

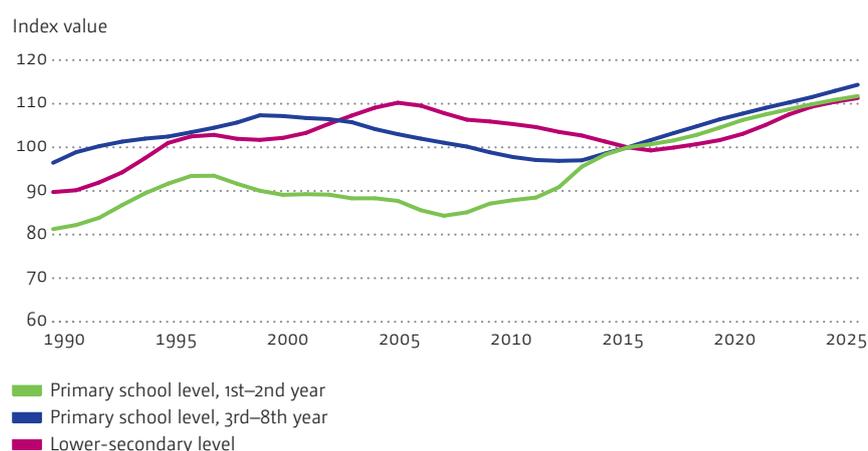
Intercantonal Conference of the Public Education System in French-speaking Switzerland and Ticino (CIIP) at the same time as signing the HarmoS Agreement (CIIP, 2007). In its Annual Report 2015, the *Convention scolaire romande* showed that regional cooperation had resulted in the comprehensive introduction of the *Plan d'études romand* (PER) and the *Piano di studio* curricula. Cooperation has also been achieved in the training and further education of teachers and an agreement on objectives, priorities and the implementation of the *épreuves romandes communes* joint examinations (CIIP, 2015).

Development of pupil numbers

The forecasts of the Federal Statistical Office (FSO) indicate that demographic change is a major factor affecting compulsory education, alongside structural and institutional change. Since 2017, the number of pupils attending compulsory education in Switzerland has been rising. This development will continue for at least ten years. The latest figures in the reference scenario predict a 12% (20 000) increase in pupil numbers in the first and second years at primary school level by 2025 compared with 2015. A 14% (67 600) rise is forecast over the same period at years 3 to 8 of the primary school level, while the estimates also indicate 12% (29 000) additional pupils at lower-secondary level (→ Figure 23). These trends differ strongly at cantonal level. The reference scenario predicts growth to be highest in the cantons of Basel-Stadt (22%) and Zurich (18%), in contrast to Neuchâtel (−0.5%) and Uri (−2%), where numbers are projected to fall (FSO, 2015b) (→ *chapter Primary school level, page 51*).

23 Development of pupil numbers in compulsory education, 1990–2025, reference scenario, index 2015 = 100

Data: FSO



The assumed average growth of 116 600 pupils between 2015 and 2025 will affect the infrastructure (school buildings) and result in a greater need for teachers. Assuming a constant degree of employment of teachers, around 11 000 additional teachers (7980 full-time workload) will be required by 2025. As a comparative figure: this corresponds roughly to twice of the graduates from the universities of teacher education in 2015 (→ *chapter Universities of teacher education, page 241*). Assum-

ing that that around 55 per cent of lower secondary school-leavers will opt for dual-track vocational education and training (VET), an additional 19 330 apprenticeship places will be needed in 2025 than in 2015 (→ *chapter Vocational education and training, page 111*).

Challenges for the Swiss education system

Among the many issues currently occupying education policymakers and administrators, migration and digitalisation are the two that predominate.

Many studies have long revealed a series of disadvantages suffered by migrants in compulsory education, such as entry to primary school level and in transition (increased repetition of the first years of the primary school level). Despite the various measures to support migrants, including German as a second language and *Corsi di lingua e cultura di paesi d'origine* (LCO), their performance at school is lower and they are over-represented in schools with lower requirements (*Cattaneo & Wolter, 2015; Meunier, 2011; Kronig, 2007; Lanfranchi, 2005, 2007; Becker, 2005*). Nevertheless, a migration background on its own is not an indicator of actual migration-specific disadvantage, since migrants may differ from Swiss-born pupils in many other aspects that impact their progress at school, such as level of parents' education and language spoken at home. Statistical coverage of this information is frequently patchy, and as a result a migration background is sometimes unjustifiably identified as a reason for differences at school, instead of social status or the level of education in the family.

The migrant population is also very diverse, not only in relation to the length of residence in Switzerland (first generation vs. second, third or even fourth generation) but also in terms of geographic origin (neighbouring countries vs. geographically and culturally distant countries of origin). According to Swiss Structural Survey, 32.2% of 15 to 17-year olds have a migration background. When this is broken down to first-generation migrant families, the figure falls to 13.9%. However, when only considering the nationality of the young people, 21.8% are foreign citizens, although many were born in Switzerland. More detailed research into questions about the integration of migrants would require better statistical data to include language, cultural origin, socio-economic background and length of residence in the country.

The arrival of asylum-seeking minors who are subject to compulsory education has been a new challenge for the Swiss education system, and the phenomenon cannot yet be adequately described by statistics in terms of school performance and general problems. It is equally dubious whether the experience with the integration of children who have arrived in Switzerland predominantly because of their parents' work can provide answers to the challenges arising from the integration of asylum seekers at school. In some cantons the existing knowledge has been documented in publications on «Refugee children in compulsory education» (e.g. in the cantons of Lucerne, Bern and Zurich).

The rapid progress of digitalisation is an additional challenge (→ *chapter General context of the Swiss education system, page 13*). It affects both teachers and pupils, as well as the education system itself. Teachers require training and further education to acquire the skills required to meet changing demands in the classroom and to handle the potential consequences for their