

NEET-YOUTH IN AUSTRIA

WITH A SPECIAL FOCUS ON MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

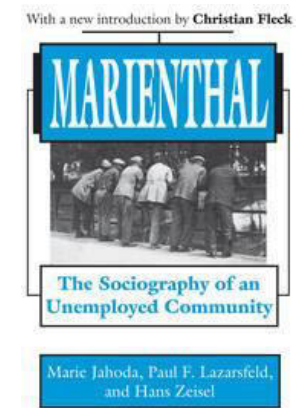
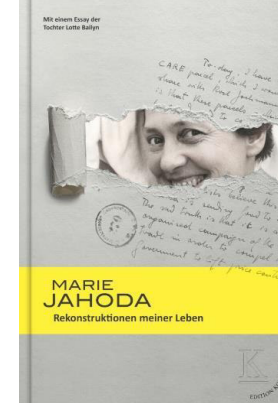
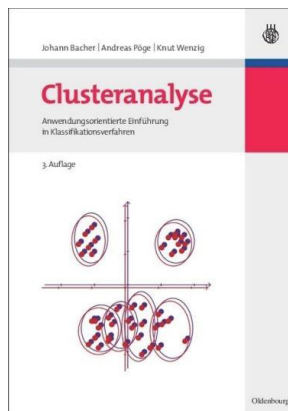


NEET = neither employed
nor involved in education or training

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OVERVIEW

- History, Aim and Definition of the NEET-Concept
- Measurement and NEET-Rates in Europe
- NEETs in AUSTRIA
- NEET-Status and Mental Health
- Programs and Measures to combat NEET including examples
- Conclusion

1. HISTORY, AIM AND DEFINITION

Origin of NEET-Concept

- Mid-1980s, Great Britain: marginalized youth, non-registered → Category “0” (ZERO)
- Mid-1990s, Great Britain: Term “0” is stigmatizing → NEET (Shortcut for neither in employment nor in education or training)

Spread

- Since 2000: (global) spread
- 2008: OECD → social indicator
- 2010: EU → new official indicator
- 2010/11: Austria (see below)

Hikikomori (Japanese: ひきこもり or 引きこもり, lit. known as **severe social withdrawal**,^{[1][2][3][4][5]} is tot extreme degrees of **social isolation** and confinement.

Source:
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hikikomori>



A young Japanese man living as a hikikomori in 2004

also
king
phenomenon

2. MEASUREMENT AND NEET-RATES IN EUROPE

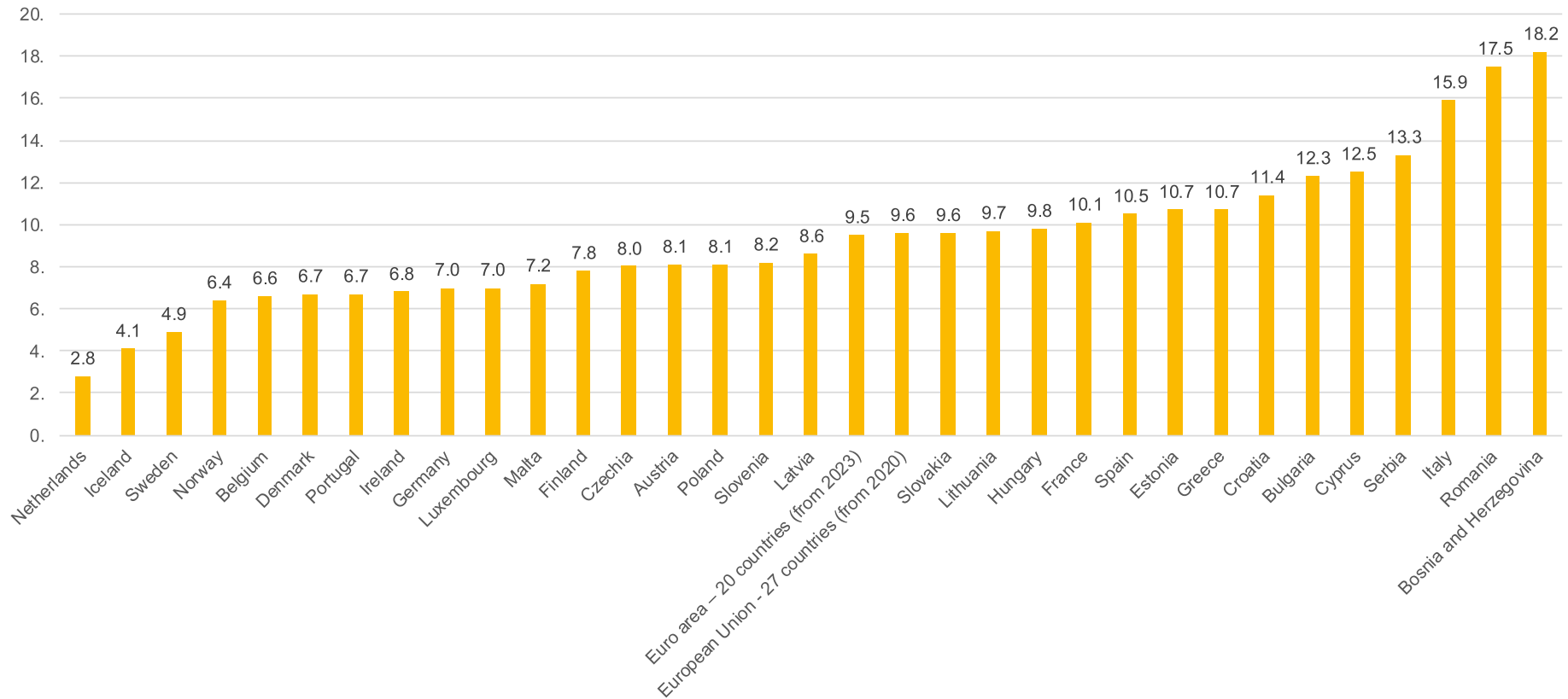
Measurement

- ☐ Data: ILFS (International Labor Force Survey)
- ☐ Age-Group: 15-24, 15-29 and 15-34, young people in civilian or military service are excluded
- ☐ Not employed → unemployed or inactive according to the International Labor Organization definition (employed = working in the reference week for one hour and more)
- ☐ not involved in education or training → formal or non-formal education or training in the four weeks preceding the survey
- ☐ Reports on percentage not absolute numbers

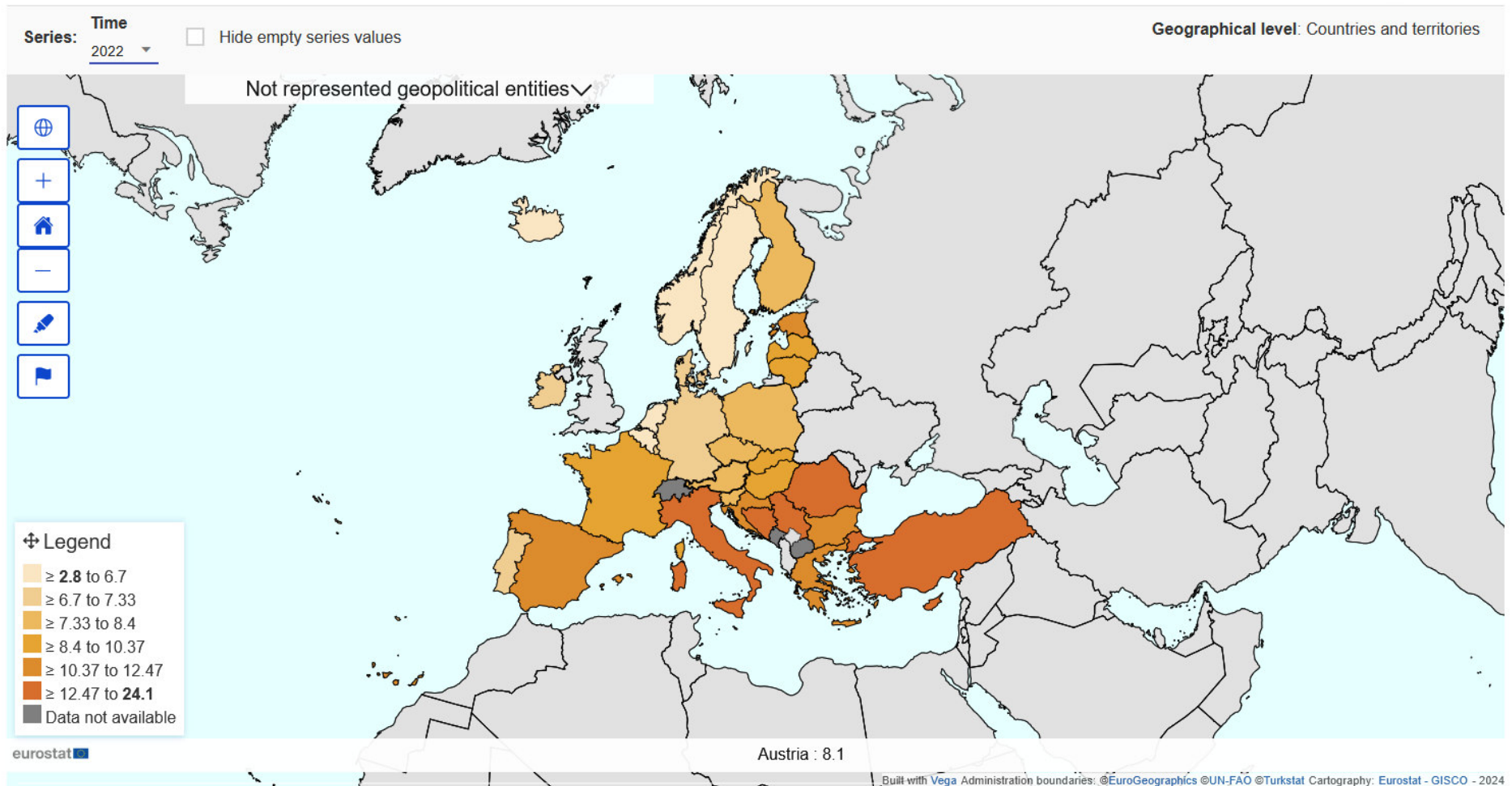
Publications

- ☐ Eurostat: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Statistics on young people neither in employment nor in education or training](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Statistics_on_young_people_neither_in_employment_nor_in_education_or_training)
- ☐ Eurofound: <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/en/home>

NEET-Rates, 15- to 24-Year-Olds, 2022



Source: Young people neither in employment nor in education and training by sex, age and country of birth (NEET rates) [edat_lfse_28__custom_15363938]



3. NEETs IN AUSTRIA

Austria → NEET-concept unknown until 2010/11 → Bacher / Tamesberger (2011)

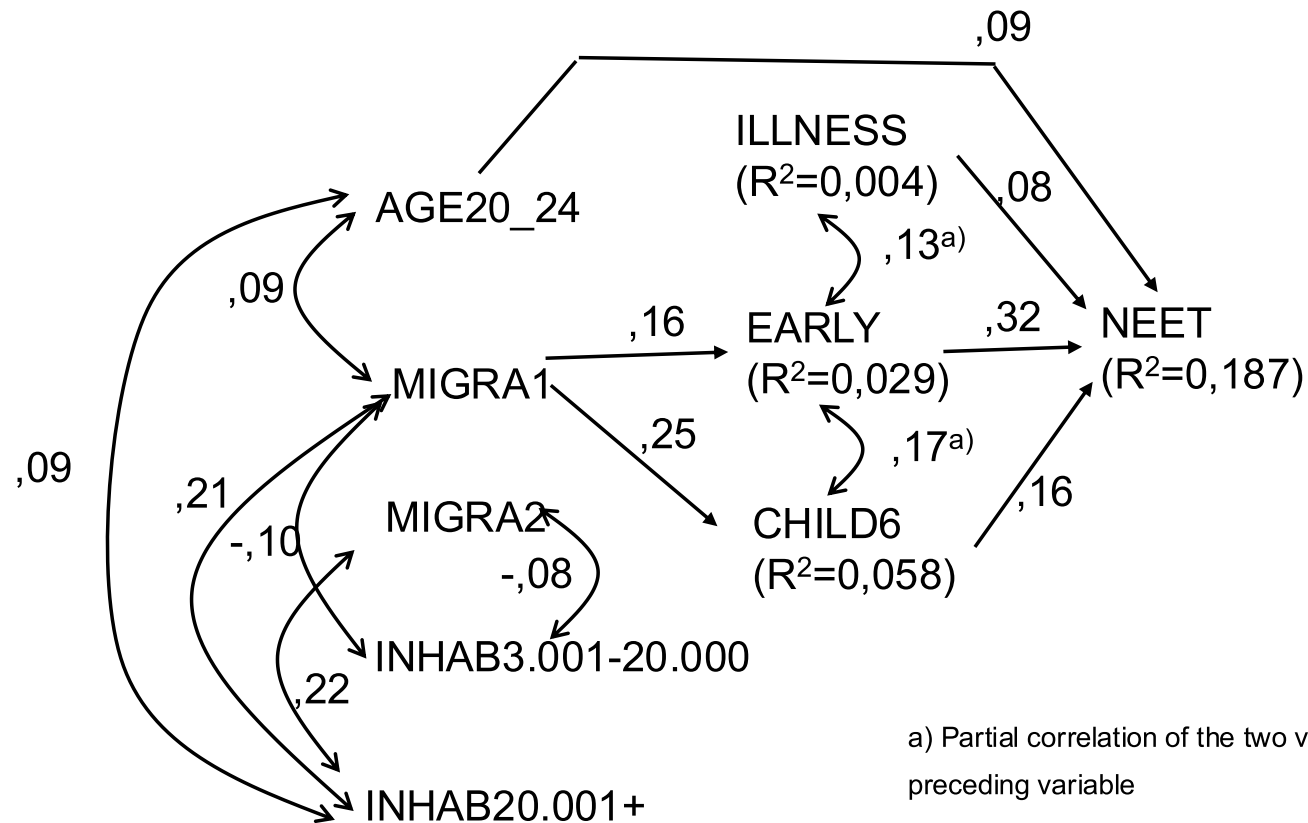
- ☐ Large public and political interest
 - Absolute number, general interest of politics and public in youth, social exclusion
- ☐ 1st NEET-Study (2011-2013, Bacher et al. 2014)
 - Mixed-Method-Design: quantitative secondary-analysis of ILFS (approx. n=75,000 young people in the age of 15 to 24 years, 2006-2011) + qualitative interviews with NEET-youths (n=60 qualitative interviews) + workshop on results with experts (approx. n=40 experts)
 - Number and socio-demographic characteristics, duration and reasons of NEET-status, measures
- ☐ 2nd NEET-Study (2015-2016, Bacher et al. 2016)
 - Health status of young people and NEETs and overview about psycho-social services in Upper Austria
 - Mixed-Method-Design: literature review (65 sources) + quantitative secondary-analysis (ILFS additional module approx. n=3,200 young people in the age of 15 to 24 years) + analysis of register/administrative-data (approx. n=100,000 young people in the age of 15 to 24 years) + qualitative secondary analysis of interviews with NEET-youths (n=24) + qualitative interviews with experts (n=12)
- ☐ Further studies and papers on ESL, NEET, youth unemployment etc.
- ☐ Two indicators: EU-Indicator plus national indicator (based on register/administrative-data)

4. NEETs IN AUSTRIA (2023)

15- to 24-year-olds	Austria	Upper Austria	Vienna
Total	930,400	158,100	220,800
...in civilian or military service	22,100	3,200	3,600
Total without civilian or military service	908,300	154,900	217,200
in NEET	78,900 (8.7%)	11,800 (7.6%)	26,800 (12.3%)
...active NEET	33,900 (43.0%)	5,000 (42.4%)	12,500 (46.6%)
...inactive NEET	45,000 (57.0%)	6,800 (57.6%)	14,300 (53.4%)

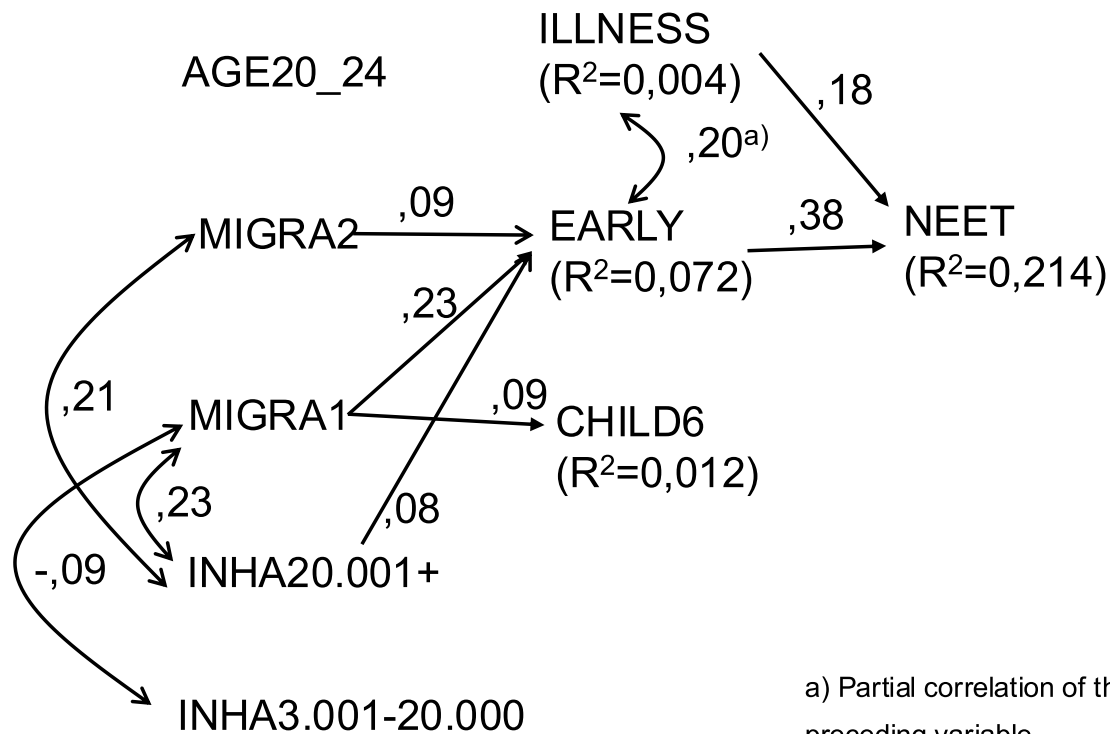
Source: MZ2023, calculation by the author

MAIN CAUSES FOR FEMALE YOUNG PEOPLE



a) Partial correlation of the two variables under control of the preceding variable

MAIN CAUSES FOR MALE YOUNG PEOPLE



a) Partial correlation of the two variables under control of the preceding variable

Source: MZ2023, calculation by the author

4. NEET-STATUS AND MENTAL HEALTH

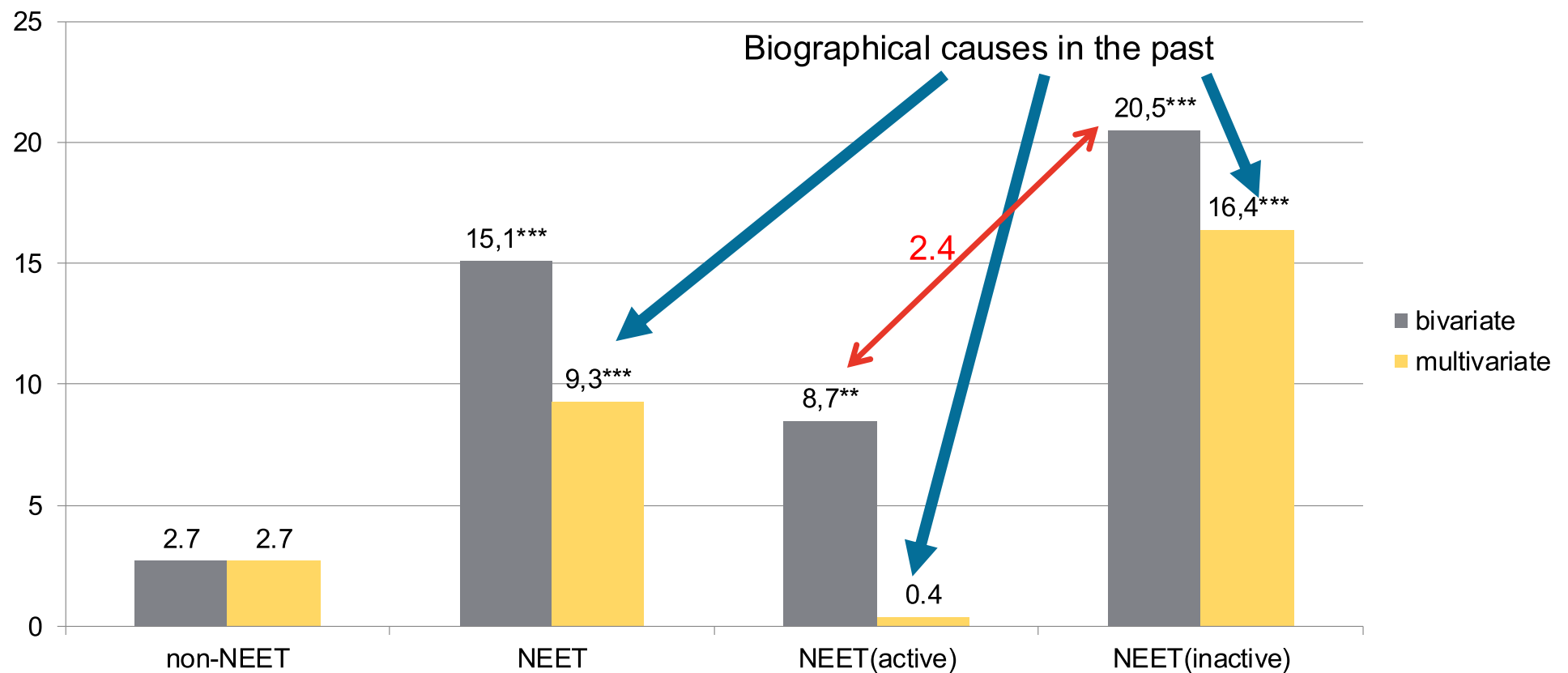
Long-term impairments/illnesses

Mental / Psychological impairments	Physical impairments
<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Learning disabilities– Anxiety disorders– Depression– Other mental health problems– Other long-term health problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Problems with arms, hands– Problems with legs, feet– Problems with back, neck– Skin diseases– Problems with heart, blood pressure, circulation– Problems with chest, breathing– Problems with stomach, liver, kidneys, digestion– Diabetes– Cancer– Epilepsy– Severe headaches– other progressive diseases

Source: Bacher et al. (2016, 2022)

Definition: Long-term impairments/illnesses are those that last or are expected to last for at least six months.

PERMANENT PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPAIRMENTS OF 15- TO 24-YEAR-OLDS



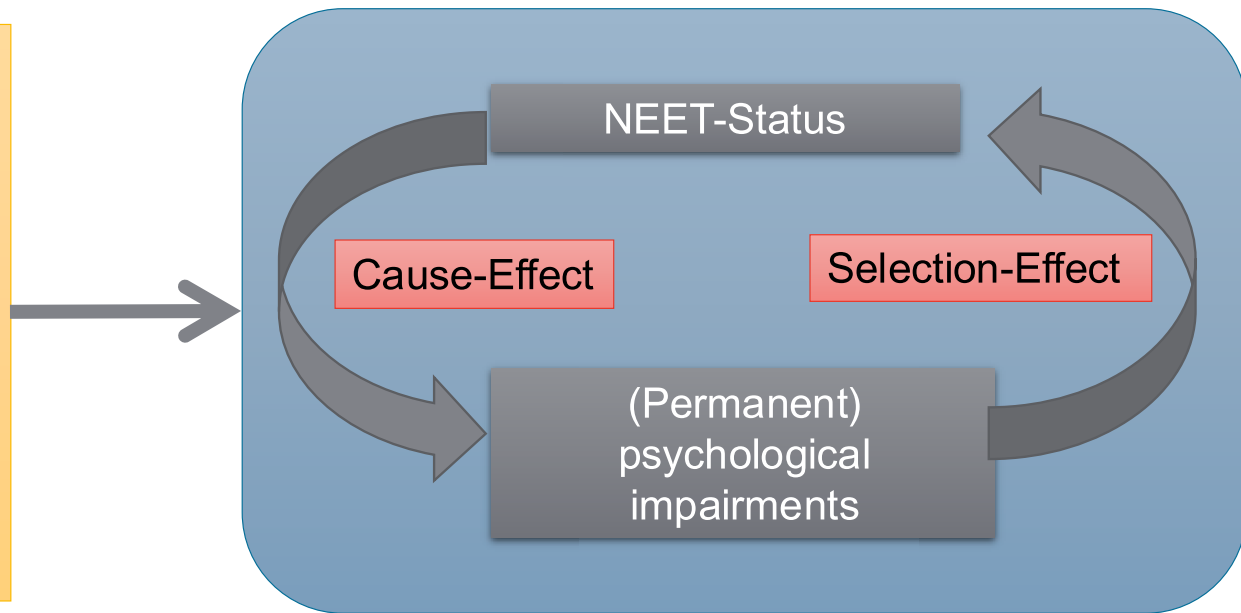
CAUSAL MODEL

Biographical causes in the past

Accumulation of risk factors with limited resources and late intervention

Risk factors in

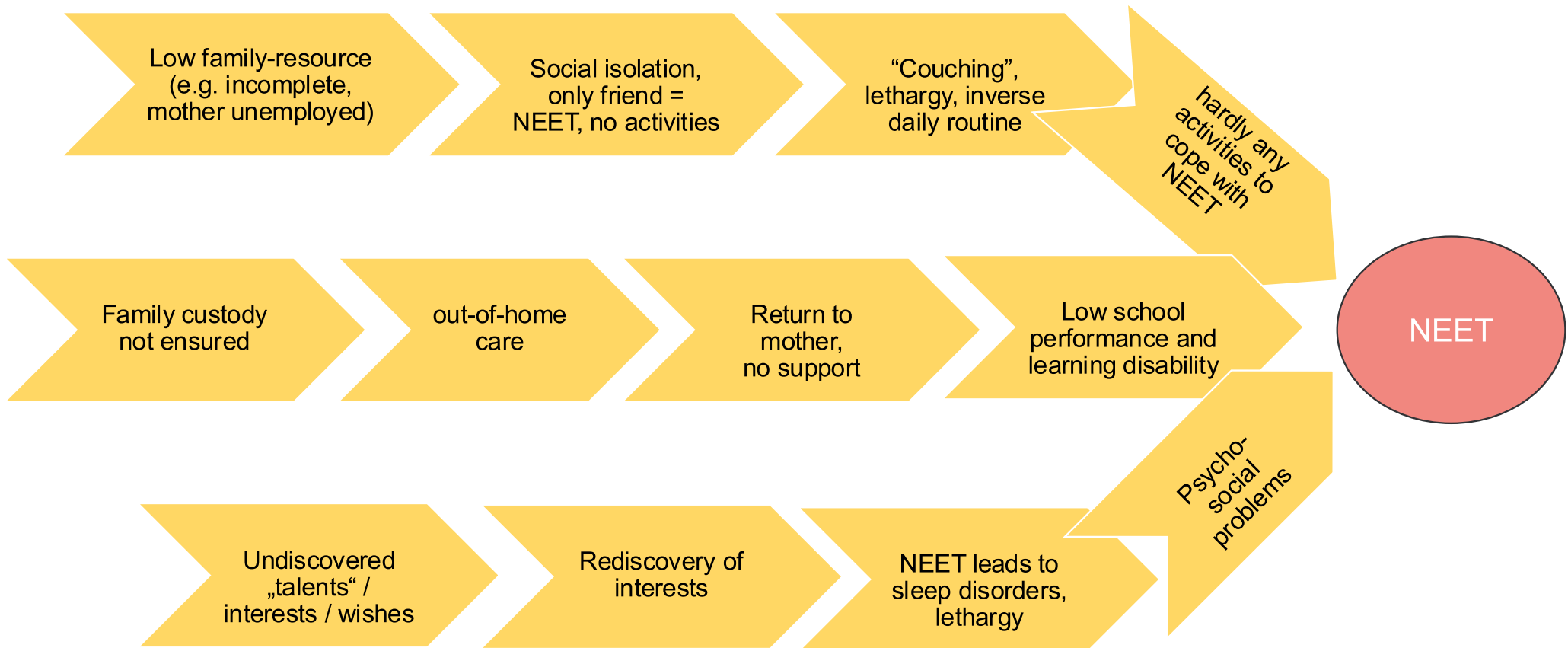
- family
- school
- peers



Causal model is confirmed by qualitative interviews and administrative data

- **Qualitative data:** Accumulation of risk factors and low resources (protective factors), biographically early occurrence of risk factors, late interventions
- **Administrative data:** Early onset, interplay between unemployment and psychological impairments

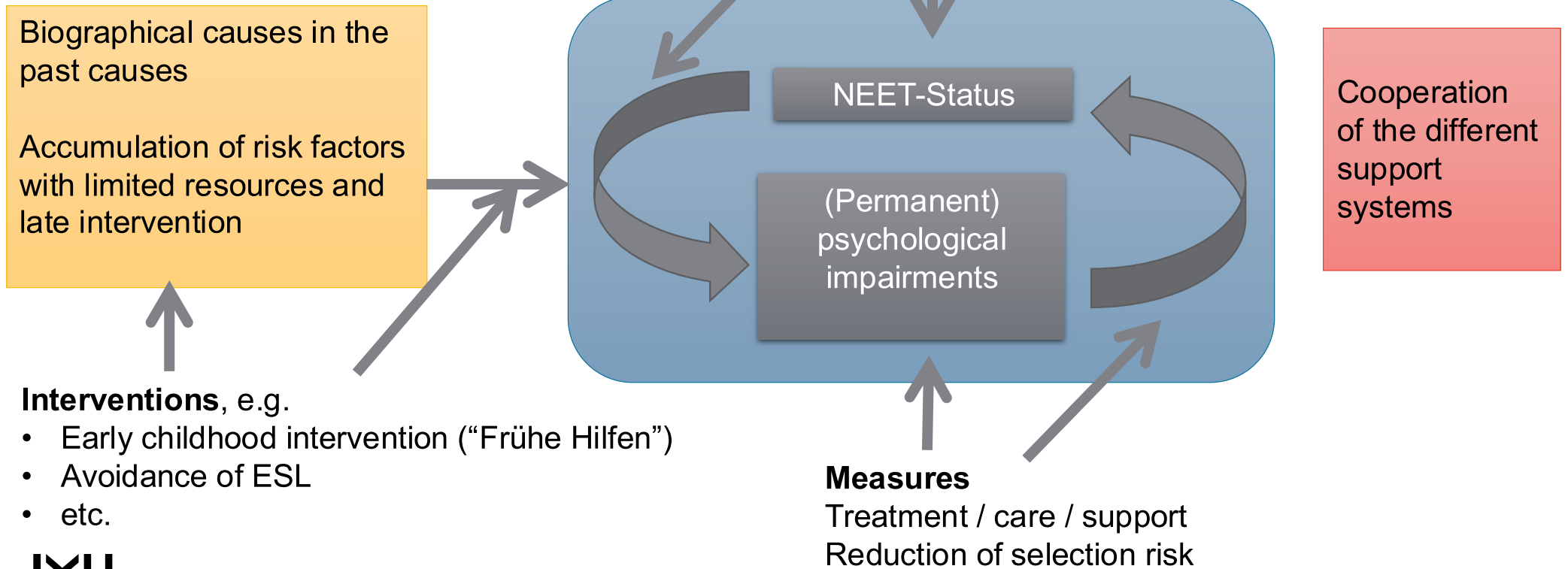
CASE-STUDY EVA, 16 YEARS OLD



MEASURES

Measures

- Employment/training/staying in the system
- Psychosocial support in NEET status



SOME EXAMPLES OF EARLY INTERVENTION

Early childhood intervention (“Frühe Hilfen”)

- 2009 founding of the Family Network in Vorarlberg
- 2011 development of model for Austria by “Gesundheit Österreich GmbH” (GÖG)
- 2015 establishment and expansion of regional early help networks in all Austrian federal states, Austrian National Centre for Early Childhood Interventions (NZFH.at)
- 2022 – 2024 roll-out (financed by funds from the European Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF))

<https://nzfh.at/fruehe-hilfen>

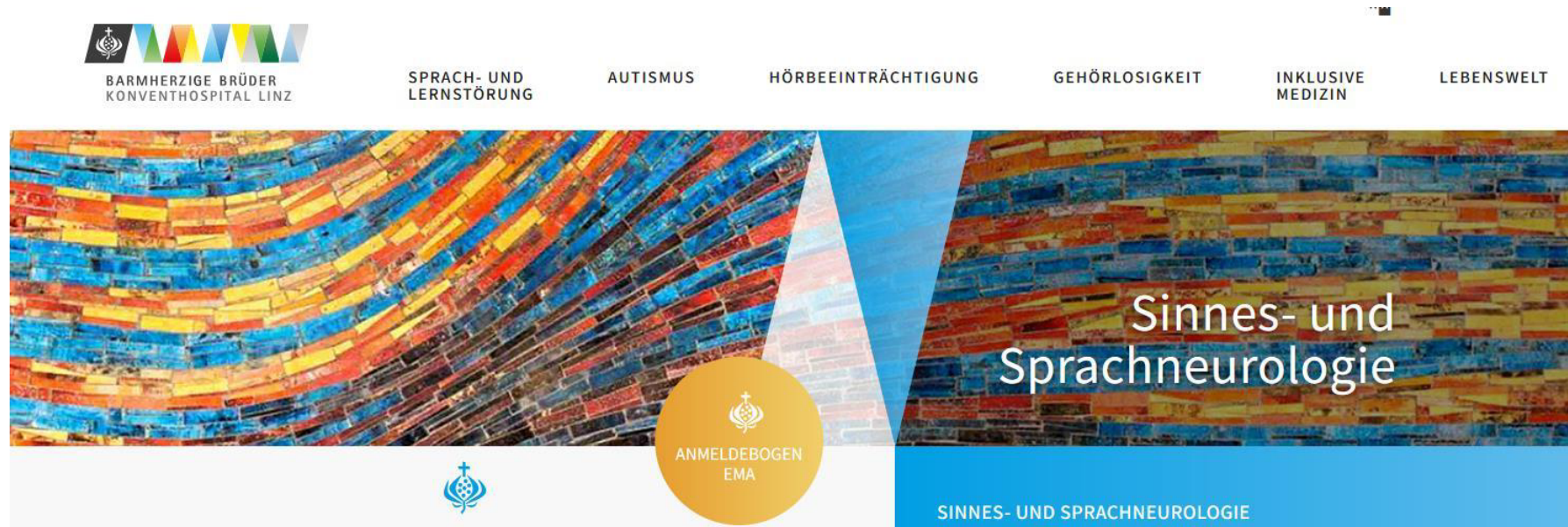
<https://maps.goeg.at/fruehe-hilfen-netzwerke>

https://nzfh.at/sites/nzfh.at/files/inline-files/Evaluation_RRF_Fru%CC%88he_Hilfen_Endbericht_prospect.pdf

SOME EXAMPLES OF EARLY INTERVENTION

Institute of Sensory Neurology and Language Neurology (Prim. Holzer, founder Prim. Fellingner)

- supports people with problems in the areas of communication, speech, hearing and learning and their environment to develop their personal potential through diagnostic, therapeutic, social and educational services <https://www.barmherzige-brueder.at/portal/issn>



SUPPORT-STRUCTURE AND PROGRAMS FOR ADOLESCENTS

- Compulsory training until the age of 18 (“Ausbildungspflicht bis 18”) and training guarantee until the age of 25 (“Ausbildungsgarantie bis 25”)
- Youth coaching (“Jugendcoaching”)
- Medical services provided by the healthcare system (e.g. adolescent psychiatry, “Jugendpsychiatrie”)
- Offers from the psycho-social support system (e.g. open youth work, counseling and support services --> Pro-Mente: resp@ct, “Institut für Suchtprävention”, etc.)
- School services (e.g. school social work, school psychology)
- Offers from the labor market service (e.g. counseling, financial support, financing of courses)

PRO MENTE OÖ: RESP@CT/START.BOX

- ESF funding between 2017-2019, further funding until 2022
- Low-threshold services with group and individual support
- Open access, interface between youth coach and other facilities (production school, apprenticeship, etc.)
- Multi-professional team with many additional qualifications,
- Involvement of a volunteer employee
- Now: e.g. Start.Box

RESP@CT



pro mente | jugend

Unsere Angebote

Home > start.box

”

Wir stärken dich und zeigen dir,
wie du Probleme lösen kannst!“

**start.box – Zentrum für psychi-
sche Gesundheit junger Menschen**

SUMMARY AND CHALLENGES

- **NEET** refers to an important social problem, namely **social exclusion** of young people
- **NEET** and social exclusion are associated with high **economic, social and political costs** for the young people, their families, the economy and the society
- **NEET-indicator** partially covers the social problem of social exclusion
 - **Advantages**
 - Includes young people at risk of exclusion who are not unemployed or registered as unemployed
 - **Disadvantages**
 - Includes young people not at risk of exclusion (e.g. school leavers waiting to go to university; young mothers with an academic degree, ...)
 - Does not include all young people at risk of exclusion (e.g. “working poor”, homeless young people)
 - Stigmatization, in German: NEET → “Niete”, Ticket in a lottery that does not yield a win, “lahme Ente” (lame duck)
- **NEETs** are **heterogenous group**. Therefore, a differentiated view of NEET is required in science as well as in politics, administration and practice
- **NEETs** with **permanent psychological impairments** are one subgroup.

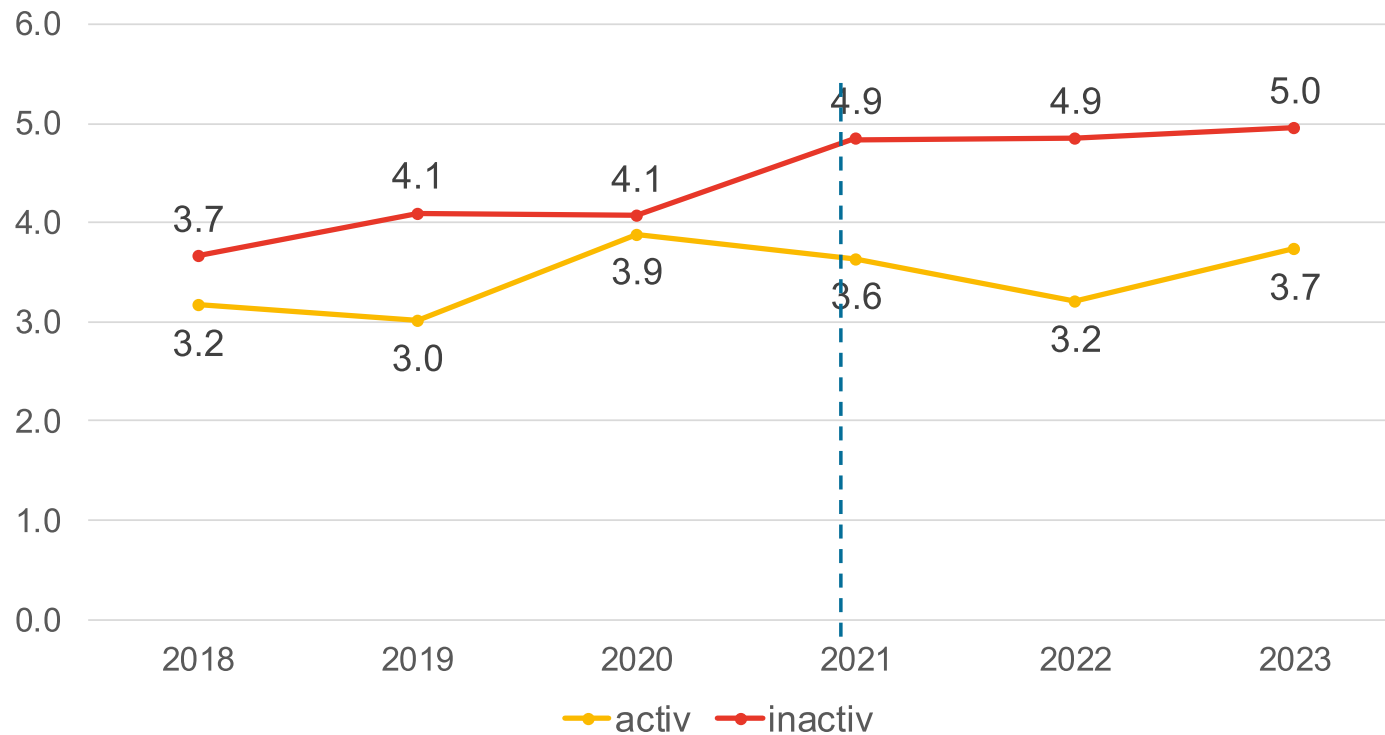
- **Causes** are very often rooted in early childhood,
 - but NEET-status strengthens mental health problems and vice versa
- **Psychological impairments** make it more difficult to leave NEET-status
- **Support-Structure** and Interventions for young people
 - Austria has good approaches, both at the legal level and at the level of implementation
 - But there is still a lot to do.
- **Major challenges**
 - Demand greater than supply → financial resources and personnel/staff
 - “Age-Boarders” → more flexible (start of “Jugendcoaching” earlier extending the age limits, lifting the 18/19-year threshold, e.g. switching from adolescent psychiatry to adult psychiatry at the age of 18)
 - Sustainability → institutionalize “projects” to avoid loss of know-how, demotivation of project manager and organization
 - Aftercare (exit of NEET-status should be sustainable)
 - Cooperation between the systems → at the operational and strategic levels
 - Participation of young people

- What is the situation in your country?
- Is the NEET phenomenon discussed?
- What challenges are seen?
- How are they dealt with?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

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NEET-RATES OF 15- TO 24-YEAR-OLDS BY YEAR (IN %)



Source: MZ2018-2023, calculation by the author

COSTS OF NEET AND OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION

- Estimation by Eurofound (2012) → gross-costs for society as a whole
- Update and expanding the costs estimate of Eurofound-Estimation → gross costs for society and state (public sector) (Bacher 2020)
- Comprehensive cost estimation (net) for early school leaving for society as a whole, those affected, the state (public sector) and companies (Bacher 2023)
- Social and political costs of early school leaving (Bacher et al. 2010, Moosbrugger et al. 2019, Kvir et al. 2025)

UPDATE AND EXPANDING THE COST ESTIMATE

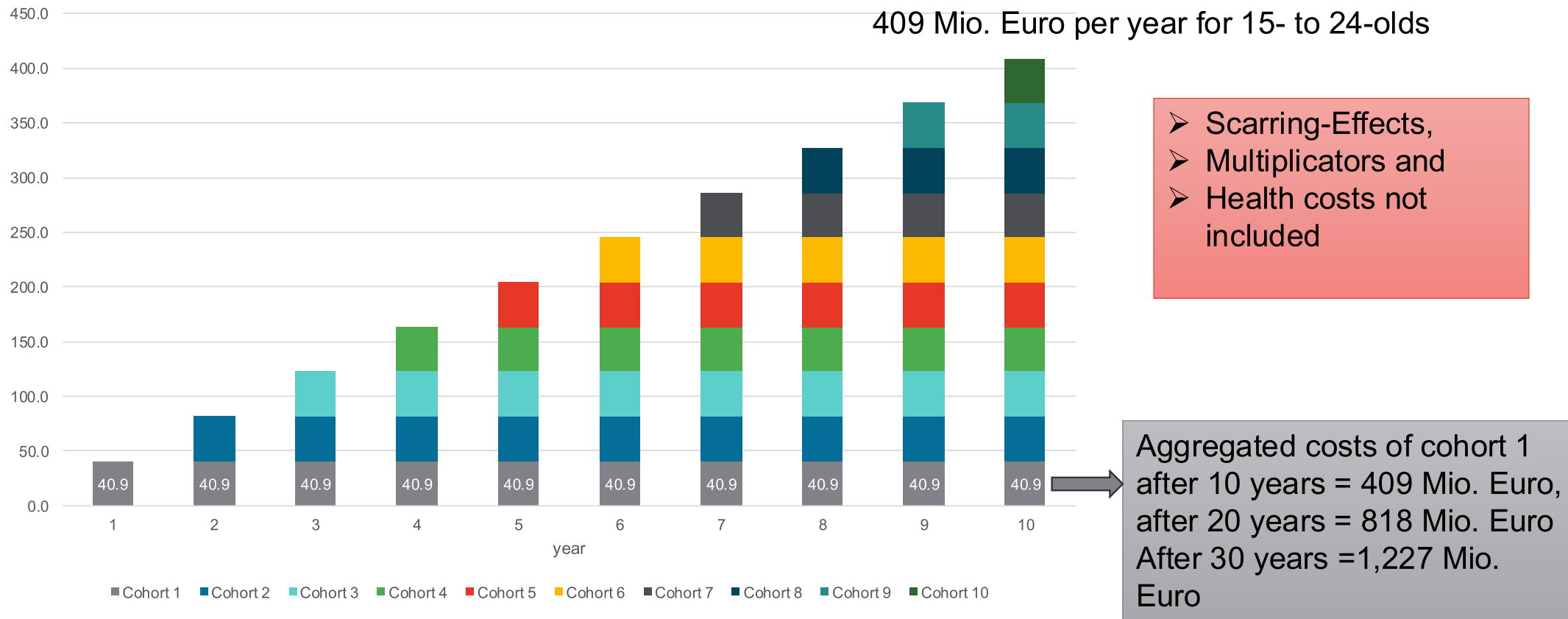
	per case	total (rounded)
NEET young people aged 15 to 24 who have not been employed for at least six months	1	43,500 cases
Income from transfer payments („unit public finance cost“)	1,271	55,300,000 €
Lost income incl. lost revenue from taxes and social contributions (“unit resource cost”)	16,520	719,400,000 €
Total costs	17,791	774,800,000 €
Loss of government revenue		
Employee: social security and income tax	2,559	111,400,000 €
Employer: social security contributions	4,635	201,900,000 €
Revenue from sales tax assuming a mixed tax rate of 16% and a savings rate of 2%	2,189	95,300,000 €
Total loss	9,383	408,600,000 €

Results for 2018

Consumer price index
2018 → 2024:

127.5

Public Cost of NEETs per Cohort 2018



RISK FACTORS

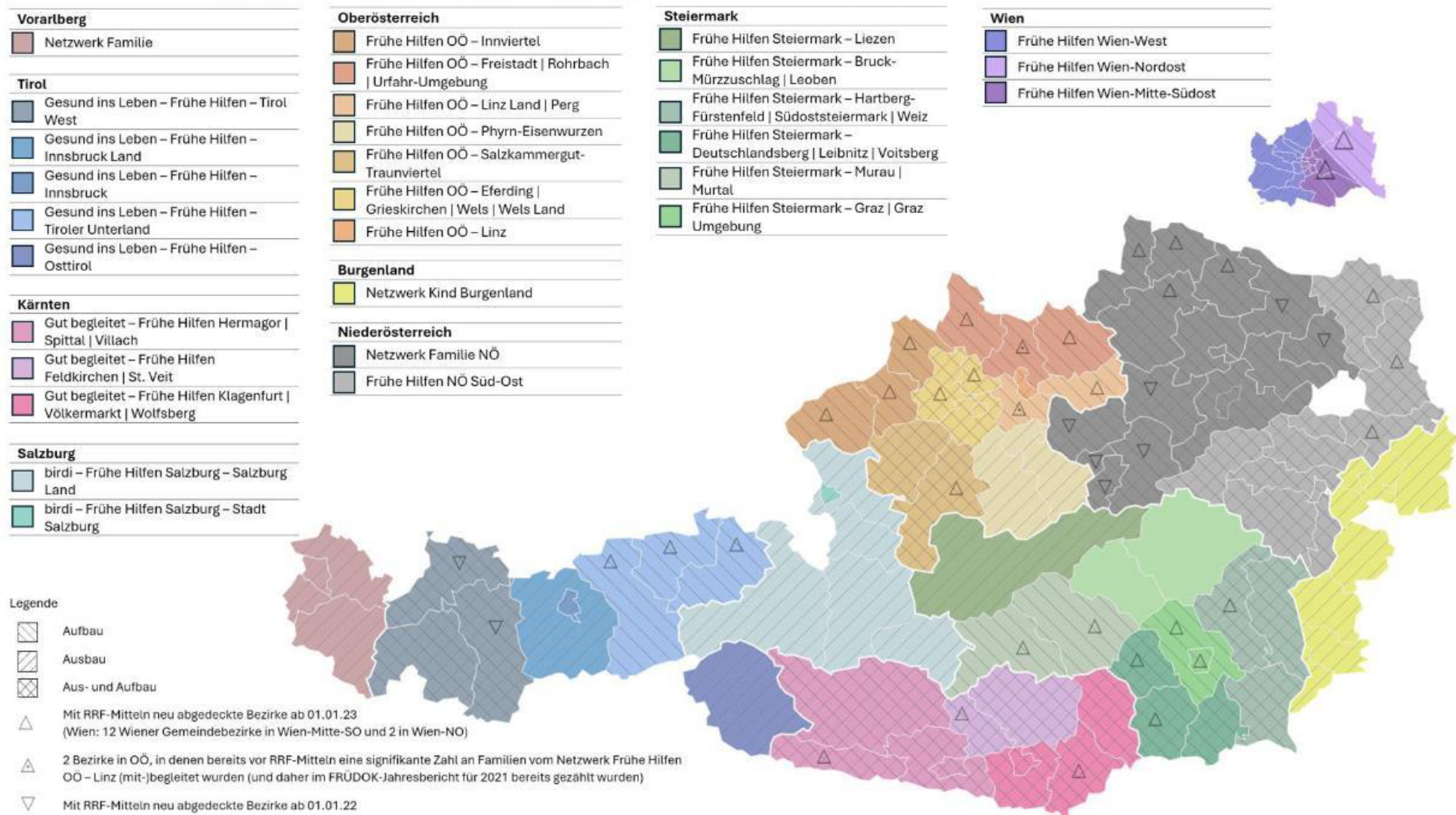
Family risk factors	Social risk factors	Personal risk factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Divorce or separation of parents – Unfavorable parenting practices – Family conflicts – Experiences of violence – Placement in out-of-home care – Low socio-economic status – Remarriage or changing partnerships of the parents – Illnesses of the parents – Losses within the family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Unfavorable peer influence – Negative school or work experiences – Unemployment – Experiences of exclusion – Frequent changes of residence – Loss of friends – Debts – Abuse to drugs – Precarious housing situation – Experiences of violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Difficult temperament – Chronic illnesses – Lack of self-confidence, self-efficacy, social skills

CHARACTERISTICS OF ADOLESCENTS AND THEIR MOTHERS AT THE TIME OF BIRTH

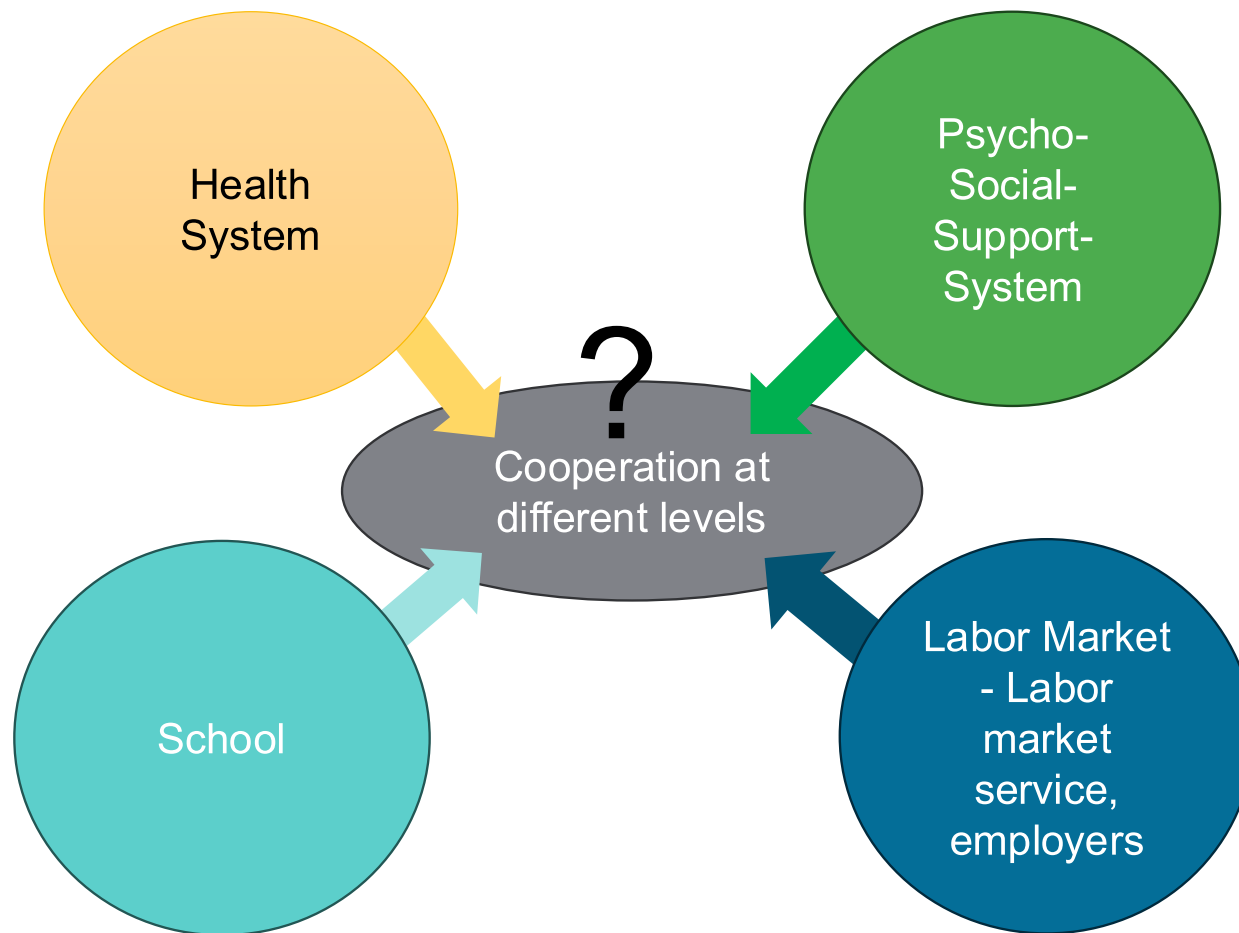
Results of analysis of administrative data

Variable	Job seeking (unemployed)	employed / dual education	difference	p-value
Birth weight (grams)	3.275	3.334	-59	0,000

Abbildung 4: Der Aus- und Aufbauprozess der regionalen Frühe-Hilfen-Netzwerke mithilfe der RRF-Mittel (Stand Mai 2024)



COOPERATION OF DIFFERENT SYSTEMS



PARTICIPATION (IN DECISION MAKING)

