year's training as a housekeeper and looked after four children. “That was O.K., she said. „I like children. However, I realised that I could not spend my entire life as a housekeeper. It was clear to me that I would have to do something for myself if I still wanted to realize my dream.”

She plucked up her courage and asked the architect if she could do another practical trial in his office. He agreed but said that that particular year he did not have an apprenticeship position. This time Hyrie did so well that not only her father but also the architect supported her to find an apprenticeship. Now Hyrie is learning to be an engineering draftswoman.

To choose an occupation or a school for further education needs time. Your son or your daughter need your support.

You can help your son or daughter

As parents, you have various possibilities for actively assisting your son or daughter in the choice of a career or the search for an apprenticeship.

Go to parents' meetings at the school

You receive important information at parents' meetings concerning the sensible approach to the choice of career or search for apprenticeships. An insight into the Swiss system for choosing a career is obtained and you find out how your son or daughter will be supported by the school in the choice of an occupation. In addition, you can discuss experiences with other parents of children in the same age group, who are also apprenticeship-hunting.

Use your own network

Use the contacts you have in your workplace, club, society or circle of acquaintances and tell everybody that your son or daughter is looking for an apprenticeship as.... . Perhaps somebody knows of a business with an apprenticeship available or offers to act as the contact person.

Encourage your daughter or your son

Finding an apprenticeship in today's economic climate is not easy. In times like these, your son or daughter needs to show a great deal of initiative and to consistently make every effort. Share his or her experiences. Show your sympathy if there is great disappointment following a negative response. Give him or her the courage to try again at another place.

Dealing with negative replies

If your son or daughter constantly receives negative replies to applications for apprenticeships, it is worthwhile carefully reconsidering the choice of occupation. Perhaps there are less well-known occupations linked to the dream job which would be of equal interest and suitability for your son or daughter. Get in touch with the vocational guidance officer. These counsellors will help you and your son or daughter until a good solution is found.

Bridging courses

Perhaps in spite of intensive efforts, for the time being your son or daughter is unable to find an apprenticeship or possibly still has certain deficiencies in his or her schooling which need to be remedied. Then, following the obligatory school education, it is perhaps initially worthwhile to undertake a suitable bridging course. As a rule, bridging courses last one year and prepare students for entry into the job market. Find out from the vocational guidance officers about the various courses available and the possible cost. Note that it is often necessary to register for a bridging course in February. Should your son or daughter subsequently find an apprenticeship, you can always cancel his or her registration for the course.