

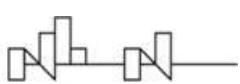


# Evaluation report of questionnaires with NEETs

L.I.K.E. Life Investment is the Key to Employment Project  
Salva Vita Foundation  
HUNGARY



Iceland  
Liechtenstein  
Norway grants



Norway grants

Salva Vita Foundation  
January 2020

## **Methodological notes**

Salva Vita Foundation cooperated with *RTG Corporate Responsibility Ltd.*<sup>1</sup> regarding the research part of the LIKE project to ensure that the research meets all the quality criterias and reach the required number of responding youngsters.

In the research, 205 NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) youngsters were interviewed using a standardized questionnaire.

The questions of the questionnaire were determined by the project leader (Bugarian SPOC oragnization), in some cases, Salva Vita added some extra answer options (mean: expanding the *other* answer options), while making sure that the structure and content of the questionnaire do not change.

The purpose of the research was to explore the quality of life, health, satisfaction, interests, desires, anxieties and attitudes of NEET youngsters, so the questionnaire included a demographic section and specific questions related to lifestyle, employment status, psychological attitudes, family relationships, environment, sources of information, health, and more.

We asked the respondents who completed the questionnaire to give us his/her contact data (phone number, e-mail address). By collecting these contacts, we wanted to prepare for the later phase of the project.

The survey was completed in November and December 2019. Preparations, close cooperation with research agency began in September, 2019. Despite of the professional background and experience of the research company, Salva Vita had to finance/offer vouchers for the respondents to encourage them to fill in the questionnaire.

Taking into consideration that the first Hidden Likes House will be in Budapest, we took the questionnaire with young people living in or near Budapest. We also carried out studies on BAG, a small village near Budapest with roma habitants, so we could reach youngsters with roma nationalty living in a rural area in difficult economic situation as well.

We have also focused on reaching youngsters with light mental issues but they were very difficult to involve in the research. Due to GDPR regulations organisations were reluctant to share data on the target group. On the other hand youngsters with serious mental problems are not in the focus of LIKE project.

Salva Vita Foundation did not intend to share this questionnaire on its webőage, although it is followed by many people with all kind of disabilities, to avoid the overrepresentation of youngsters with disabilities in the research. According to our experience, people with disabilities have very special needs and their employment requires special methods and approaches therefore Salva Vita Foundation offers several programs and projects to involve these youngsters. However, persons with disabilities were not excluded from filling in the questionnaire.

We used different techniques to recruit the questionnaire respondents:

- Some of the questionnaires were completed with the help of interviewers, visiting sites, places where NEET youth could be found (e.g. ...). So the interviewers visited such

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<sup>1</sup> <http://rtg.hu/en>

external places where more potential participants (NEETs) were present, thus these youngsters didn't need to take any additional effort to complete the questionnaires. A voucher worth 1000 HUF (approximately 2.5 EUR) was offered for participation in many cases. The youngsters, who received a voucher, were always asked by an interviewer.

- Some youth organisations supported the completion of the questionnaires: Social workers, youth workers delivered the questionnaires to the young people in the target group, either in print or on-line form.
- In several cases, questionnaires were completed on-line since Salva Vita shared the link of the on-line questionnaires on the Facebook of the Hungarian LIKE project. This link was also sent to organizations connected to NEET youngsters.

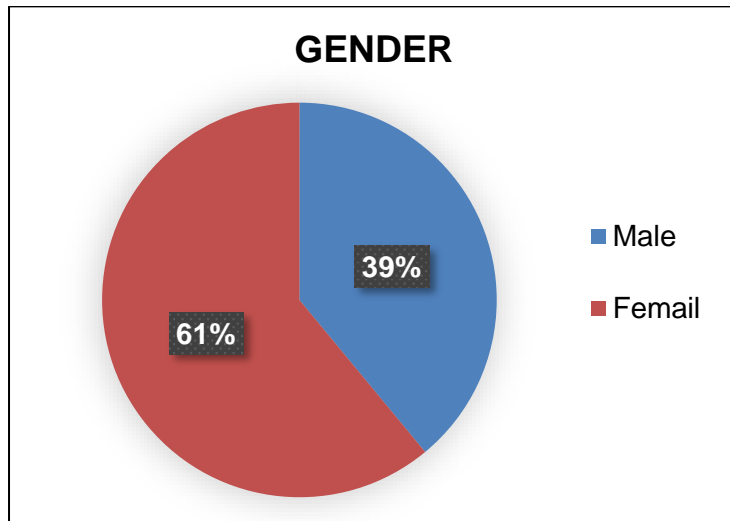
Representativeness was not expected in the case of Hungarian questionnaire research, so the data are not representative in the target group.

We suppose that groups of youngsters with addiction/mental problems, living in good social situation somewhat isolated are less represented in the study.

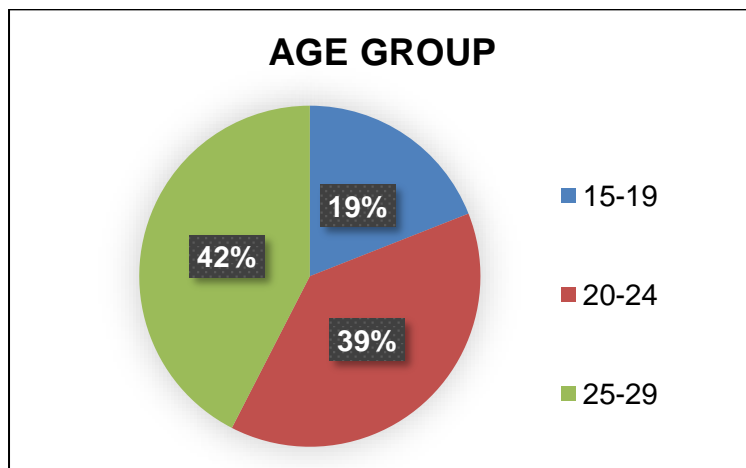
The questionnaire was part of the research process followed by focus group research and in-depth interviews so the overall results of these steps sets out a broad vision about the situation of the NEETs in Hungary.

The results of the survey are grouped into several categories as follows, thus forming the five-step model:

### **I. Gender, Age, Education, Residence, Ethnicity**



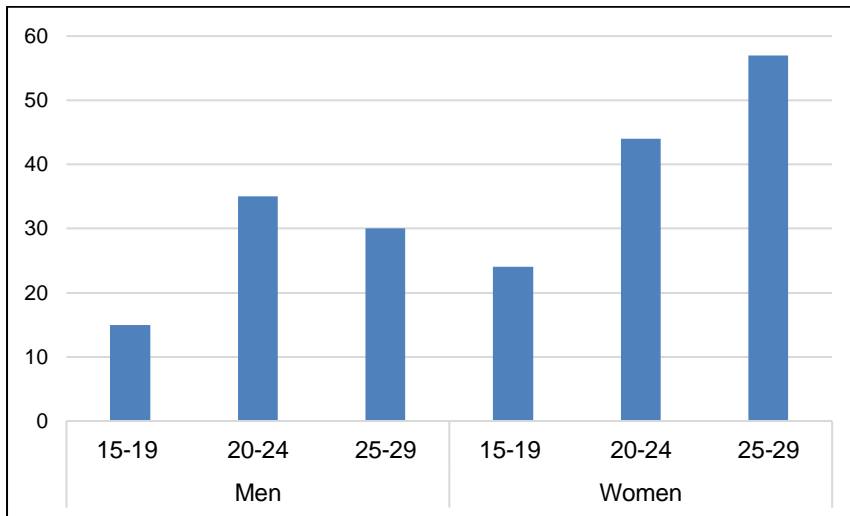
The proportion of women among respondents is 61 %. It is 12 % higher than the proportion of women in Hungary in this age group (51 % men and 49 % women<sup>2</sup>). As a result, men in this age group participated in the Hungarian research in a smaller proportion compared to their population share. We assume that women tend to face more difficulties than men in terms of education and employment in Hungary, and it was highlighted by the results of the focus group research as well.



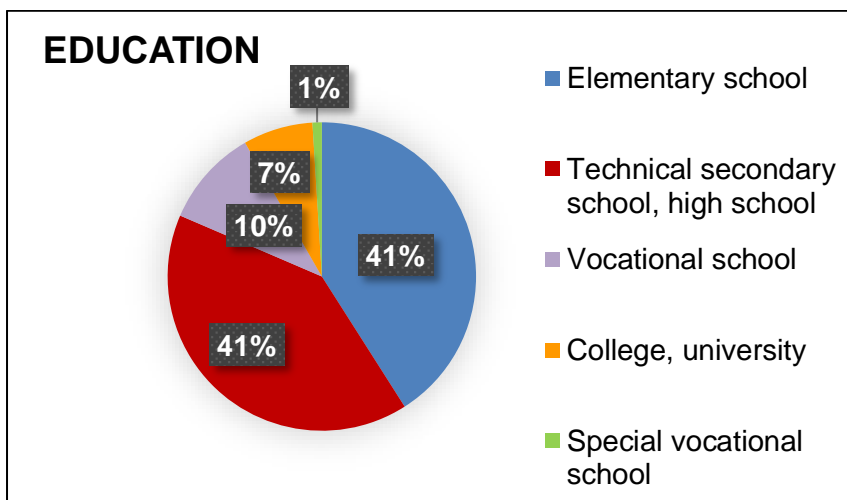
The highest percentage of respondents belong to the age group 25-29 years (42%), which corresponds to the predetermined focus of the survey. They are followed by the respondents

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.ksh.hu/nepszamlalas/tablak\\_demografia](http://www.ksh.hu/nepszamlalas/tablak_demografia)

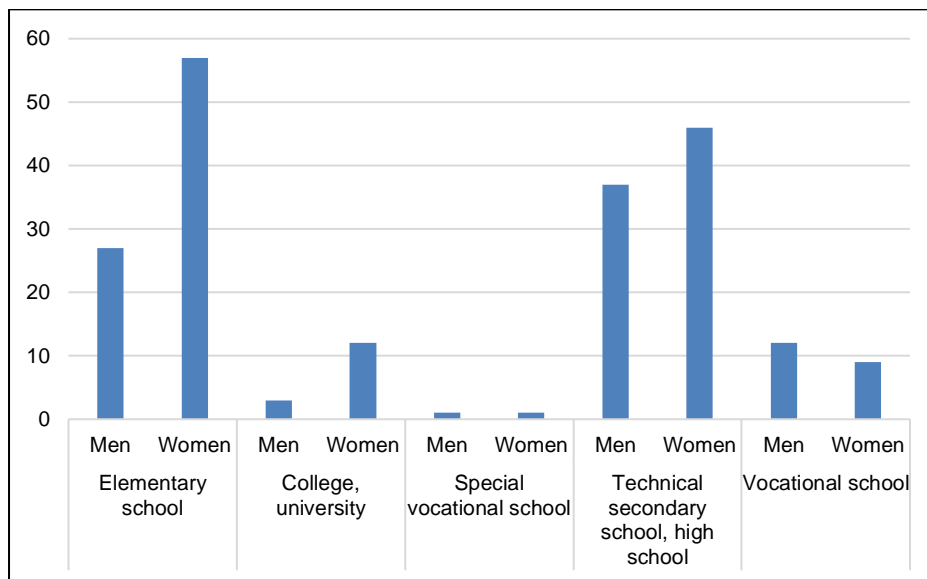
who are in age group of 20-24 years (39 %). The proportion of 15-19-year old young people, who skip their studies and do not work, is 19 %.



The research included more women, 80% of them were in the 20-29 age group.

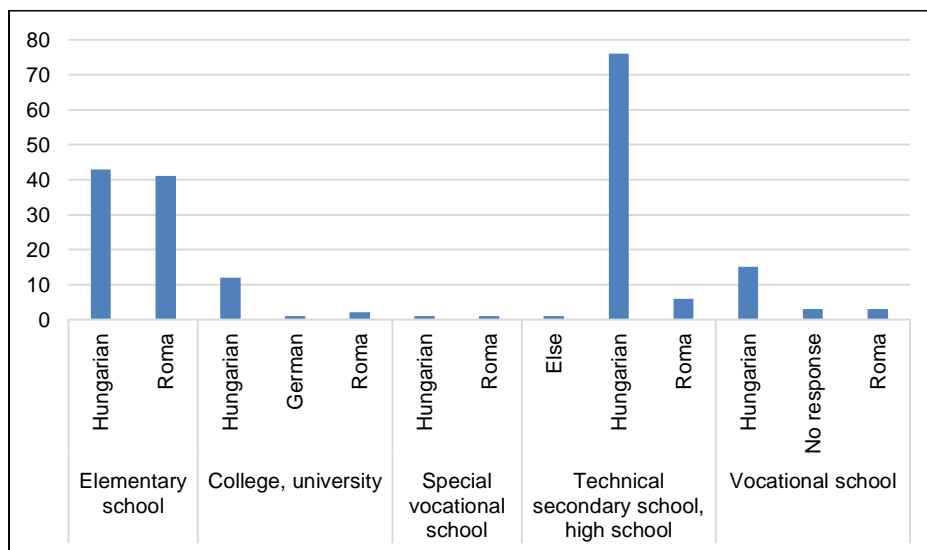


The highest percentage of respondents are those with elementary school education (41%), and the same proportion of respondents has completed their studies at technical secondary school/high school (41%). They are followed by young people with vocational education (10%), and 7 % of the youngsters has college or university degree. Altogether 58 % of the respondents completed secondary education/technical secondary school and vocational school or has university degree but failed to get or retain a job. These youngsters may have social, economical or personal difficulties, and we assume, the Hungarian education system, which should prepare young people for employment, has shortcomings. It is also revealed by focus group interviews that cultural reasons or differences related to ethnic groups (e.g. widespread customs among the Roma population) may also affect the education and employability of these youngsters.

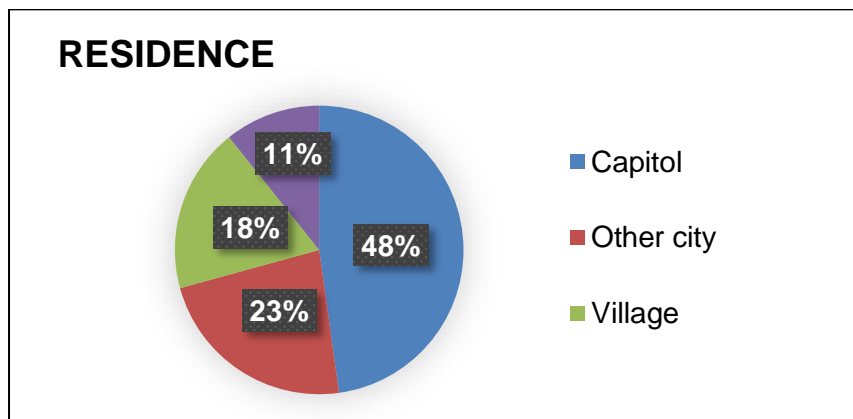


Most of the female respondents had elementary school education, while most of the male respondents had technical secondary school or high school education.

45% of female respondents had a primary school education, compared to the fact that only 33% of male respondents had elementary school education.



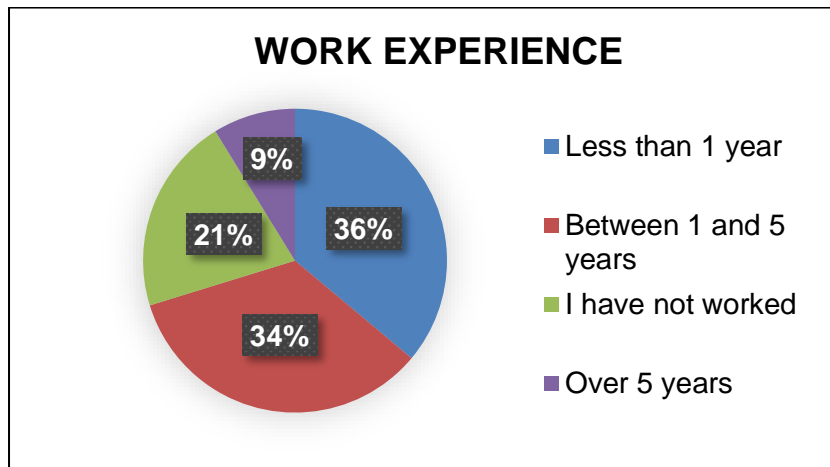
The Roma respondents typically had primary school education, 77% of the them had a primary school education. While Hungarian (or other nationality) respondents had higher level of education.



The majority of the youth interviewed is from the capital (48%), 23 % live in other cities or villages (18%) near Budapest. We have also contacted youngsters in regional cities (11%). Some of the online responses came from Hungarian citizens of neighboring countries such as Romania and Slovakia. Most of the surveyed (71.5 %) identified themselves as Hungarians, 26 % as Roma, and 1 % as German or other nationality. There was 1.5 % who refused to indicate their ethnic origin.

The respondents' residence in or near the capital is also important because Salva Vita Foundation and Hidden Likes House will operate in the same area. So it was important to get to know those young people whom we can reach.

## II. Employment, economic status



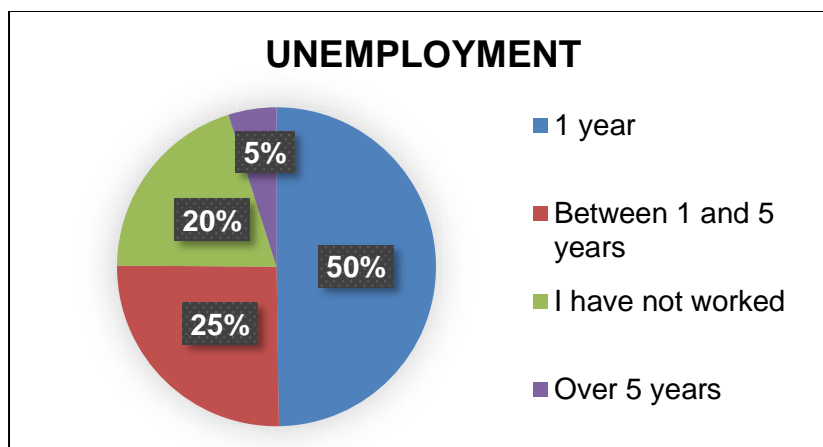
Youngsters without any work experience - 21 % - especially who skipped school - probably have difficulties in starting a job. We assume that they need professional help to improve their competences and overcome social, economical and cultural obstacles.

(Elementary school graduates 29% have not worked yet, 39% worked less than a year, 23% worked for 1-5 years, 7% of them worked for more than 5 years.)

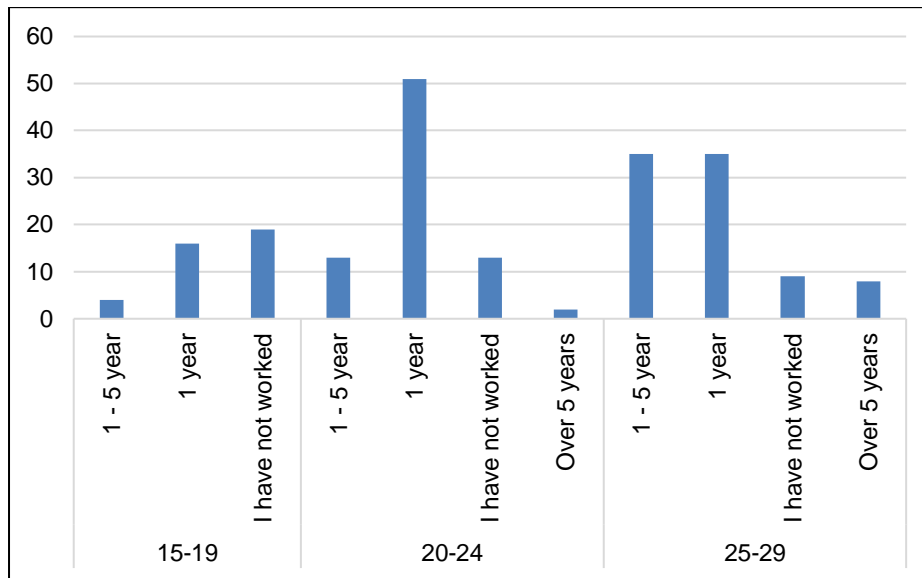
The highest proportion - 36 % of the respondents have worked less than 1 year. Similar percentage, 34 % managed to stay on the labour market for up to 5 years, and almost 10 % of the surveyed have more than 5 years of work experience.

Bad experiences and failures of employment may affect the personality of the youngsters therefore, increasing self-esteem, self-confidence and motivation is a factor of their support.

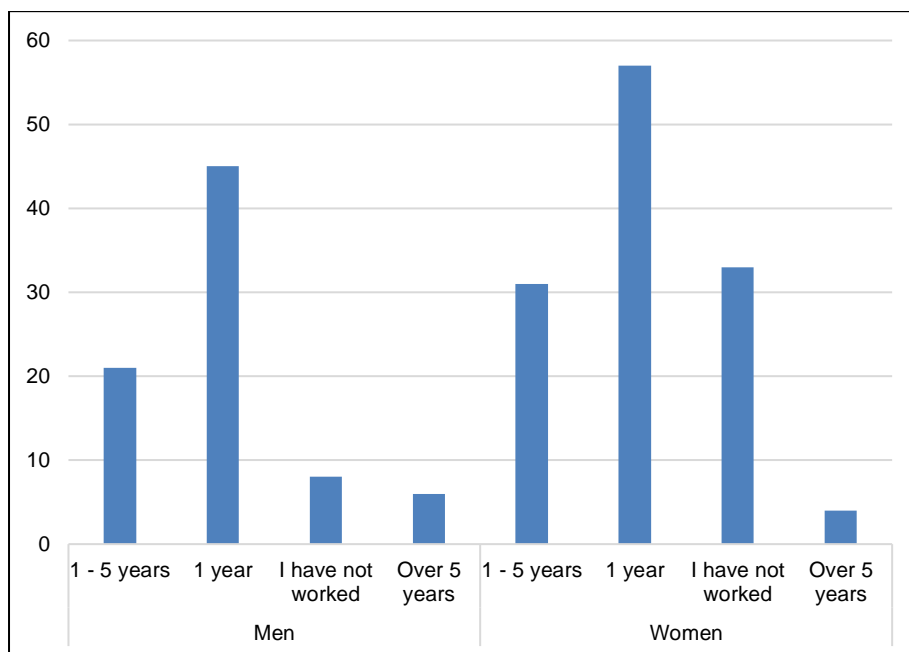
It is important to note that work experience and employment are different categories in Hungary due to black work. Thus, the high rate of work experience (80%) of the respondents may cover working without official employment. Youngsters with such experience have less difficulties to find a job, but long-term employment is a real challenge for them, in our opinion.



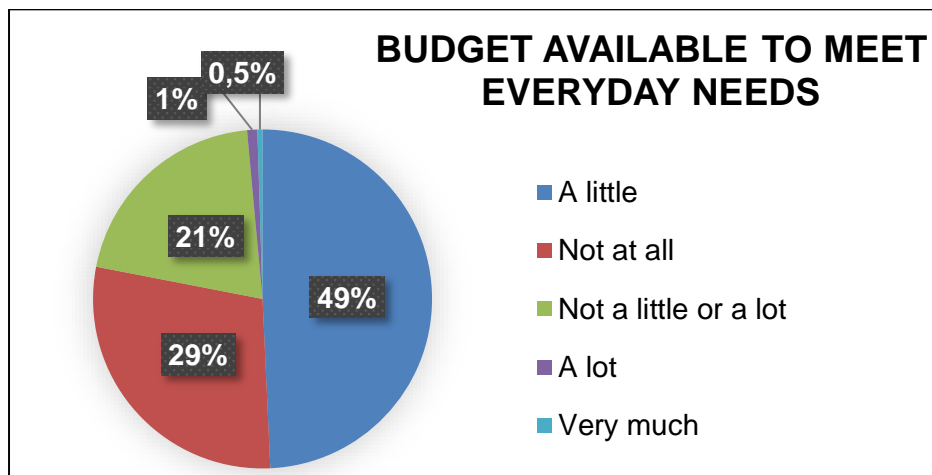
In terms of economic status, it is striking that the majority of respondents are those who neither study nor work in the last 1 year (50%), and an additional 25 % has been in this situation up to 5 five years.



The older a respondent, the more often longer unemployment (1-5 years) occurred.



Lack of work experience was much more common among the female respondents, although 80% of them were in the 20-29 age group.

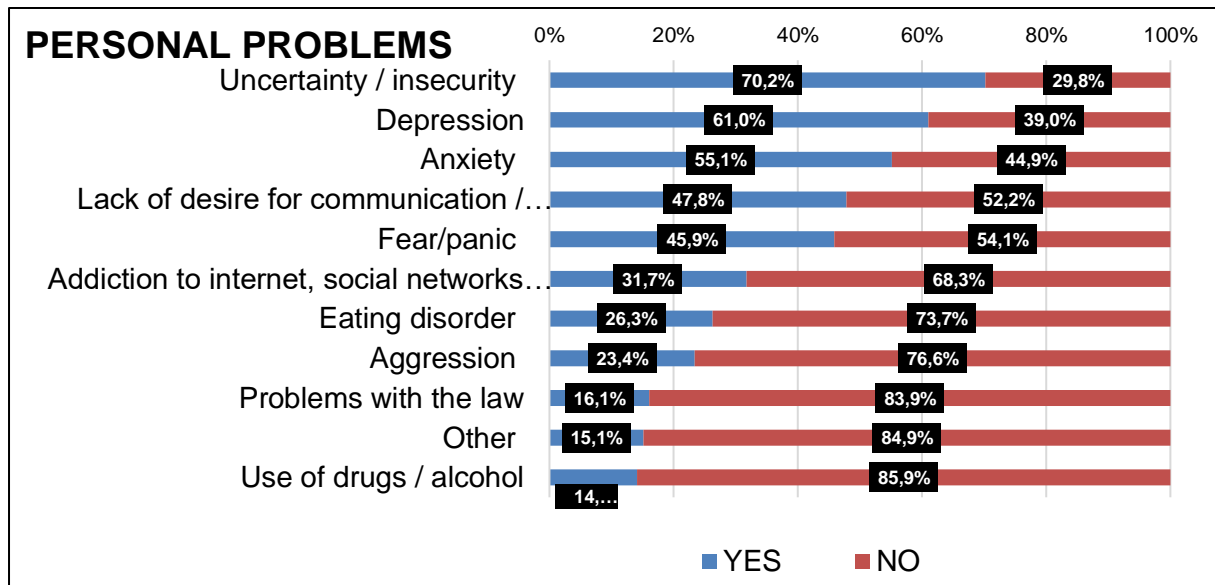


The 29 % of the respondents have no money at all. The school leaving age in Hungary is 16, and family allowance is paid until this age but there is no allowance for those who left school and have never been employed before.

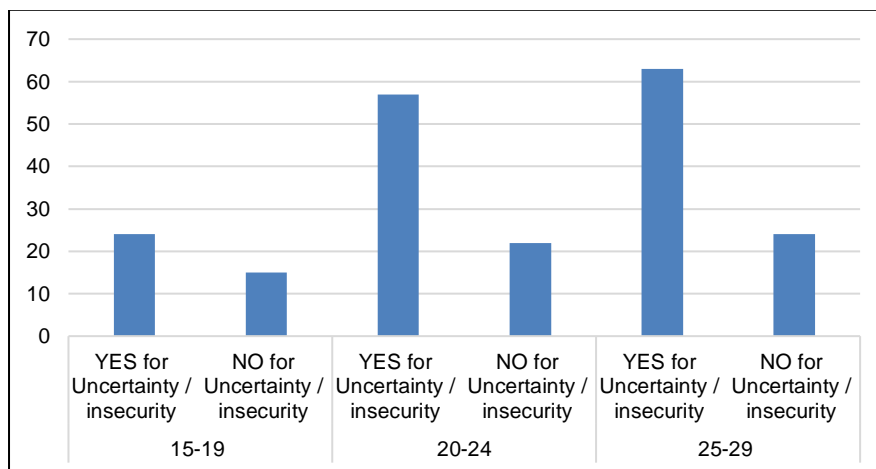
The available budget is little for the half (50 %) of the target group. This income can be raised by working on the black market for those who are over the age of 16, unless they are entitled to unemployment benefits due to previous status of employment. At least 365 days of employment in the last 3 years is necessary to be entitled to unemployment benefits.

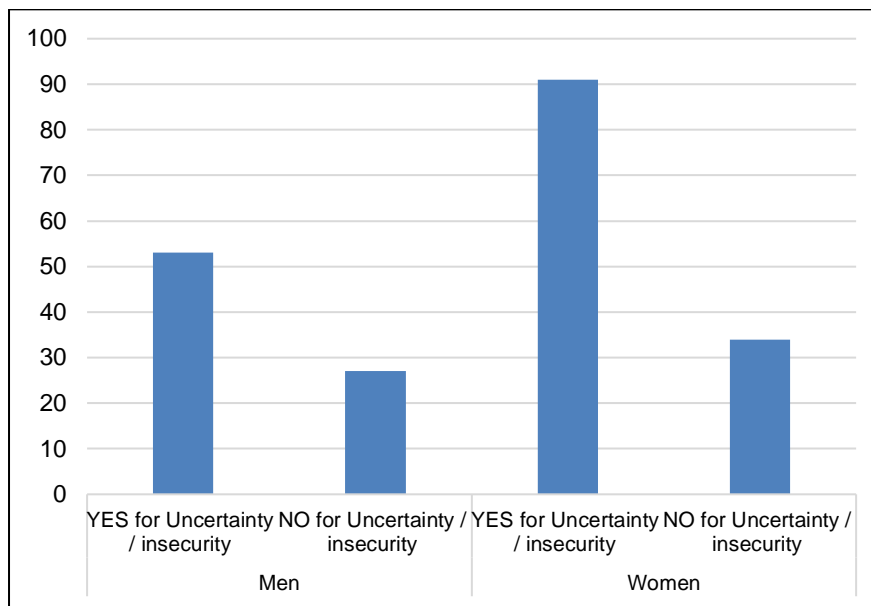
Another 21 % of surveyed is having “neither less nor much” money. The available budget depends on the financial situation of the family as well, so there are some youngsters with very much (0.5 %) or even with a lot of money (1 %).

### III. Psychological Characteristics and family status



On the question of personal problems, the highest percentage (70.2 %) has the feeling of insecurity or uncertainty.





The feeling of insecurity was more pronounced in the older age group and in women.

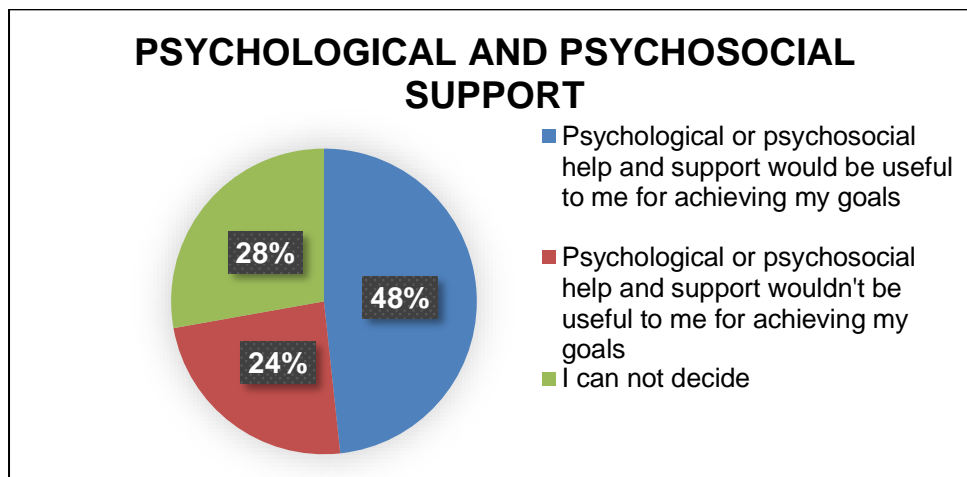
Anxiety is indicated by 55.1 % of the respondents, which is together with fear or panic (indicated by 46% of the respondents) - forms of anxiety - is the most common mental problem for the young persons who does not work or learn at age 15-29.

High rate of the surveyed persons (61 %) indicated the symptoms of depression. Eating disorders (23 %) are also considerable, and 14 % of the interviewed youngsters reported alcohol or other addiction.

The percentage of psychiatric-related problems is significant, as 55 - 61 % of the interviewed people reported various manifestations of mild psychiatric disorders (from the anxiety-depressive spectrum). These data shows that the youngsters are in aware of their mental problems, and 48 % of them require psychosocial support to achieve their goals, but only 19 % of the respondents turns to psychologists or psychiatrists.

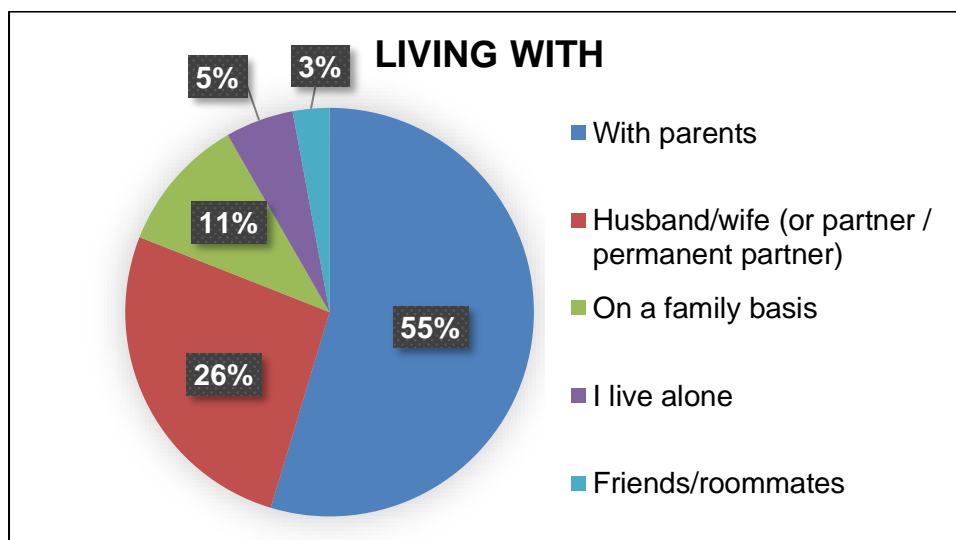
48% of both male and female respondents would require psychological and psychosocial help, so there was no gender difference in this matter.

The number of people with such problems have been increasing in Hungary like in Europe in the past years, and only 30 % of the cases are detected.



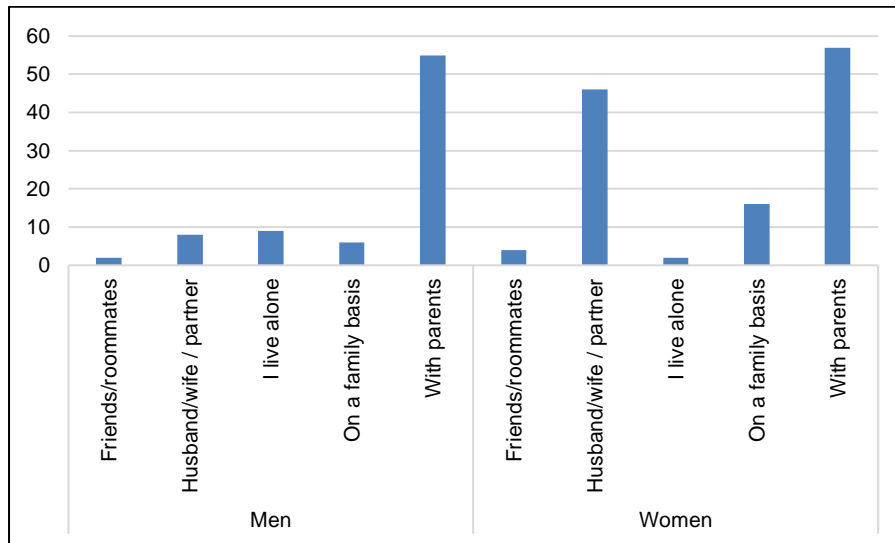
More than ¼ of the respondents (26 %) live together with his or her partner, 5 % live alone and 3 % live together with friends or roommates.

More than half of the respondents – 55 % of young people between age 15 and 29 - live together with their parents, and an additional 11 % live on family basis, but only 6 % take care of a sick or dependent family member.



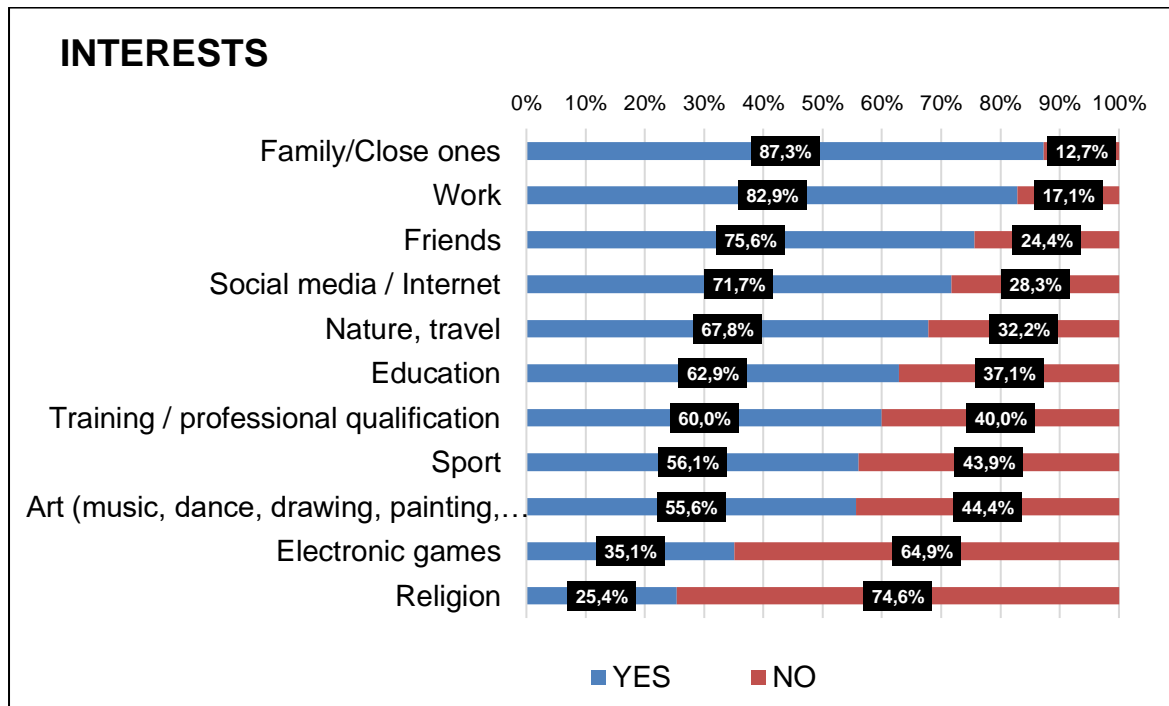
The reason behind the result, that this high percentage of respondents live with the parents/family, is probably poverty and lack of financial background, since almost 80% of the respondents have no or very little money. The goal for more than 84 % of the respondents is to get a job and realize better financial conditions. However, pursuit of financial independency does not mean efforts for independent living in all cases, due to cultural reasons. It is also highlighted in the survey that family means not only financial but emotional security for these youngsters at age group 15-29. According to the results, youngsters are highly interested in their family members (87 %) and prefer turning to them with problems (72 %). Family is the expected assistance for realization of life goals for 82% of the respondents, and 94 % stated that the support of the family and their friends is very important for them. Based on the above, it is foreseen that the success of LIKE project depends a lot on the awareness of the

environment of the involved youngsters and the degree of cooperation with their close relatives.

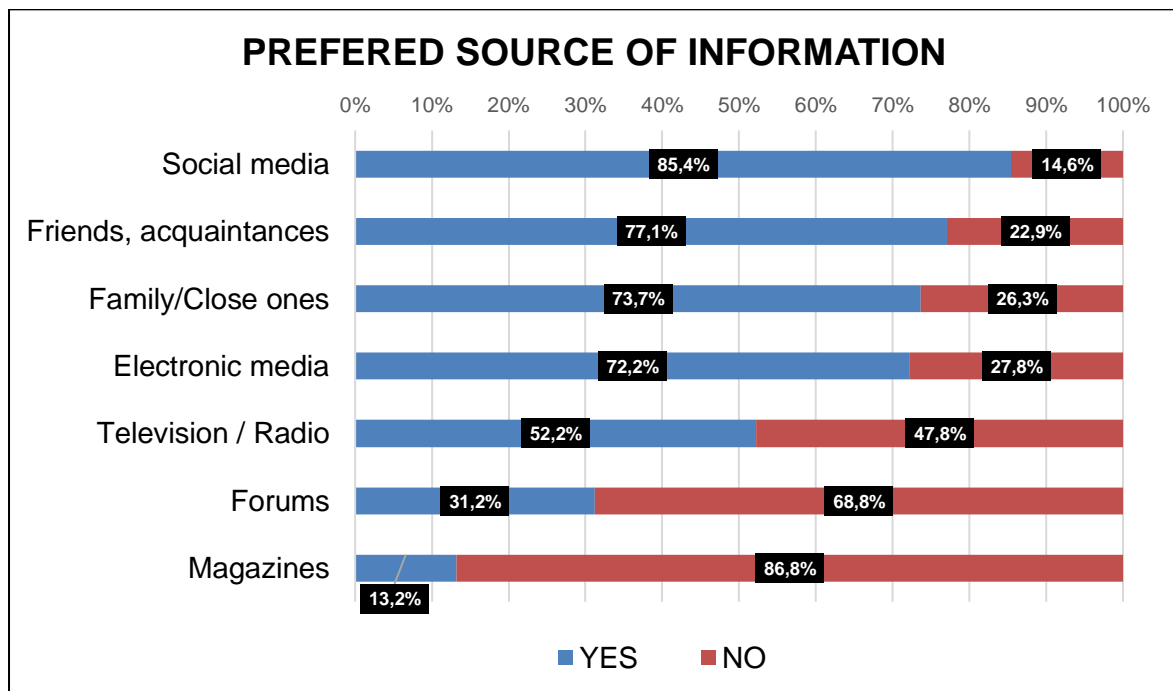


Living with a spouse or life partner is more pronounced among female respondents.

#### IV. Interests, sources of information, social contacts, trust



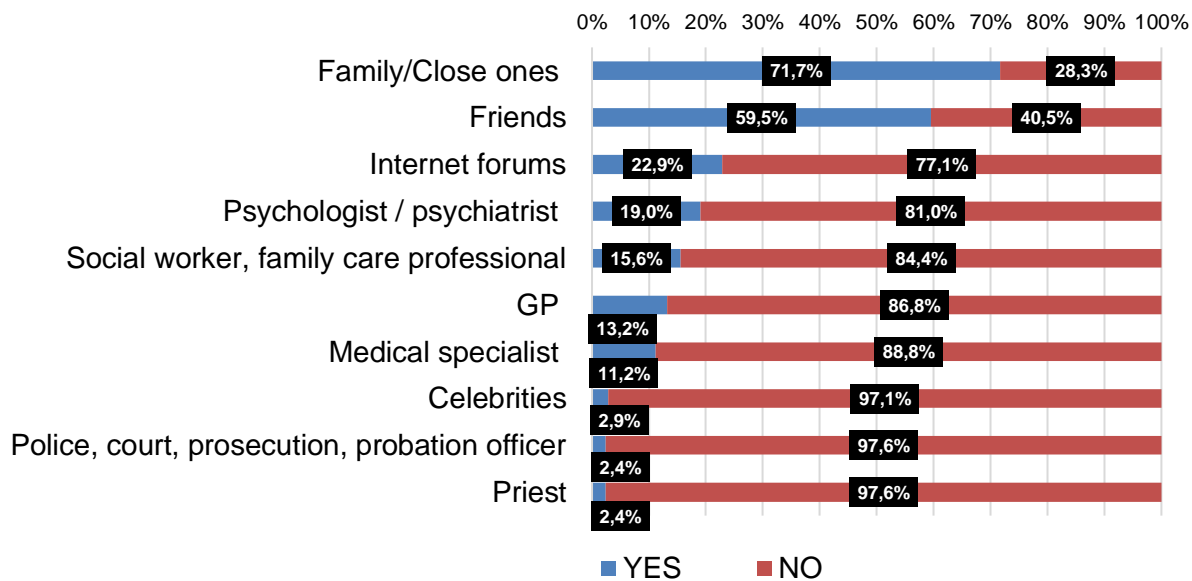
The highest proportion of respondents confirm that they focus on their family members and relatives, as mentioned above. Work is the second in the rank (83 %), followed by friends (76 %). Social media and internet - mentioned by 72 % - is particularly relevant for these youngsters as it is the main source of information for them (85 %), which can be generation-specific issue. Education and training is equally important (63 and 60%) for the respondents, but nature and traveling is even more at the heart of their interest (68 %), based on the optional answers. Elements added in the “other” category by the youngsters are: sports and arts (56% each) and religion (25 %). These results are really positive and encouraging for planning the future “Hidden LIKE House” programs. It also indicates that most youngsters are motivated enough to improve the quality of their lives and ready to take actions to achieve their goals. Only 35 % of the surveyed is engaged with electronic games, which is a quite low rate compared to internet usage, and almost the same proportion of respondents (31 %) have admitted their addiction to it.



The main source of information for this generation is social media (85%) where young people get and share information. This is a world without barriers and a possibility for people to form an image about themselves, which can be far and different from their reality. On the second place (77 %) there are friends and acquaintances – probably from the same age group – whose opinion is decisive followed by family members and close relatives (74 %). While family is on the third place as source of information, young people trust their family members (77%) and friends (59%) much more than internet forums (23,5 %). This fact not only indicates the importance of the family but assumes the youngsters realistic vision.

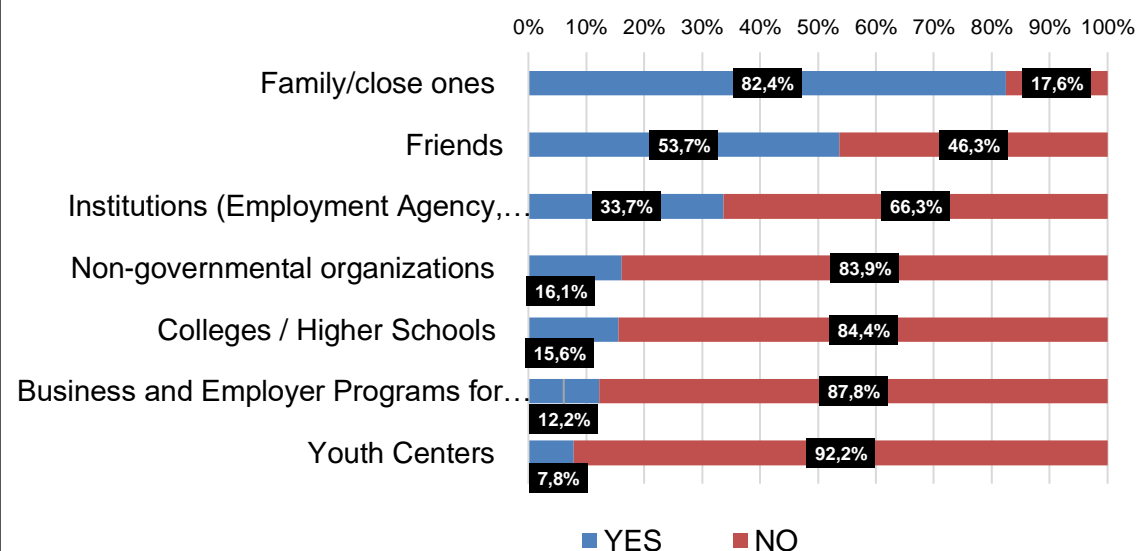
Electronic media is also an important source of information (73,5 %) compared to TV and radio (52%) and other forums (31 %), which corresponds to the trend.

## TRUST



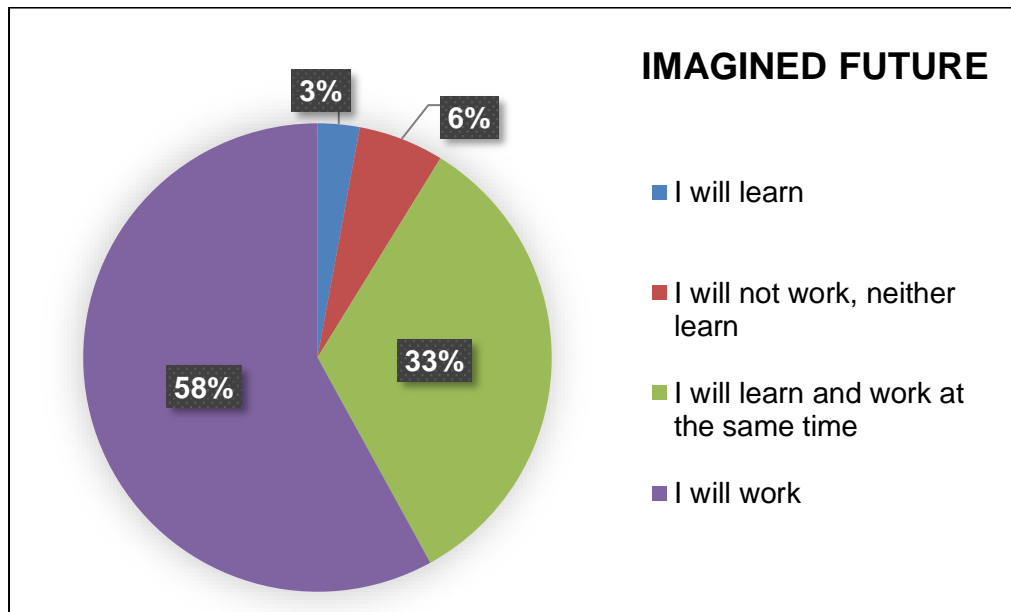
In terms of trust, family members (72%) and friends (60 %) are the key persons. Turning to internet forums with problems is a bit more common (23 %) than seeing psychiatrist or psychologist (19 %), but 49 % needs professional help to cope with mental problems. Social workers, family care professionals, GPs and other medical specialists are mentioned by youngsters in a similar proportion (15, 13 and 11 %). On the other hand, police/probation officers and priests with equal shares (2.4 %) have even less importance for youngsters than celebrities (3 %).

## EXPECTED HELP TO REACH GOALS

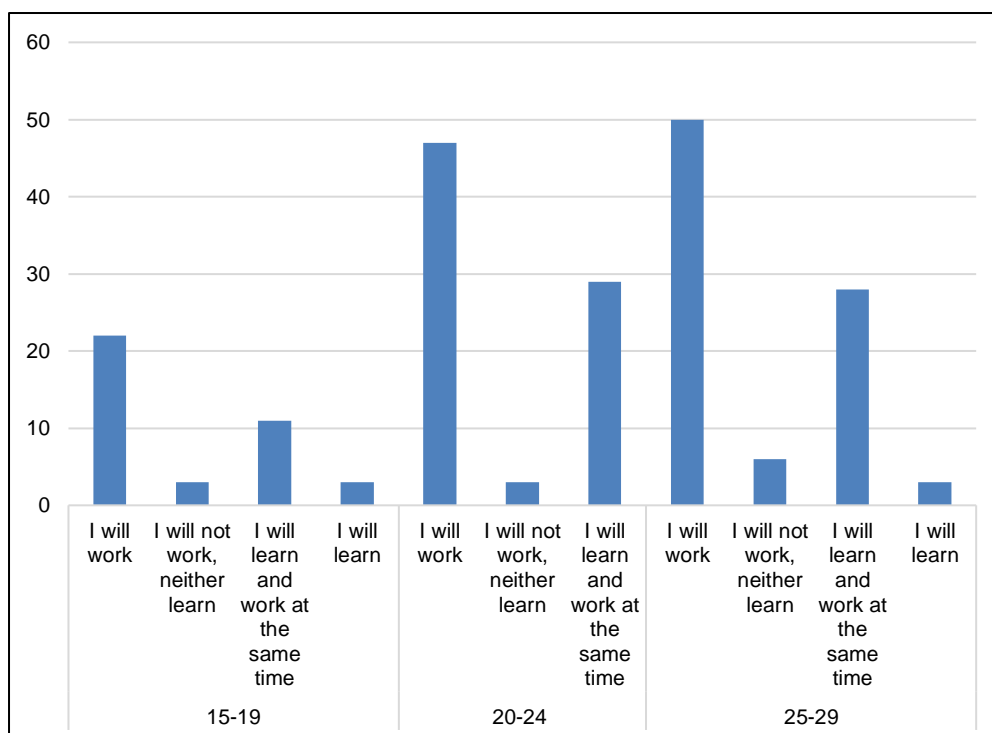


Family is again at the first place when it comes to expected help for realizing goals (82 %), followed by friends (54 %). Employment Agencies, Labor offices and Qualification centers are on the third place in this ranking with 34 %. Assistance offered by Non-governmental organisations and colleges/high schools are less known by the respondents or these services are not available for more than 16 % of the youngsters, and the same is the case with Business and employer's programs (12 %). Youth centers seem to be even less effective in Hungary according to the results of the questionnaire, as only 8 % of the youngsters mentioned them as potential support.

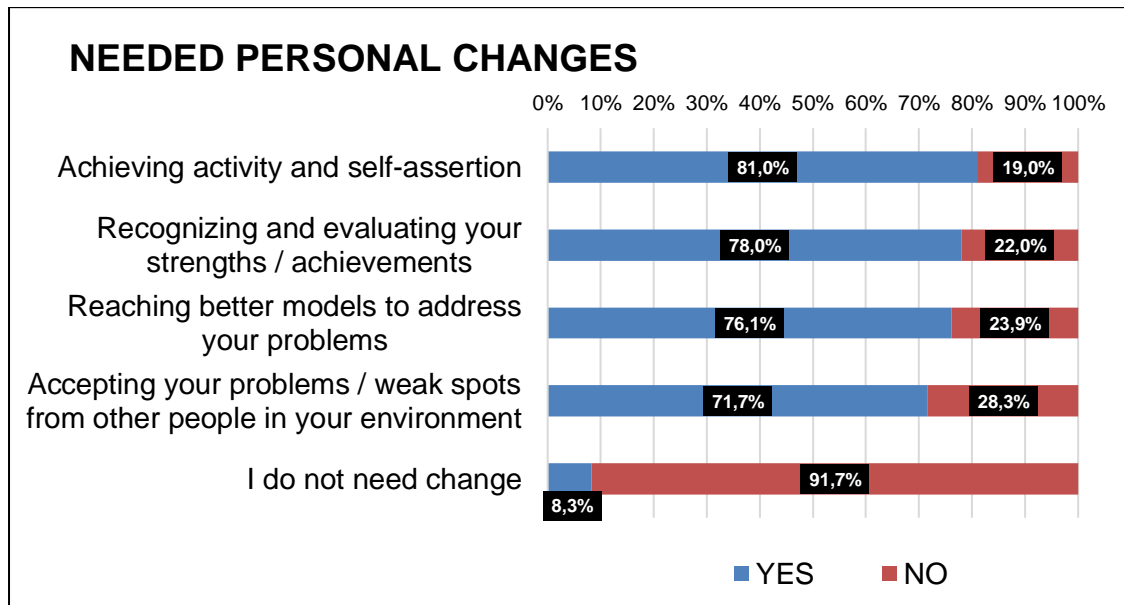
## V. Future vision, expectations and values



Almost 60 % of the respondents imagine life after 5 years as work-based and 33 % associate it with learning. Only 3 % think that they will study in 5 years. The high perception of work commitment indicates social problems however, deficiencies of the education system together with failures in the past may be behind refusal to continue education.

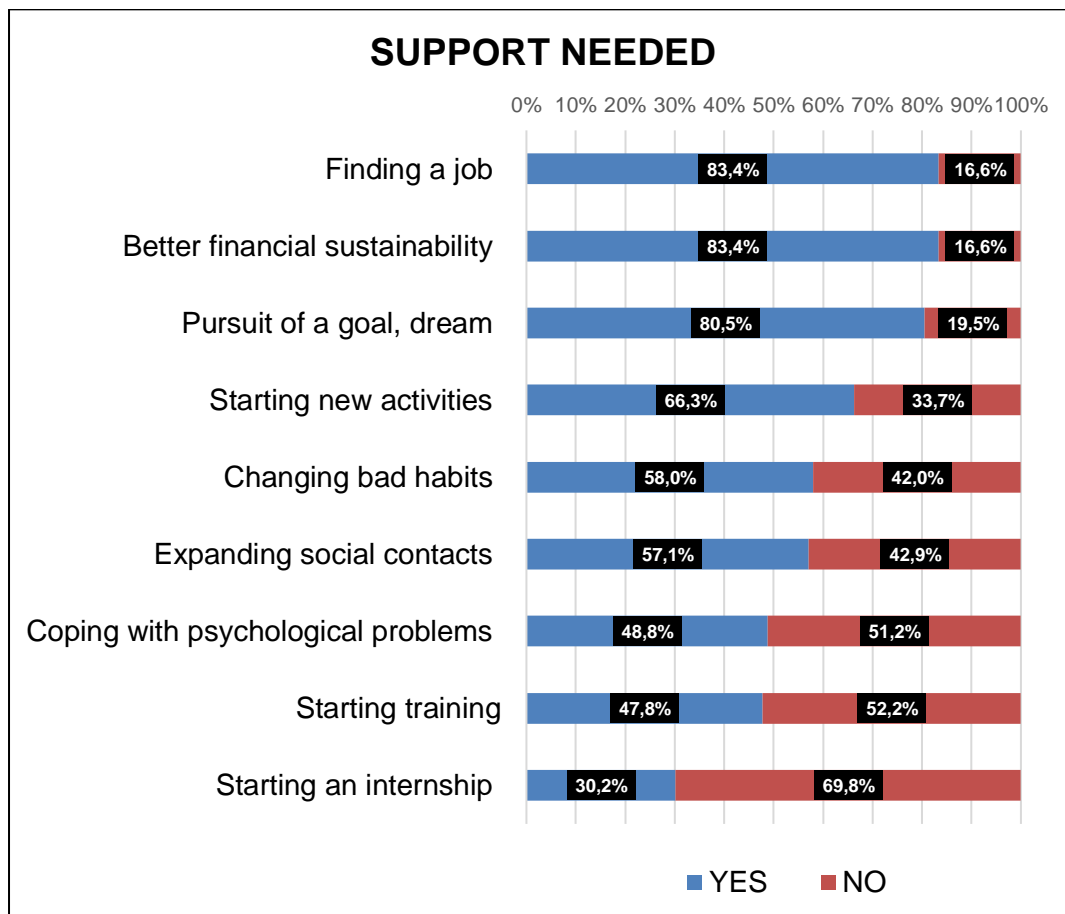


Most young respondents imagine in each age group want to work.



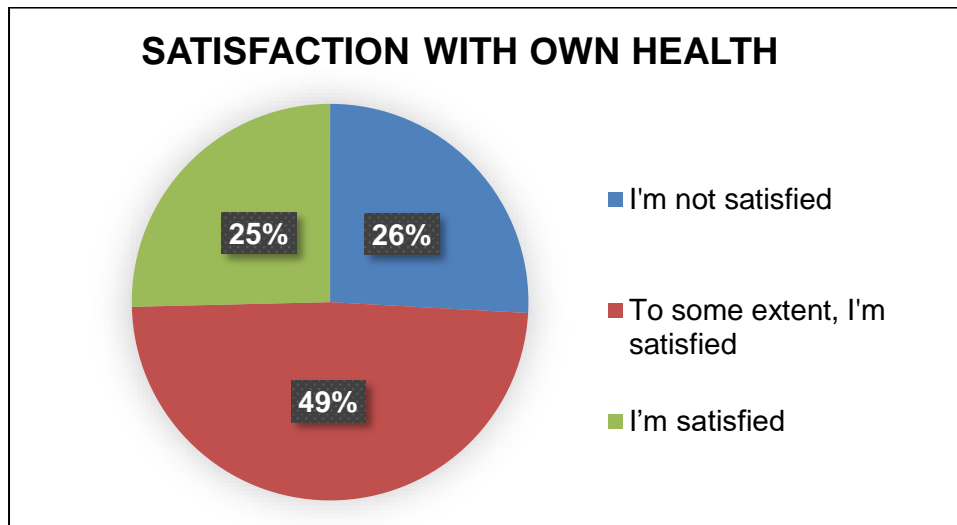
Young people rely on others especially on their relatives in many aspects, and admitted that their activity and self-assertion is very important to be improved (81 %). They also recognized the importance of evaluating strengths and achievements (78 %). We consider professional help may be crucial to reach this goal and the same is the case with achieving better models to address their problems (76 %).

Most of the youngsters accept the evaluation by others (72 %) and, even more - 82 % of the respondents are aware of the importance of getting rid of bad influence by other people.



Youngsters are committed to working and achieving financial sustainability (83 %) and these are the first in the ranking of the values. Family and human relations are also important values for the respondents and, 57 % would like to expand their human relations. The attainment of these values involves the expectation of outside help but. About 60 % is have recognized the importance of improvement of their competences by trainings or education and It is also highlighted in the survey that social activity, nature, healthier lifestyle and mental health are also important values for these youngsters.

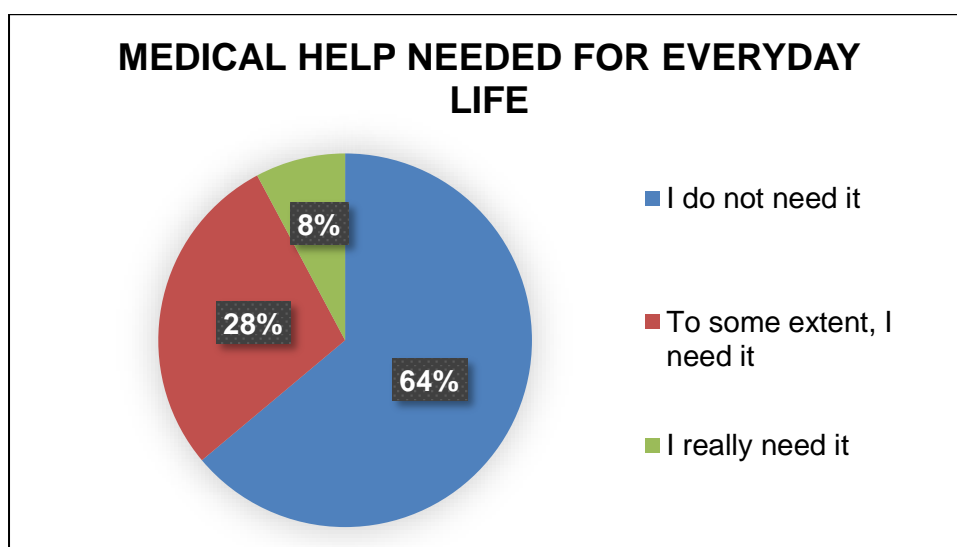
## **VI. Health, life satisfaction**



The quarter of the respondents are satisfied with their health status, and almost the half of them – 49 % were somewhat satisfied, and only 26 % of the respondents stated that they are not satisfied with their health status. Only 8 % said that medical help is needed for everyday life and 28 % needs it for some extent. This data is corresponding to the responses referring to being restricted ever from working because of medical problems, as 32 % of youngsters gave positive answer to this question. It is also to be considered that almost 80 % have already worked for short or long term before.

It is also corresponding to previous data that 64 % of the youngsters need no medical assistance to live normal life.

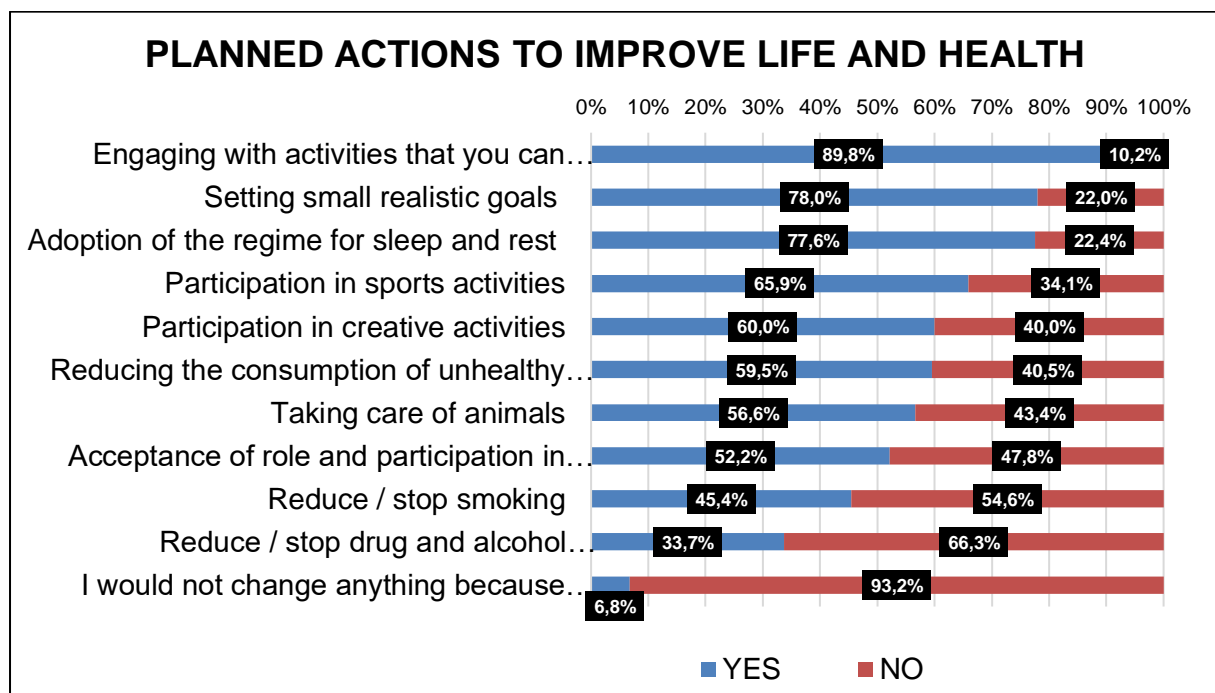
On the other hand, 49 % committed that psychological help is necessary for them to cope with their problems. This may lead to the conclusion that health problems to some extent may be behind not participating in any form of employment or training but mental health issues are more significant reasons of exclusion from social life and employment.



In terms of life satisfaction in the last month, the respondents most often - 49% choose the answer "somewhat satisfied" followed by the "I am not satisfied" – 38 % and only 13 % is satisfied with it. It highly corresponds to the previously given answer that 8 % of the youngsters do not need any personal change and 7 % would not change their lives at all. We assume that to some extent this percentage of young people have accepted or are accustomed to the limitations and the lack of self-actualization. Other possible hypothesis is that those who responded (satisfied with life in the last month) are well socially insured by their parents and, despite their lack of employment, they can afford a good quality of life not only with material security but with good social care.

In terms of future plans 90 % of the youngsters would like to be engaged with activities that they feel competent. According to our experience it is highly advantageous for people to get involved in such activities because of the positive effect on self-confidence and motivation. They mention other activities such as sports (66 %), art and creative activities (60 %). The similar percentage of respondents (57 %) would take care of animals. Due to data matching we suppose that these options might be interesting for the persons who are open for different activities.

According to the answer youngsters agree to set small realistic goals (78 %) although it is an important step to define which goals are realistic for them personally.



## **Conclusion**

The research concerns a group of youngsters where the number of female respondents is 20 % higher than the number of male respondents. The youngsters are mainly of Hungarian ethnic origin aged between 20 and 29, and almost equally divided by elementary or secondary school education. Work experience is between 1 to 5 years. More than half of them live with their family, and highly supported by family members and relatives financially and emotionally as well. However, most of the group members feel uncertainty and insecurity in both respects. They are helpless, having mental problems and almost 50 % of them is aware of it. They expect support mainly from outside, but also motivated to change their lives and improve their skills. Their main goal is to get a job, but 1/3 of the respondents is ready to learn at the same time.

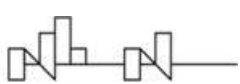


# Evaluation report of focus groups and in-depth interviews

L.I.K.E. Life Investment is the Key to Employment Project  
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## Executive summary

The qualitative pillars of the L.I.K.E. project research included focus group and in-depth interviews, with altogether 45 persons within permanent NEETs' (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) environment (relatives, family members, friends, guardians etc.) and 14 employers' representatives. The interviews provided relevant and valuable insights regarding NEETs' current situation, background, competencies and qualifications, shortcomings and needs for development in Budapest and its surroundings (Hungary); at the same time, we explored employers' views regarding the challenges of the long-term employment of NEETs.

## Main consequences of NEETs' environment research

Successful recruitment for the focus groups within the NEET environment was the most difficult part of the project. Around 3/4 of the 45 participants were female, and almost 1/3 of them were the mothers of the NEETs; 1/4 were guardians, fosters and mentors – supporting NEETs by profession. Interviewees were almost as diverse as the NEETs themselves.

As experienced, almost all NEETs had one or more critical traumas or failures in the past – within their family history, educational background, work experience.

Most NEETs had some kind of work experience, though for successful and long-term employment quite all NEETs have to overcome a barrier and improve their skills or competencies. Their situation cannot be expected to change automatically.

In almost all cases, when the NEET had a professional qualification, a *physiological problem could be identified*. Around 20-25% of the NEETs underwent psychotherapy in their lifetime, but far more of them would need it according to the interviewees.

*Discrimination* against Romas were mentioned by many. A mother with young children (older than 2-3 years) was very often hindered on the job market.

Some of the NEETs undertake occasional odd jobs – mainly black-market work and we could identify some common reasons for getting stuck in temporary *black work*.

NEETs generally prefer *working* to studying: besides financial reasons, qualifications do not present a high value for the NEETs, as they are not considered as a guarantee for a (better) job.

There are only a few NEETs who seem to do nothing about their situation. NEETs, not working hard on finding a job or earning the costs of their living, usually do the housework, cook, take care of children. Only a few of them were described as "sitting at home and doing nothing".

Many NEETs are engaged in *arts*.

In most of the cases, a permanent NEET within the family causes strain, though the respondent parents are patient with their children. Many mothers did a lot for their child in the past, even in their earlier childhood (cooperation with the family care service centre, including psychotherapy; searching for training opportunities; requiring development treatments, etc.). Some of the problems, illnesses and situations are unique within the families, some were inherited.

All the NEETs has somebody they trust – in many cases the interviewees named themselves. According to the interviews, the family support service offices were the most frequent, formerly used *external support* to improve the NEET's situation – when help was considered useful. NEETs highly appreciated the support of the mentors of BAGázs (an NGO dealing with Roma people), and the social workers of the Temporary Home of Families.

Some frequently mentioned needs and tools for supporting the long-term employment and social integration of NEETs are:

- NEETs need to experience success – in many cases this could be the first success in their lives.
- Psychologist.
- Improvement of their different types of personal skills. Self-knowledge and self-confidence improvement were mentioned most frequently.
- General training regarding employment. (e.g. preparation for an interview, the ability to observe rules, communication)
- Many of the interviewees considered having a mentor as a good opportunity.

Recommendations included financing instead of providing a service (contribution to costs of accommodation or travelling costs, financing the attendance of other organisations' trainings, etc.).

The idea of a youth community centre (such as Hidden Likes Youth House) was generally liked.

It was declared that NEETs within the child protection system would need much more support in order to overcome their heavily burdened background and traumas.

### **Main consequences of employers' research**

We managed to gain diverse opinions from employers, as the participants of the focus group and interviews represented different sectors and different sized companies. Sector specific experiences and expectations can be valid for many more employers within the same field.

The shortage of workforce was one of the hot topics of the conversation, and it became critical in some sectors in the last 1-2 years.

As a consequence, the criteria and requirements towards the newcomers are lower than before. With some employers the chance is given to everybody who applies for a job, and meets the minimum qualification requirements – which means 8 grades of elementary school education – in many cases. Appearing for an interview is also a successful entry for some employers. "I am no longer concerned about them having had too many workplaces or how long they have been unemployed." It can be stated that according to employers this is the very best time for the successful employment of NEETs, though NEETs' environment focus groups reported rejections and failures of application.

General shortcomings were voiced by employers as well: "Many unemployed are not in a good condition physically." As a result of bad experiences, most employers developed their own reading comprehension tests to be passed by every applicant.

Regarding *psychological problems*, employers are more tolerant and supportive if these are discovered during employment (and not upon hiring).

The retention of an employee is also becoming more and more challenging for employers – it is challenging for those as well who do not have a problem with recruitment. Motivation and working atmosphere are considered as a significant factor in long-term employment.

The NEETs' and employers' needs coincide in many cases, and many of the employers apply the tools required by the NEETs. At the same time, employers would rely on NGOs' support. The critical importance of motivation was mentioned in all phases of employment. NEETs'

development in advance (before applying for a position) was emphasized. A key person can be a big support – an important person for the youngster to motivate him / her and participates in the same training or working group.

Current employees' interests and equal opportunities/treatment should be taken into consideration as well. Some of the participants had favourable experiences with dedicated employment programmes for a certain target group and mentoring, thus these were seen as keys to success.

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## Methodological notes and experiences of organisations

Salva Vita Foundation cooperated with *RTG Corporate Responsibility Ltd.*<sup>1</sup> regarding the project's research to ensure that the research meets all the quality criterias. Only the cornerstones of the focus groups were determined by the project leader (SPOC), thus we elaborated on our own methods.

The focus groups and the in-depth interviews were conducted between 02.1. 2019-14.01.2020. Preparations began in mid-October, 2019.

The primary method used to explore the opinions of the 45 persons in **close connection with NEETs** are focus group conversations<sup>2</sup>. Secondly, we relied on in-depth interviews. Taking into consideration that the first Hidden Likes House will be in Budapest, we organised 4 focus groups in Budapest, one in Pest county, and the interviewees of the in-depth interviews were also connected to NEETs who live in or around Budapest. Beyond geographical requirements no other criteria were set regarding the participants.

Salva Vita's Office was chosen to host the focus groups, because of its central location within Budapest and its availability without extra costs. During the organisation process, it turned out that we had to change our strategy and organise focus groups at external venues as well. We organised focus groups at such external places where more potential participants were present without any additional effort (they worked/lived there).

Different techniques were used to recruit the focus group members; these included questionnaire-related and independent methods as well:

- Face-to-face completed questionnaires were always used to recruit participants – NEETs were asked to recommend a potential participant (relative/close friend/partner) for the focus group (questionnaires outside Pest county were an exception). This meant approx. 70 persons.
- Online questionnaires promoted participation with a dedicated question, but only one participant was recruited through this promotion. Besides, all the respondents who completed the questionnaire within Pest county and gave his/her contact, was contacted in order to recommend a participant (relatives/close friends/partner) for the interviews (approx. 20 persons). This way proved to be more successful.
- Thematic Facebook groups (local groups of Budapest districts; groups for mental problems e.g. panic, depression; parent groups), the Hungarian FB-site of the L.I.K.E. project<sup>3</sup> were all used for promoting the focus groups. L.I.K.E. project "likers" were all contacted via private messages (approx. 45 persons).
- Organisations were involved as well. Besides the organisations which supported the completion of the questionnaires, we contacted other organisations, specifically regarding the focus groups. None of the organisations were able to provide personal data (contacts/names) because of the GDPR requirements. This made the recruitment much more difficult, and an extra effort was required from the organisations to contact the possible participants themselves – at least for the first time.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://rtg.hu/en>

<sup>2</sup> Questions: ANNEX1

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/L-I-K-E-projekt-120050802725454/>

- Some of the youth organisations were difficult or impossible to contact so we got the impression that they were not active NGO-s any more.

Successful recruitment for the focus groups within the NEET was the most difficult part of the project, even compared with the 200 questionnaires.

**5 focus groups** were organised and 9 in-depth interviews were conducted to reach the required 45 participants. Rate of no-show was extremely high among the participants who were expected to make an extra effort and come to the Salva Vita office (a voucher worth 4000 HUF, apr. 12 EUR was offered for participation.) Phone interviews also required a bigger effort than expected before.

Experiences of these struggles might be useful in the further phases of the project:

- only people in great need can be motivated with reasonable financial expenditure (e.g. some of the people who stood in line for food distribution);
- a contact person who the interviewee wants to please with his/her participation (e.g. social worker or other supporting organisation's employee) helps a lot but only within a very short travel distance;
- travelling is a big barrier to overcome (travelling time to the place of the focus group conversation counted a lot, this will be expected to be relevant for the NEETs as well);
- many of the NEETs were unwilling or unable to involve anybody – even the persons close to them – in such an interview for many different reasons (e.g. the potential participant is busy working; the NEET does not have anybody whom he/she could ask such a favour; the NEET presumes that the relative or friend, who is in a close connection with him/her, would not like to participate in such an interview).

Regarding **employers'** focus group, we intended to invite diverse employers (meaning diversity in size, sector, public-/private ownership, qualification requirements). We planned only one focus group for employers<sup>4</sup>, in-depth interviews were allowed to collect 14 employer's opinions. All MEF (Hungarian Employers Forum on Equal Opportunities<sup>5</sup>) members (22 employers) received an invitation, and we attempted to contact employers known for their commitment to diversity or sensitivity towards vulnerable groups. Recruiting employers was far easier than in the NEET's environment. We used more channels to recruit diverse participants. 9 employers' representatives were present at the focus group and 5 were interviewed separately. The focus group was held at a new community centre of Salva Vita in Budapest.

**The guide** of the focus groups was harmonized with Salva Vita Foundation, and after the conclusions of the first group, a revision and adjustments were made. The questions of the focus groups were used in the in-depth interviews as well. The main questions of the guide can be found in the next chapters of the document, in the conclusions section.

While introducing the results of the focus groups, we use the expression "interviewee" both for focus group participants and for the participants of in-depth interviews in order to keep the language of the document simple. Similarly, "interview" is used for the focus groups and the in-depth interviews. The reason for using NEETs, and not writing in every case: NEETs in question, NEETs talked about, etc., is also a simplification; though all of the information

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<sup>4</sup> Questions: ANNEX2

<sup>5</sup> , <http://mef.forum.hu/>

described in the “I. NEET’s environment focus groups” chapter was gained through the participants of the focus groups (family members, friends, guardians, etc.). We did not organise any focus groups for the NEETs themselves.

## I. NEET's environment focus groups

### 1. Participants

#### Demography and relationship with the NEET

Around 3/4 of the 45 participants were female, and almost 1/3 of them were the mothers of the NEETs. 2 fathers and 3 siblings participated as well. Guardians, fosters and mentors (altogether 12 persons) have a dedicated aim to support NEETs and they have connection with more NEETs in many cases. All of the participants were from Budapest or from Pest county.

The participants of the interviews and focus groups were almost as diverse as the NEETs themselves. They differed in age, educational, financial, social, family background, current way of and approach to life, some of them were unemployed themselves, sometimes they were NEETs.

#### Main characteristics of each focus group

##### *1-2.: Salva Vita Office: 13 persons*

Main characteristics of the participants: 4 of the participants came through family support services (mothers) and 1 mother through a youth service centre, 5 were contacted at food distributions (a father and young couples), the other 3 participants were contacted via different channels. Most of the participants talked about their family members. 5 of the NEETs were Roma. The educational background of the participants was diverse from failing to finish the elementary school (8 grades) to having a university degree. Only approx. half of the participants worked themselves – some of them received disability allowance, or were unemployed in their 30s.

##### *3. TEGYESZ<sup>6</sup> – child protection centre of Budapest: 9 persons*

Main characteristics of the participants: All of the participants were in connection with the NEETs by profession, through child protection services; they were either guardians or fosters in residential children's homes. Besides having experience with individual NEETs, participants, due to their profession, have an overall picture of these young people and their problems within child protection. Their connection with the NEETs is characteristically close, and we can state that they are attached to these young people. TEGYESZ was one of the few organisations, connected in the course of the project, and saw great potential in further cooperation with Salva Vita to support the young people they are working with.

##### *4. Bag village 40 kms from Budapest – Roma settlement of the village: 9 persons*

Main characteristics of the participants: Most of the participants live in the Roma settlement of Bag village, which is a typical gypsy settlement in many aspects (e.g. no asphalt roads, low qualified people, widespread drug abuse in the last few years, and high level of academic failure). From another aspect, however, Bag is not typical: BAGÁZS<sup>7</sup> – one of the most effective NGOs in this field, in Hungary, both regarding community building, educational and

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<sup>6</sup> <http://tegyesz.hu/en/home/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://bagazs.org/?lang=en>

employment programs – have been working there for years. Participants from the settlement were women who were themselves unemployed (sometimes NEETs), and talked about their family members or friends. 2 of the participants were mentors of BAGázs, who had valuable information regarding typical problems and phenomena in the village.

#### *5. Menhely (The Shelter Foundation)<sup>8</sup>*

Temporary Home of Families in Budapest, 11<sup>th</sup> district: participants: 5 persons

Main characteristics of the participants: with one exception, the participants were NEETs themselves, the NEETs they talked about were their friends. The participant who worked, was the partner of a NEET. With one exception they were Roma (it was not the not-Roma participant who worked). They all had a child/children and a partner. Menhely is another place where further support for NEETs in the project will be very welcome. Compared to the NEETs mentioned at TEGYESZ and in Bag, the NEETs at Menhely were much more motivated and determined to change their circumstances and find a job, most of them had had some previous success.

#### *In-depth interviews by telephone: 9 persons*

Main characteristics of the participants: With 2 exceptions, the participants were parents, one was a partner and a close friend. Within this group of people, the NEETs in question had higher education, almost all of them were high school graduates, one had a university degree. Almost all of the participants worked themselves.

### **Atmosphere**

Both the focus groups and the interviews had a sincere atmosphere, all of the participants were open to talk. Due to their diversity, the interviewees contributed to the research to a different extent.

In a few cases inconsistencies were discovered within things revealed during the focus-groups and in other situations. The main conclusion of the 3-4 inconsistencies discovered is that the participants talking in a group try to paint a better picture of their circumstances than the reality. A mother protected her daughter more (one-on-one: the child had a particular problem to be solved; in the group it was stated that the problems came from the system and not from the children's behaviour); 2 mothers stated that they wanted to encourage their child to become more independent – as they had been advised before - while the supporters had the impression that their care / protection hinders the change. These inconsistencies reaffirm that focus group and in-depth interviews are subjective by nature, yet this fact does not decrease the value of the research.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.menhely.hu/index.php/english/our-mission>

## 2. Main conclusions

We present the main conclusions of the interviews in the order of the questions asked.

### Demography of NEETs in question

No detailed quotes and characteristics were expected regarding the NEETs about whom the participants talked during the focus-group and in-depth interviews except their total number. Though some characteristics and features are worth mentioning for a better evaluation of the results. NEETs, involved in the research, were from Budapest and Pest county, taking into consideration that the first Hidden Likes House will be also created in the capital. Partially, due to the contacted organisations, partially as a consequence of the research method (focus group interviews in person were preferred at Salva Vita office, limited financial compensation), and maybe also due to their need for external help, NEETs in a worse financial, educational, social situation and background were overrepresented by their relatives and supporters, compared to the “average” of NEETs involved in the questionnaires. The rate of Roma NEETs was also higher than in the questionnaire research. The involvement of Roma NEETs was highly recommended by the project methodology, and we are convinced that supporting these young people efficiently has a higher added value, thus the possibility to explore their needs more deeply is considered as an advantage.

### 2.1 Current situation of NEETs and their activity

*Questions: Who is the NEET, what is his/her connection with the focus group participant? What did he/she learn, or where did she work for the last time? Why did it end? Why she/he cannot find a job? What is he/she doing currently? How does she/he spend her/his time? Would the NEET like to change her/his situation?*

The main types of connections/relationships with NEETs were introduced above. We can state that almost all of the participants cared much about the NEET they were talking about. In many cases, the motivation to participate in the interviews was to support the NEET in this way as well. Some of the participants would have been very glad – especially in the focus groups organised at Salva Vita Office – if they could have been ensured their NEET’s right to participate in the programme in the future.

**Educational background** of the NEETs is very diverse. Almost all of them had one or more academic failures. A few NEETs did not finish the 8 grades of elementary school (add.: the minimum school-leaving age in Hungary is currently 16) and both Hungarian and Roma young people are affected. More NEETs started to learn a profession at a vocational school or high school but quit. Many of the NEETs in question failed one or more times. Giving up school is quite common among NEETs.

**Dysfunctions of the educational system** were emphasised at TEGYESZ and BAG focus groups, though they came up in other interviews as well. “She started vocational school as a waitress, but did not pass the exams.” “After being detained, the school did not take him back as a cook, so he could only continue his studies as a female tailor. He did not want this – which

is quite acceptable – so he quit.” Among Bag participants, the Madách Vocational School in Gödöllő had a very bad reputation, some of the NEETs attended this school for a short period of time. “They’re doing nothing meaningful with the teachers there, the teacher tells them where to go to smoke, they don’t learn anything in class”. At least 2 NEETs participated in the HÍD programme (state programme for children below the school-leaving age who are not admitted to secondary school). “Legal” truancy – when the school requires only formal school attendance and real appearance and academic performance is not required – was also mentioned regarding some of the schools. As a systemic problem it was mentioned, that residential children’s homes expect children to attend school formally, because they don’t have the capacity to deal professionally with the children in the daytime.

Many of the permanently unemployed young people successfully finished their vocational training (as cook, painter, technical equipment salesman, tailor etc.) and in some cases they even graduated. In many cases, it turned out that the profession/qualification is not enough to find an appropriate job. Only one participant mentioned it, but according to our experience, it is very true for many professions and jobs: “The problem with studying is that it is not really worth the time. There are these kindergarten teachers who earn less than the workers at Green Bridge (Zöld Híd – waste management company, some of their employees come from Bag).” Short-term trainings (up to 6 months) were generally considered as a better option than the qualifications that require 2 or more years of studying.

One of the participants mentioned inadequate language teaching in schools: “If she had a better knowledge of English, she could have far better options. Better – fairer – companies, better salaries, better colleagues.”

In many cases, the participants mentioned that NEETs had learning problems: “She wasn’t good at maths”, “he had dyscalculia”. But truancy was not always rooted in academic failure. “She was good at school, she liked maths. I don’t know why she started to play truant ... I was asked into the office. (add.: Authority the school reports to.) She was very mature, and she was hanging out with her friends.” Getting into **bad company** was mentioned several times as a reason for quitting school. NEETs – mainly the ones raised in a family and not within the child protection system – successfully got out of bad company by the time of the interview.

There are some common patterns regarding former **work experience**. After finishing school, some of the NEETs (approx. 6-8) were **not able to find a first job** for diverse reasons:

- Requirements of the NEET do not meet the possibilities: “He wouldn’t find a job in his profession (add.: as a carpenter), and the workplace (add.: job opportunity) is far away, he doesn’t want to travel that much.”
- Low self-esteem and uncertainty:
  - “He submits some applications. But these days, it doesn’t work like that, you’re not welcome with opened arms. But he was hired by Media Markt, and he refused to go. He didn’t dare to undertake the job. And he told me that he had not been hired.”
  - “Her mother protects her, she is an only child. It is hard to know which obstacles come from her and which from her mother. She avoids situations where she (add. the daughter) can be hurt, she has many prejudices (e.g. nobody will like me, because I’m Roma).” (add.: Frima is a Roma girl, in Bag)
- No motivation: “She sits in the children’s home. She would like to find student work (add.: part time job for students).”

- Caring for a dependent family member (add. info: there was only one case like this, and according to the questionnaires, similar situations are rare).

Most of NEETs **had some kind of work experience**. Reasons for their failures are different, though for successful and long-term employment almost all NEETs have to overcome a barrier and improve their skills or competencies. Their situation cannot be expected to change automatically. This is even more true when a NEET would like to find a job matching his/her qualification/profession:

- “He had a webmaster qualification (OKJ), but it was not enough to build on (add.: the interviewee was a friend working at the same place). He managed to work in his profession once, and it was not a coincidence that he was hired there (add.: it was an unprofessional workplace). I resigned, he was dismissed. After dismissal he could not find a qualified job.” (add.: it was 7 years ago)
- “... after that he worked as a chauffeur but he was fired after the 3-month probation period. He took it badly. He wants to be a chauffeur, he tried delivery as well but as he has dyscalculia, he had problems.”
- “She worked at a nursery as a nurse (add.: not a qualified early childhood educator). She was blackballed because she was 17, she was thrown in at the deep end. But she has a problem with being on time, there was a situation when she was expected to open the nursery and she was not there at 6:00 am, the parents had been waiting.”
- “He worked at Kézmű (add.: accredited employer but the NEET in question was not employed as a disabled person), but he was fired. His performance was not satisfactory (he was not fast enough).”
- “He wanted to work primarily as a technical equipment salesman. He was a trainee in such a store, he enjoyed it and had good feedback. But after finishing school, he was not hired, he was rejected by Media Markt, by Best Byte, as he didn’t have experience, he was advised to try for a position in Tesco’s, but he was not hired.” (add.: he had other jobs in the meantime, but not within his profession)
- Sometimes, personality problems were identified as a reason for frequent job change and longer unemployment. “He has possibilities, but he finds a problem everywhere.” “He is not a person who likes to conform. One can get along with him, but if there is something he doesn’t like...”
- “She worked as a volleyball-referee, but there was tension at the club.”

Almost in all cases, when the NEET had a qualification with or without graduation, a psychological *problem could be identified*. The volleyball referee was always a very secretive person according to the father of the NEET. The chauffeur had a congenital illness and specific learning difficulties and (maybe as a consequence) lack of self-confidence. The NEET at Kézmű has had anxiety problems since elementary school.

Sometimes the problem is not finding a job, but finding a job matching the NEET’s profession. “She quitted McDonalds, because she felt getting stuck into a situation which did not allow her to step forward, and to immerse into art.” (Artist, graduated from the Hungarian University of Fine Arts). “He could work as a storekeeper, shelf-stacker but he wants something more.” (The NEET with webmaster qualification)

*Discrimination* against Romas were mentioned by many. “At many places when they realised that he is a gypsy they show him/her the door right away.” “When we gave our names: Kanalas (add.: typical Roma surname)... they said the position had been filled.” The same thing happened to other Roma families with typical Roma surnames. The gypsy background was mentioned as a problem when looking for a nursery for children as well.

Some of the NEETs undertake **occasional odd jobs – mainly black-market work**. “She works at a gyros place for one-two days occasionally.” “He works occasionally – black – where he is paid or not.” Vulnerability and defencelessness are very typical for the ones doing black work. Construction is by far the most common option for black work and sometimes the only possibility for male NEETs. The catering sector and cleaning turned out to serve as an option for females. TEGYESZ participants emphasised that heavy physical work can be more dangerous for young people under 18.

There are some general reasons for getting stuck in temporary black work:

- Not having finished the 8 grades of elementary school.
- Formerly committed crime.
- Having no legal address (formal/real homelessness). One of the NEETs lived in a rented flat where the owner refuses to register the address and she consequently failed at many places.)

Some of the NEETs gave up black work but failed to find a satisfactory legal job. Many of the NEETs were described as a smart and confident person (and if we had the chance to talk with him/her, we had the same impression), but cannot overcome her/his background.

Sometimes NEETs don't want to undertake a legal job, because they have debt and banks would seize a big part of their wages/salaries (no further details are known about these cases). Another significant reason for permanent black work is that NEETs cannot make ends meet, they would need their wages immediately or at least per week.

Other occasional jobs were mentioned: 2 of the NEETs had odd jobs as an extra in films (legal jobs). The NEET who refused the Media Markt job creates websites with a friend (recently they had a quarrel about money) but it is not regular work and the amount of the money earned is far from secure living, according to the mother.

It was not unusual that the NEETs undertook a **student's job** and expected to live on their salary alone, so they quit school, but employers do not tend to employ persons under 18 without school-attendance. This was a tough experience for many NEETs, because they found themselves in a more difficult situation than before.

Regarding female NEETs, we can observe that having **young children** (older than 2-3 years) very often hinders mothers from satisfactory work. Nurseries are almost unavailable for women who are unemployed, and in many cases, mothers could work only part-time, which means that the sole option for underqualified women is cleaning or catering. Almost all NEETs from the Temporary Home of Families spent some time abroad (in Germany, France, Switzerland), because they failed to find a job in Hungary. (No other NEETs had foreign experience.) The reason for coming back was mainly pregnancy – they could not imagine staying abroad with an infant: “if something happens, I don't know who to turn to”, though both the employers and the inhabitants of the foreign countries were held fair, correct and open. They all started to

learn the local language and they are all engaged in learning a foreign language in the future. In Hungary they fail to find a job again, in spite of their experience gained abroad (children and nursery problems make their situation more difficult.) The artist girl's carrier at the university was also broken by the birth of her son and he is the reason for her not applying for foreign scholarships (6 months), which was seen as a realistic, long-term solution for the NEET's situation.

NEETs generally prefer **working to studying**. Some of the NEETs would like to finish their schools, especially the 8 grades of elementary school. Persons with higher education are more motivated to study more, or to deepen their knowledge in a specific field (language, IT programming, computer graphics), but studying was imagined without giving up working. Finishing the formerly quitted vocational school / profession was rarely mentioned. As described before, qualifications do not have a high value for the NEETs, as these are not considered as a guarantee for a (better) job – interviewees and NEETs in question shared this opinion.

Many NEETs are engaged in **arts**, though NEETs' environment is not always supporting and have doubts when art is mentioned as a possible way of making their living. The referee girl writes short stories, but her father does not believe that she can be successful at professional writing, as "she has been doing it for a long time and she still hasn't submitted it to the online platform she had talked about". The webmaster guy makes music on the computer – the friend is seriously supporting him in many fields of life, but does not really believe that he can be successful, as – according to him – success in this sector mainly depends on luck. The artist girl uses the opportunity to make portraits for a small amount of money occasionally, she also started to write and illustrate a book of tales. Another NEET sings in a band created by some young people in a youth centre. His first dream is to become a singer, the second – a more realistic one – is to become a train driver, but he should wait till he is 20 to start the qualification to be a train driver. This was mentioned as the main reason for unemployment. 2-3 other NEETs were mentioned to have attended arts and crafts/music high schools but currently they are not thinking about using these skills at work.

There are only a few NEETs who seem to **do nothing** about their situation. NEETs, who do not work hard on finding a job or earning the costs of their living, usually do the housework, cook, take care of children. Only a few of them were described as "sitting at home and doing nothing". Though in Bag this situation was more frequent. "They spend their time with TV, internet, laziness, eating, drinking, that's all." "It's totally boring, spending the days with boring stuff." "She was just fine staying at home. She was just laying about almost all day, she stopped helping with her younger siblings, she did not even start the heating, she used another blanket instead."

Many of the NEETs have regular programs or go out regularly. Even "sitting at home and doing nothing NEETs" mentioned outdoor activities. "The program they go out for is to do the shopping." (Participants from Temporary Homes of Families, and they shopping means supermarket shopping.) "He goes out roller skating with friends." The girl lazy starting the heating promised to take her young siblings to a spa one day – and according to the mother, it is a promise she will keep.

Sometimes relatives blame former **bad company** for the current situation of the NEET. “She was mixed in with some bad company, she wanted to hang with them and do nothing.” Drugs and other types of addictions were mentioned mainly by TEGYESZ related NEETs. (Though, according to mentors at BAGázs drugs are a widespread problem in the village, during the interview and regarding the NEETs in question, drugs were not mentioned. At the same time, we have to admit that we cannot really expect to explore drugs or alcohol abuse within these focus groups. Psychological problems were far more frequently explored.) Among NEETs within the child protection system substance abuse and addiction were as frequent a problem as criminality. Besides TEGYESZ, only one other NEET (from Bag) was mentioned to be involved in crimes.

Some of the NEET girls escaped into a **relationship**, meaning an escape from school, from home/internal, from work. Roma husbands or boyfriends tend to keep women at home. In some cases, the men themselves don’t want to work either, but expect their parents to support them. TEGYESZ mentioned NEETs had a far **more burdened family background** (prostitute mother, alcohol dependency within the family, mother abandoning the children, criminality, drugs, violence), though other types of problematic backgrounds (divorce, death of father, drugs) were mentioned in other interviews as well. Guardians and fosters added that the system of children’s homes is insensitive to traumas, and fail to help overcome them.

## 2.2. Feelings about the situation, psychological problems and other illnesses

*Questions: Does it cause strain within the family? Do they experience psychological problem (e.g.: eating disorders, sleeping disorders, addiction, problematic psychological status – anxiety, depression)? Did the NEETs see a doctor concerning these problems? Does the NEET have any recognised illness? Did he/she undergo any treatment? Did it help?*

In most of the cases, a permanent NEET within the family causes **strain**, but the participants themselves try to help to solve the situation in many ways. The expected support for the NEETs was in many cases the main motivation of participation in in-depth interviews and in focus-groups held at Salva Vita Office (practically in exchange for the answers, participants would like to ensure their children’s/partner’s participation in the program). Others did not expect such a direct result and saw participation as a new way of helping their children by gaining new insights and ideas.

We could experience that many **mothers had done** a lot for their child in the past, even in their earlier childhood (cooperation with the family care service centre, including psychotherapy; searching for training opportunities; requiring development treatments, one mother even completed a personal trainer course together with his son). The financial backgrounds of the interviewees did allow only state financed psychologists and free trainings were preferred.

Overall, the respondent parents are patient with their children, they accept their hard situation. Though conflicts were explored between NEETs and their caring parents. The parents encourage their children to change but see that their advices are not really accepted, many NEETs would like to go on their own way. Partners were even more appreciative, especially with women.

In 2 cases we had the impression (in one case it was voiced as well) that too much care hinders change. There was only one case when financial support from the parents was mentioned as an obstacle: The webmaster NEET's friend had the opinion that as the NEET's parents provide an own flat and a monthly allowance, the NEET is not really pressed to change, although the allowance is not enough to meet the NEET's living standard expectations. As the parents had been disappointed before, they do not want to finance a longer and more expensive IT training for their son. With the exception of this case, participants were cared for both emotionally and financially. We can state that there are NEETs having a very supportive background. (While the opposite can be also stated, no further estimation would make sense on the basis of the interviews due to the limits of the research methodology.)

To estimate the **inner strain** and stress of NEETs is quite impossible interviewing their relatives and close connections, but at least in some cases, we were able to detect that they themselves suffered from their situation. (Sometimes, when contacting the NEETs after completing the questionnaire, we could feel this, and one common reason for not asking their friends/parents to join the focus group interviews was that they did not want to involve them in this problem, and in many cases the ones who could have been asked to participate, worked till late in the evening.)

Besides psychological problems, physical **illnesses** were detected in some cases (e.g.: epilepsy, smaller mutation within the left-part of the brain, asthma). Regarding children within the child protection, it was emphasised that expensive dental services and the high price of glasses with an acceptable design prevent these young people from having a better job, as their appearance did not meet the requirements of a higher status job. Only one case was mentioned when permanent illness (in this particular case epilepsy) was identified as a reason for being permanently unemployed. (We have to add that though her illness was revealed as the reason for several rejections, the NEET is a Roma girl with 2 small children and with no higher education. No similar illnesses were mentioned by the interviewees.)

Around 20-25% of the NEETs had undergone temporary **psychotherapy** in their lifetime, but far more of them would need it according to the interviewees. According to the participants of the focus groups and the in-depth interviews, their previous therapy experiences were diverse: some experienced some improvement, but nobody was fully satisfied or stated that the problem was solved. It was declared at TEGYESZ focus groups that therapy was mainly available under the young-teenager age and the NEETs quit therapy easily. The most common problems were anxiety, depression, panic disorder. None mentioned eating disorders (even when the question was supported).

### 2.3. Does a family member have the same problem?

*Question: Does a family member have the same psychological or work-related problem?*

Many participants mentioned that the NEET's problem is **unique** within the family. They experience neither work-related nor psychological problems. "She has a sister, but she is very open, she has a totally different personality. But Anna is very closed, she cannot imagine going to an office every day." "I have 6 children – 3 of them are fostered – but I have this problem only with Dzseni." "He is the youngest child, his siblings work and do not have these problems."

On the other hand, some of the NEETs' problems rooted in the family. "He acts just as can be expected from his father's son." (According to the mother, the son has panic disorder and depression, and the mother herself has a psychiatric illness as well.) "The family also has stage fright." (Add.: According to a NEET with anxiety.) "Trauma-repetition" and addictions were general among the NEETs mentioned by TEGYESZ. It is not surprising that mainly couples mentioned a breaking point conflicts and bad conditions within the family background. When these were mentioned by parents, they described that psychological support was requested, but the problem was not fully solved.

## 2.4. Who does the NEET trust with problems?

*Questions: Who does he/she listen to? What is his/her relationship with family members? Does he/she have friends? Did his/her relationships change due to permanent unemployment? If yes, how? Is there anybody outside family and friends whom he/she involves in his/her problems (e.g.: teacher, priest, medical specialist, supporter)?*

All the NEETs had somebody they **trusted**. In many cases, the participants named themselves in this question. Some of TEGYESZ NEETs seemed to have a close and sincere relationship with their guardians and fosters. Sometimes close relationships mean motivation as well, but in this regard the parents fail in many cases.

Some of the NEETs do not have **friends**. Their only close relationships are connected to the family (in some cases in-laws are included as well). By Roma NEETs, the broader family circle was mentioned more often in terms of close relationships. Some of the NEETs – excluding TEGYESZ, Temporary Home of Families and Bag NEETs – formed close friendships through the internet. Besides virtual contacts, they keep in touch in person as well. Many of these connections are related to a hobby – animated films (Manga), novel writing, etc. Bad company/gang influence were mentioned more often as an experience from the past. Children within the child protection system often have connections with companions, youngsters in the same situation – they feel that they are the only ones accepting them (These connections are not always close.) It was also added that the children living in a residential home are not be accepted by their mates living in a family. A few situations were mentioned when this prejudice was disproved.

Overall, we had the impression that NEETs have/had a good relationship with other **family members** beside the interviewee. Among the NEETs mentioned by TEGYESZ, siblings were most frequently mentioned to be the NEETs' trusted connections. "She can have a better talk with her godfather and godmother." "They (older siblings) love Levente very much." "When the older sister moved from home – as a result of a conflict, Viki felt betrayed. Though this happened 4 years ago, Viki still feels bad about it."

Change in relationships was not mentioned as a result of unemployment. According to the responses, relationships seem to change parallel with the youngster's course of life. The NEETs we came in contact with, look for connection generally. There was only one NEET whose mother told that: "He doesn't have a friend, but he should. He is ashamed of his situation in front of his former classmates." A NEET girl had connection solely with her husband, son and mother-in-law, but she was satisfied with this situation.

The mentors of BAGázs were mentioned several times by the parents and friends of NEETs as persons they trust and can turn to.

## 2.5. State- or civil support

*Questions: Have you ever received support for further training, or in order to be employed? Whom did you ask for support? (Possible answers supported the question after a while.)*

Many of the NEETs had experience with the **Employment Departments** (Foglalkoztatási Osztály – formerly: Munkaügyi Központ). This experience was, in most of the cases, dissatisfactory. Administrative burdens and administrative formalities instead of real support were mentioned as criticism. According to the responses, they were not able to offer adequate options for the NEETs. Some of the NEETs received support by creating a proper CV. The motivation of visiting and cooperating with this office is almost exclusively to gain subsidy and social security.

The **family support services** (családsegítő szolgálat) were mentioned several times during focus groups organised at Salva Vita Office, in Bag and during in-depth interviews. Many of these interviewees were contacted through the family support services, but the participants who were involved independently of the family support services, mentioned this office as well. Reasons for cooperation of the NEETs' or the NEETs' family with the family support services are different, but the support received from the family support services is considered useful. Some of the NEETs in question had the opportunity to take part in psychotherapy for a year or more, some were offered a training for free, in some cases career orientation was mentioned as well. When referring to the free English course, it was also mentioned that the NEET did not use the opportunity, because she considered it as of low quality – based on general opinion regarding the state-financed language courses. Social workers helped one NEET with elementary school education, she was helped to manage his/her debt as well. We must add that some of the NEETs' sole motivation for cooperation is to receive support/subsidy.

One NEET visited **youth centres (e.g.: H52, Konkáv)** very actively – often with his mother. They were very satisfied with the existence and operation of these services. Another NEET was helped to create a proper CV.

**Mentors** at Bag, **guardians and fosters**, and employees of the Temporary Home of Families were mentioned to have helped with administrative issues of employment (and in other fields of life), they all provide support with preparation for an interview and for certain other situations. Mentors, guardians and fosters told us that these tasks are part of their duties. Regarding mentors at Bag and the employees of the Temporary Home of Families, this statement was confirmed by the participants of the focus groups. According to the interviewees, NEETs very much appreciated the support of the social workers of Temporary Homes of Families.

Other options, like wage support from the state, mobility or accommodation allowances were mentioned regarding only one NEET, but the interviewees knew others who used company buses or a workers' hostel outside Budapest.

Only one of the NEETs in question was an active **volunteer** – the one actively visiting youth centres – and volunteering was not mentioned as a proposed opportunity by other supporters.

## 2.6. Needs

*Questions: What kind of help, support, programme would these young people need to step forward / to improve their circumstances? Did the NEETs come up with their own requirements? What should a support centre look like in order to be visited by the NEET? What kind of programmes would be attractive? What would you recommend to the leader of the centre?*

According to our experience, NEETs have different needs so personal advisory and professional support is a crucial factor for each of them from the beginning of the project. On the other hand, there are common characteristics regarding these youngsters' needs according to the interviews, and it was also highlighted that some of the services are probably more popular than others. There are different types of recommendations range from personal development through changing the conditions of employment to diverse trainings. The identified **needs and ideas** are listed below:

- **A sense of achievement** – in many cases the first one in their lives – would be the most useful support according to the majority of the interviewees.
- **Psychologist** – psychotherapy: This was the most commonly mentioned need.
- Different types of **personal skills improvement** trainings were mentioned: self-knowledge improvement, career orientation was highlighted mainly by “professionals” (TEGYESZ participants and mentors, but they considered it essential). Strengthening self-confidence and motivation training was considered useful as well. Playful, entertaining trainings, teambuilding games were mentioned as well, as they provide immediate feedback and joy, which many of the NEETs miss.
- **General training regarding employment:** this could include knowledge about how to behave, how to speak, techniques for job searching; preparation of a CV, preparing for a job interview. (Problems with obeying rules and being on time were rarely mentioned by the interviewees. With specific questions, many of the interviewees stated that the NEET in question is reliable, arrives on time. With questionnaires, we experienced that many of the NEETs promised to be at a certain place and time to complete the questionnaire, and did not appear at all, or were very late.)
- Many of the interviewees considered having a **mentor** as a good opportunity. Besides a general mentor, the need for a professional mentor was mentioned in some cases. “She would be very happy to talk to an art entrepreneur. Where can she start? How to negotiate with a gallery?” Entrepreneurship was mentioned in another case as well.
- **Positive feedback** can be a need itself. “He requires positive feedback regarding the task he has done, and someone whom he can perform for.”
- **A role model** could also help in some cases as it was mentioned at Bag: “The situation is somewhat better with the boys, there are local predecessors who had set path for them. Some youngsters finished secondary school together, they live in Budapest in a rented flat now. They come home frequently and the guys here listen to them very much. They show that there is a way out of the Roma projects. They were asked to start a youth club.”

- **Professional trainings** for free (professional IT) (add.: could be interpreted as a scholarship). High quality and usefulness were important criteria regarding trainings. Short-term results (not more than half a year) are required as well. Trainings possible to attend besides work would be very much preferred. Some mentioned that allowances would make attendance more successful. (Relatively short trainings are needed, on the one hand, to be able to earn money sooner, and on the other hand, because many NEETs cannot stand waiting. Perseverance skills and the ability to wait should be improved at the same time.) Some of the NEETs would like to finish elementary school.
- **Welcoming work environment:** work environment is a very important factor. “He is ashamed of his anxiety.” Employers’ and current employees’ sensitivity trainings could also help.
- **Team spirit:** NEETs at Bag would hardly start / try anything alone outside Bag and without their friends. This is a very hard obstacle to overcome. Relatives considers this as good: “It’s better if they can go in a team, they encourage each other.” Providing the possibility to meet and work/be/study with peers was considered as an advantage by more interviewees regarding the youth community centre.
- Gaining more and **practical experience** about different workplaces and jobs was required by many. Besides factory visits, the possibility to try a job was highly recommended. According to the respondents, this could take place in the workplace or outside the factory as well. (On the other hand, employers shared the opinion that many professions are not popular among young people)
- **Volunteering** was considered as a possible option to start with by a few interviewees, as it can help to gain relevant experience. (It can work only when the basic needs of the NEET’s are satisfactorily covered.)
- Jobs without experience required: to overcome the obstacle that all vacancies expect previous work experience.
- **Accommodation:** some of the NEETs cannot afford accommodation, the couples or families where only one member is working, cannot afford to rent a flat – especially not in Budapest. Socially rented flats were also mentioned related to local governance support.
- **Weekly wages:** could encourage and enable NEETs to switch from the black market to legal employment.
- **More available medical services:** (drug withdrawal treatment is practically not available for children; dentist; glasses – that the young people accept to wear; psychologist with whom therapy cannot be quit, and the therapist is available for a longer period of time).
- Recommendations included financing instead of providing a service (support of accommodation or travelling costs, financing the training of other organisations etc.).

The idea of a **youth community centre** was generally liked. Many of the interviewees said NEETs could be motivated to visit regularly. Different advantages were expressed: “He is lonely, he goes out but does not have social programmes.” Some doubts regarding the centre were expressed as well: “I don’t know who will be able to motivate her to go.” “He would go anywhere, if it is somehow guaranteed that he’ll succeed in having a job.” The idea was very

much liked at TEGYESZ, and some preferred characteristics were mentioned: "These children would prefer to be in as homogenous groups as possible... but, at the same time, they desire to participate in other groups as well. They fear that they won't be accepted if children living in a family get to know their background." "Strict rules can't be obeyed by these young adults, the system should become more flexible." "This layer of society could be motivated with money." The participants at Bag acknowledged that the community centre, operated by BAGázs, helps a lot. "It is organised for young people, they can share their problems, and can influence each other in a positive way. Boring everyday life could become more exciting with the help of a centre as well."

According to our own experiences, in many cases, a **career advisory** conversation with a broad-minded expert of the labour market could be a big support. We had the impression that even the ones having work experience and searching actively, overlook real opportunities, and they can form their own ideas after gaining another perspective. (e.g.: The webmaster NEET speaks a Slavic language on a high level and English as well, but has not thought about using it. Part time job as a teacher at moms' clubs/kids' art/music lessons can be another option for more of the NEET girls. The artist girl passed her art teacher exams as well.)

It was declared that **NEETs within the child protection system** need much more support: "At least 50 times more should be done for these children than for the ones living in families. The 8 grades should be finished. Then psychotherapy – individual and group therapy. And after that can something be done." "These children don't stand a chance, all their chances fade away." "The efficiency of such programmes is very low. We estimate that the efficiency of our work is around 10%." "They are at the end of their rope by the time they are 18. (means: They have accommodation and food, but after their 18th birthday, they lose these benefits, and have nothing.)" "Army and police – can serve as an option, meant in a positive way, their need for dependence/attachment and infantilism can be satisfied. But Special Needs Education (SNI) children won't pass." "It is extremely difficult for these young adults to build a civilian life."

Some of the interviewees mentioned that the **employers need to change** themselves as well: "They exploit them." "Trust and normal communication would be needed." "If she makes a mistake, she is ostracised. Train her, and then the child will be able to do it." "They (NEETs) do not dare to ask about the work contract." "If one tries to act in their own best interest, they will be fired, 'cause they are not a puppet."

During the interviews a few employers seemed to be quite popular among the NEETs, the most frequently mentioned ones by the participants were Tesco's and McDonald's. These are considered as desired and realistically reachable workplaces. Some of the NEETs had previous knowledge about these workplaces through their own experiences or through their acquaintances. As more NEETs in question had peers working at these workplaces, they thought – and this consideration is known by the participants of the interviews as well – that they are able to meet the criteria of these employers. At the same time, these employers have many sites, thus geographically they are easily accessible for the NEETs.

## II. Employers' focus group

### 1. Participants

We managed to gain opinions from different sectors and from companies of different sizes. Even the geographic operations of the organisations were diverse and participants from public organisations, from NGOs and from private companies were present. Eight of the employers have each several thousand employees all over Hungary (e.g.: The Hungarian Post is the 2nd largest employer of the country with 28,000 employees, Denso has 4500 employees, the Military has enormous receptivity as well). Sector specific experiences and expectations can be valid and used by many more employers within the same field. The participant employers employ people with a very wide range of qualifications: unskilled workers or people with a short-term training qualification (OKJ) work for some of the companies, while there are enterprises where the minimum requirement is secondary school graduation.

Some of the participants had psychological degrees besides HR qualification.

Interviewees represented the following employers:

<b>Name of the organisations, companies</b>
1. Auchan Hungary
2. Denso Hungary
3. dm – Drogerie Markt
4. Getronics
5. Hungarian Post
6. Hungarian Red Cross
7. Institution of National Heritage
8. Kindergarten of Lágymányos (11. district of Budapest)
9. MÁV (Hungarian Railways) Service Centre
10. Military of Hungary
11. Praktiker
12. Provident
13. SMEs (e.g.: BIG FISH, e-DiMa, Tricky Communications) through Indisol
14. Spar Hungary

The focus group was a lively and vibrant conversation, and according to the feedback, the participants themselves gained new insights from their professional peers. Participants were highly interested in NEETs as a hard-to-reach population in Hungary.

## 2. Main conclusions

We present the main conclusions of the interviews in the order of the questions.

Many of the participants were self-motivated to attend the interviews, many of them expressed their motivation for further possible cooperation, or/and for hiring employees from the NEET participants of the programme.

### 2.1 Challenges from the employers' perspective regarding the employment of permanent NEETs

*Questions: What are the main challenges and problems from the employers' perspective regarding the long-term employment of permanently unemployed youngsters? (Regarding (1) recruitment - selection, (2) integration and work.) How can a candidate pass the first round – being invited for an interview; how can an interview end in failure? Do employers have any goals, services, strategies for the long-term retention of young people?*

All of the interviewees mentioned shortage of workforce as a phenomenon that affects their company significantly. All participants agreed that, currently, the biggest challenge is to find an employee for the long term. "As a workplace we are no longer attractive. And applicants don't like higher demands for substitutions, which is a consequence of workforce shortage."

None of the employers have dedicated programmes for permanent NEETs. No employer registers permanent unemployment status regarding a new employee, thus the number of formerly permanent unemployed persons cannot be estimated.

Many participants emphasized that **motivation** is needed for employment, and more employers see lack of motivation as a key factor in unemployment and in frequent changes of workplaces.

Another obstacle can be that the youngster applies for **jobs that do not match his/her** qualities. Unrealistic self-image and lack of self-knowledge were mentioned as a general problem. Both the educational system and the NEET's environment (family, friends, schools) were considered responsible for not providing real feedback. "At least schools should orient their students: you'll get the paper, but be aware that this won't be enough." Career advice or conversation would be essential for all. One of the participants helps abused women occasionally (one afternoon per month/every two months). "There are more of us who help as volunteers, so somebody is always available for these women. And sometimes only one conversation is enough for somebody to change."

Employment **criteria and requirements** are lower than before. With some employers the chance is given to everybody who applies, and reaches the minimum qualification requirements. There are *jobs for unqualified workers* offered by more participant employers (e.g.: Denso and Post – employ operators; within the commercial industry – dm, Praktiker, Auchan, Spar – shelf-stacker, shopkeeper positions exist; kindergartens – can employ nurses) but completed elementary school education is a must. "We cannot hire anyone completed elementary school education, though it would very much be needed." Practically, these employers do not reject anybody before a personal job interview, and showing up at the

interview in most cases equals hiring. Some employers are willing to pay the training costs when a lower level qualification (OKJ) is needed for the position. Many employers among the interviewees did not require foreign language skills. Spar was considering hiring people without completed elementary school education but this idea was finally rejected without implementation. As mentioned, currently their labour force need can be covered without the employment of such people, furthermore, underqualified people can pose a risk for the company (e.g.: they might be unable to obey the health, safety and other types of rules). In spite of this, the interviewee could imagine that a strategic agreement with the government could guarantee the financial background of the education of these people at the company, in exchange for their long-term employment.

Necessarily, there are positions and workplaces where *stricter criteria and qualifications* are required (e.g.: MÁV Service Centre has positions for high school graduates or above, Getronics needs IT skills and qualifications, Provident hires employees only with a university or college degree).

**Application** can be a barrier as well: an employer mentioned lack of adequate job seeking techniques. How to write a CV and a motivation letter was mentioned by more employers. Participants had different views, some opinions suggested that youngsters are able to write a CV generally, some disagreed. According to one interviewee's experience, the situation is almost tragic: CV and motivation letter writing was introduced as a subject at a school, where the teacher described motivation letters as if they were the same as a CV with the exception that they are written in full sentences, and the children were also told that hand written CVs are a real option – not a modern option but an old-fashioned option. As mentioned before, CV-s do not always count as a selection criterion on the current job market.

**Selection/short-listing** changed fundamentally in the last 1-2 years: "CV-s were sent and we were able to select them. Now they (potential employees) can choose." When the employers can choose, they select according to some common considerations: "What I look at: was he/she able to edit a CV? Is it logical? If he/she has work experience, is there any career path or only different positions come after each other? For me, a longer period of unemployment doesn't count." "If she has had many previous workplaces – that's a warning." "If I see, that a young person cannot find a job, I always try to find out what the problem is. A short introduction, which answers this question, helps a lot."

With many employers, *lack of experience* is not a problem currently, but formerly, it used to be: "Beforehand we had the chance to choose, and applicants without practice were rejected by, for example, many kindergartens. But my boss was an exception, she liked inexperienced youngsters, as they are easier to shape."

The average ratio of applicants showing up for a job interview varies a lot: Generally speaking, higher requirements/qualifications and pre-screening mean better rates, according to the participants. With retail companies the appearance rate is 40-50% on average, except dm, where, similarly to Getronics, 70% show up. Red Cross has an even lower drop out at this stage.) "They choose, and they can afford to do it. I am no longer concerned with the number of an applicant's previous workplaces or how long an applicant has been unemployed... I try to do my best and be very kind." "Unemployed people can have an advantage in the current

shortage of workforce – they can start immediately.” “Under a certain number of colleagues, we are forced to hire somebody, even if he/she is far from the best. Our colleagues are still in a better situation with lower quality hires than with unfilled position.”

“The hardest interview is when a candidate doesn’t speak. Despite this they can be hired.” Auchan elaborated a methodology, applied for disabled persons: “We have 50 cards with a picture in the front and a question in the back. The applicant has to choose. In this way a conversation can be started more easily. As an example, there is a pic with a garbage truck and the related question is: What would you throw away from your life?” An interviewee also mentioned that speaking can be even harder for people after a longer period of unemployment.

- Though for employers and for some positions, an interview is only a formality, and almost everybody will be hired, there are some typical reasons for rejection: In many cases, employers test the applicant’s reading comprehension with their own tests, or an “application form has to be filled manually”.
- “If a candidate cannot behave in a disciplined fashion on the selection day, we will not hire him/her.”
- If an untrue statement is noticed in the CV, the applicant will be rejected. (“she/he writes having a degree and it turns out that she/he hasn’t”).
- An untidy person will not be hired at some places. “If a person arrives in a slovenly fashion, retention of the current staff is endangered.”
- The Army has strict criteria to comply with – though from an educational point of view, completed elementary school education is enough. Even candidates with a certificate of no criminal record will be further investigated, and many fail in psychological and physical aptitude tests. The Army has a big inflow of applicants and 20% of them fail in the first week, while the Army’s custommade tests are completed. It was also mentioned that the psychological and physical condition of the youth has not changed within the last few years. Psychological stability is extremely important, as they carry weapons.” Another dividing line by the Army is the 5 weeks of basic training, when the candidates are separated from their family and environment.”
- “Many unemployed people are in a bad physical condition – untreated illnesses, excess weight can be a problem upon hiring.” “When talking about unemployed people, a medical check up is a stricter test than the interview.”

Many of the interviewees had experience with youngsters who applied for and intended to work in **groups**. On the one hand, the advantages of a higher retention rate and engagement were mentioned, on the other hand, integration into a bigger team and managing the dynamics of the group itself can be challenging. It was also added that youngsters tend to attach themselves to group members too much. “They should be able to accept more easily if they can’t work together or in the same shifts from the very beginning. We try to take into consideration individual needs but not always succeed from the first moment.”

Some of the employers try to recruit from schools, providing a compulsory practice place. Decreasing headcounts at schools will soon force them to start other ways, as the profession of shop assistant is becoming less popular.

Differences among more generations were mentioned as a hurdle for smooth **integration**, and some organisations try hard to manage them. In the Army special attention is paid to putting

people of similar age close to each other, as they spend much time together, sometimes in a very small place. It was mentioned that different competencies and skills can be made use of in easing the integration process. The younger generation is comfortable using electronic devices and they can teach the new applications to older colleagues.

Opinions were split regarding the difficulties of permanent NEETs' integration. The spontaneous integration of permanent NEETs could be successful only in smaller groups according to one of the respondents. Another participant mentioned that integration can be achieved without big struggles. "Permanent NEETs are somehow similar to mothers returning to work after a longer break. If they had been searching for a job for a longer time, they can have a stronger motivation when hired. They can experience a mental block inside (from nervousness), which is not surprising, but as a result, sometimes they are too willing. They should be convinced that if they were selected, they will be able to meet the expectations, a healthy level of self-confidence should be supported."

"We try to bring back and retain people from the periphery of society (permanent unemployed persons from North-Eastern Hungary). But we have seen more young people who had difficulty getting used to a big corporation's culture. We needed more patience with them. We had to go an extra mile with them: labour agencies began to prepare them regarding basic employment skills. They were also provided accommodation in a dormitory." (Denso)

The integration of employees is supported by a mentor program at some multinational companies (e.g. Praktiker and dm).

Currently, employers seem to be more patient with new employees than before. "There are situations when we see that someone cannot fit into an organisation, we used to dismiss such employees. Now we try everything, help them to learn, do reorganisations, change the work program..." "We do not fire them on the first occasion when something goes wrong." Many of the employers try to teach / train the employees, more explanation and more time warning were mentioned as well.

One participant (public sector) mentioned that there is a big difference between public and private sector workplaces, and many people fail to accommodate to the new situation when they start to work in the public sector after the private sector, and it is also the other way around.

The representative of Post voiced her doubts about transit programmes. They implemented a transit program for disabled persons with the aim of employing people at an open workforcemarket, after working at a protected workplace. The program was not successful: in spite of the slow transition, it was hard for the individuals to meet the open workforcemarket expectations, and they returned to the protected employers. As a possible solution for this situation, the idea of a protected workplace within the open workforce employer market was mentioned. We consider this idea as a possibility for the employment of NEETs as well.

**The retention** of employees is becoming more and more challenging for the employers, even for those who do not have a problem with recruitment. At this point, *generation problems* were mentioned more often (as described above, differences between the generations can cause a

problem in integration). As expected before, employers face a higher rate of fluctuation among young people. Some of the problems mentioned as typical by some of the employers are: "They quit without notice. They work for 2 days and on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, they do not show up. ." "They have no work ethic." "They quit in spite of internal trainings." "Many of the youngsters get bored after 5-6 months. In many cases, they only want to try something new. They don't really know what they want." "They overestimate their possibilities." "They want a lot of money immediately." "Electronic devices, mobiles and isolation. As a result, working in a group is difficult." "Communication with other people can be hard, what works on Facebook, is not sure to work in real life." One of the interviewees mentioned that youngsters need (positive) feedback, thus they – as an employer – place great emphasis on improving the ways of giving feedback: they provide feedback towards the employee and also expect them to voice their opinion. (Need for feedback was mentioned in the NEETs' environment focus groups as well.) More respondents mentioned the need for a leader whom the employees can look up to and perform for. This "key person" can be an older colleague as well.

Not all interviewees agreed with the generation theories, but it was generally admitted that fitting the corporate culture is important in retention.

One participant mentioned that the highest fluctuation rate can be experienced regarding low qualified employees – with some parts of the organisation it can reach 50%, though a lot of energy is invested into these employees.

Insufficient retention can cause leaders' burn out.

*Working atmosphere* is considered as a significant factor in long-term employment. A familiar environment was mentioned by several participants. Praktiker even uses the slogan of "second family". According to the experiences of one respondent, a good atmosphere can even compensate for an unsatisfactory family background.

Besides the working atmosphere, motivation was mentioned as a key factor in retaining people. According to the respondents, motivation can be increased by:

- promotion;
- professional development;
- work-life balance and satisfying individual needs if possible;
- home-office;
- improvement of working environment (cool working conditions (coloured walls, possibility of listening to music in the warehouse, free coffee, etc.), extra health care services,
- characteristics of the job – more diverse positions can be more motivating.

Regarding *psychological problems*, employers are more tolerant if the problems are discovered during employment and not upon hiring. There are some organisations where employees can turn to their leader, who tries to find a solution and provides support. "That's it nowadays, almost everybody has a problem. There are different levels, of course." Psychologists are rarely available in person, but hot-lines are present with some employers. "As an employer, we cannot do anything with psychological problems. But if they are treated, we are tolerant." Spar intends to introduce a so called "employee assistant" in order to help its employees with personal problems. Psychological problems, family problems and financial problems can be addressed via this channel as well.

## 2.2 State- or civilian-provided services to support NEET's employment and retention

*Questions: What kind of civilian/state provided professional services, support would you require to provide more opportunities for NEETs? In the last few weeks the relatives and friends of NEETs were asked about the support needed; please comment on the ideas raised by them (only those were asked which weren't mentioned before).*

Many ideas were raised. All participants tried to add new recommendations, and in most cases, many participants agreed with the recommendations. Many of the ideas were in line with the ideas explored in the NEETs' environment interviews. It can be declared that much of the support should be provided to the NEETs well before they start the application process for a position.

Identified ideas:

- **Motivation** of the NEETs was mentioned as an essential factor in success. Some mentioned that the question of motivation should be raised as the zero step, as it is also needed to make the NEET able to find the potential workplaces. "Application already means motivation."
- **Approaching and reaching** the NEETs is essential. One participant recommended building partnerships with NGOs, which could work with NEETs and can support their understanding. It was added that NEETs should be geographically located in the vicinity of the workplace, but at the same time, we must add that some of the employers provide accommodation or company buses for their employees.
- **Career advice services and self-knowledge trainings** are considered to be useful. An experience was also shared: the interviewee provides career advice services as a volunteer in an organisation supporting abused women.
- **Soft skill trainings** could be provided by NGOs. Many of the respondents shared the opinion that NEETs are self-doubted, thus improvement of self-esteem and self-confidence was emphasized.
- **Teaching the basic requirements of a workplace:** arriving on time, basic social skills, communication norms – replying to an email, etc. (need for communication and social skills trainings were very much meant for people with higher education as well).
- **Education, sensitivity training** for the companies to enable them to open towards these youngsters.
- Many of the employers have or can imagine having **open days**. But "a one-day come-and- see is only scratching the surface".
- **Better knowledge and more information of the positions** were mentioned by some respondents. "New entries don't know that working as an operator means strict rules, short breaks, etc." "They get frightened about how much new information should be learnt." "Trial days do not exist; it would be very hard to manage them from an administrative point of view." Trial work was mentioned as a possible option – one of the participants uses this method.
- **Mentoring** by an external mentor was considered as a good option. "This is the key to success."
- Many of the employers provide **trainings for professional development** and in-house careers are promoted.

- **Accommodation and support of travelling costs** / a company bus is already available with more employers (Denso, Army, Post).
- 3 employers operate an **anonymous line** for personal problems. Usage of these hot-lines are not always frequent, many employees are afraid of using them. Change in corporate culture would be needed to increase their usage.
- It was not possible to have weekly paid wages from any of the employers, generally it was not seen as a real option for the future. The main reason was the enormous burden of administration: if it is available for one person, it should be available for everybody.

State supported programmes were not popular among the participants: “We do not participate in state supported programs; the administration process is too tough.”

Two programmes are worth describing briefly because of their similarities of the L.I.K.E. programme.

- **Red Cross** currently runs a programme for NEETs (with a stricter age range, and permanent NEET status is not required for participation). As a first step, a half-year-long volunteering opportunity is provided, then NEETs are further helped to get employed. Youngsters can participate in trainings, starting a bit after the beginning of volunteering but parallel with that. The mentoring part of the programme works very well, despite youngsters are not willing to attend trainings (driving licence and language courses) even for free. 5-10 young persons are involved in the programme at the same time. No financial allowance is provided during the training. Joint activities other than trainings are not available for them either.
- Post and Auchan run a **dedicated programme** for disabled people, and Post started another programme for Roma people (with BAGázs). Due to their favourable experiences, they firmly stated that the only solution to employ more permanent NEETs is to start a dedicated programme. “Within the programme, both recruitment and retention are addressed. Finding the matching points can be the key to success: how can we bridge the gap between the job-seeker and the employer. For a special target group, special tools are needed, the exploration of needs is important from both employers’ and NEETs’ side.” (Further, deeper and more exact research meant: that each phase of employment needs separate exploration involving the particular employer taking part in the programme.) Extra allowances were mentioned as unavoidable: accommodation, fringe benefits, programmes according to the needs of the target group.

## Annex1

### Guide – NEET environment focus group (relatives, family members, guardians, friends)

topic	objective/instruction	what we are looking for/planned time
<b>LEAD</b> Introduction of the project. Goal of the focus group: to explore the areas where young people need help and the factors that have made them NEETs.	We emphasize that the research is anonymous and we ask for only the first name during the introduction.	no analysis <b>3'</b>
<b>1. Current situation of the young person and activity:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who is the youngster, what is your connection with her/him?</li> <li>What did the youngster learn or work for the last time?</li> <li>Why did it end?</li> <li>If he/she worked: was it black or legal?</li> <li>Why she/he cannot find a job according to your opinion?</li> <li>What is he/she doing currently?</li> <li>How does she/he spend her/his time?</li> <li>Does she/he go somewhere regularly?</li> <li>Would the youngster like to change her/his situation? (Does she/he would like to study, if yes, where? Does she/he look for a job? If yes, where?)</li> </ul>	In a circle, one by one, concrete details, few sentences are asked.	pitfalls, difficulties, opportunities, individual ambitions, giving up situations, etc. According to the youngster, is his/her NEET situation a problem?  2' per participant = <b>25'</b>
<b>2. How do these youngsters live/bear their situation?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does it cause stress within the family?</li> <li>Do they experience any of the listed problems (e.g. eating disorders, sleeping disorders, addiction, problematic psychological status – anxiety, depression)?</li> <li>Did the youngsters visit a doctor concerning these problems?</li> <li>Does the NEET have any recognised illness?</li> <li>Did he/she undergo any treatment?</li> <li>Did this treatment help?</li> </ul>	We're talking about sensitive issues, if needed, anonymity should be ensured again.  We ask the participants to raise their hands if they would tell us similar things, and to supplement if they would like to.	special needs, psychological problems, strategies to address problems <b>10'</b>

<b>3. How do the family members bear/cope with the situation?</b>	(To be asked only if has not been mentioned before.)	<b>(8')</b>
<b>4. Does a family member have the same problem?</b>	(To be asked only if has not been mentioned before.) If someone has not mentioned before: has a similar problem been experienced within your family previously?	Does the family pattern affect the young person? <b>(7')</b>
<b>5. Who does the youngster trust regarding his/her problem?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is there somebody he/she listen to?</li> <li>What is his/her relationship with family members?</li> <li>Does he/she have friends?</li> <li>Did his/her relationships change due to permanent unemployment? If yes, how?</li> <li>Is there anybody outside family and friends whom he/she involves in his/her problems (e.g.: teacher, priest, medical specialist, supporter)?</li> </ul>	Was a friend or family member mentioned? The change is interesting – does permanent unemployment influence relationships? (The network is explored via the questionnaire, do not spend much time on this question.)	Do they have strong connections? <b>10'</b>
<b>7. State- or civil support</b> <b>Have you ever received support for further training, or in order to be employed from any kind of organization or employer?</b> To whose child/sibling etc. did it happen, that <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>an expert listened to him/her at an Employment Department? (e.g. youth coordinator)</li> <li>he/she received a training?</li> <li>he/she received wagesupport / travelling allowance was offered in case of hiring?</li> <li>he/she received medical / psychological help?</li> <li>he/she received individual help (mentoring)?</li> <li>he/she was assessed, what he/she good at, what kind of job would fit him/her?</li> <li>he/she was prepared to a job interview, employment, situations?</li> <li>he/she was offered help with administration?</li> <li>he/she was adviced to try volunteering?</li> </ul> <b>Whom did you ask for support?</b> (e.g. social worker, youth coordinator, etc.)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where you satisfied with the service?</li> </ul>	+ We ask the listed services one by one: raise your hand..., every service will be "voted" (approx. values, paying attention to undecided persons)	Do the employment services reach the NEETs? <b>15'</b>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where were you satisfied with the service and why?</li> </ul>		
<b>8. Needs</b> <b>What kind of help, support, programme would these young people need to step forward or to improve?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did the NEETs come up with their own requirements?</li> <li>How should a support centre look like and what should it offer to the youngsters in order to be visited regularly by them (pleasure / entertainment or usefulness is more important?)</li> <li>What kind of programmes would be attractive? What would you recommend to the leader of the centre?</li> </ul>	medical, psychological, social, professional, work-related? overcoming isolation, volunteering, promoting healthy lifestyle, psychological stability? Possibility to practice/to improve in a hobby (e.g.: sewing, hand-crafts, music), on a regular basis. Examples can be given from question 7.	<b>20'</b>
Closing		<b>3'</b>
		<b>105'</b>

## Annex2

### Guide –Employers

topic	objective/instruction	what we are looking for/planned time
<b>LEAD</b> Introduction of the project. Goal: Representatives of employers give as detailed picture as possible about young employee', candidates' (and if possible and known NEETS') problems and opportunities from their point of view.	how will we use the research	no analysis 5'
<b>1. Introduction: where is he/she coming from? Why is she/he interested in the topic?</b>		10'
<b>2. What are the main challenges and problems from the employers' perspective regarding the long-term employment of permanently unemployed youngsters? (Regarding (1) recruitment - selection, (2) integration and work.)</b>  From an HRexpert point of view: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can a candidate pass the first round – being invited for an interview, especially when he/she does not have experience, or has been unemployed for a while?</li> <li>• What are the reasons for an immediate rejection?</li> <li>• Does the school, where the qualification was acquired, influence the selection?</li> <li>• How can an interview end in failure?</li> </ul>	The scope can be broadened towards youth in general, if talking about permanently unemployed youngsters means a problem. 1-2 and the answers are written on a flipchart.  Additional questions can support exploration of the problems, and if they are not mentioned, these questions should be asked.	first reactions, problems of employers and exploration of motivations  15' + 15'
<b>3. Let's talk about the most frequently mentioned problems in detail.</b>  ... has not been mentioned. Does it mean that it is not decisive?	Return to the most significant problems, and to the problems we do not have enough information about.	deeper knowledge regarding the important problems  + control question 10'
<b>4. What problems or situations do you think could lead to permanent unemployment of a youngster, if he/she has a qualification that otherwise would enable him/her to work?</b>  <b>How could she/he be supported?</b>	check, if not mentioned: psychological problems?	personal problems + state or employer provided tools are dominating? ideas 15'

	Keeping the conversation on track! Tools mentioned here should be removed from the last question.	
<p><b>5. Do you have any goals, services, strategies for the long-term retention of young people (e.g.: regarding to recruitment, selection, integration and work, etc.)?</b></p> <p><b>Do you have a specific experience, when a permanently unemployed youngster and/or a youngster with a mild mental illness or with another kind of problem was able to or was not able to integrate into the company?</b></p>	<p>Check: internal training? study leave?</p>	<p>10'</p> <p>5'</p>
<p><b>6. Does your company plan to increase the headcount in the next 1-2 years?</b></p> <p><b>Do you count on unemployed youngsters? If yes, to what extent?</b></p>		<p>5'?</p>
<p><b>7. What kind of civil / governmental professional services and assistance do you need as an employer to help more NEET young people get a job?</b></p>		<p>what can they mention on their own? 10'</p>
<p><b>8. In the last few weeks the relatives and friends of permanently unemployed youngsters were asked about the support needed; <b>please comment on the ideas</b> raised by them</b></p> <p>employers' side:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• company and job introduction: e.g.: factory visit, trial days</li> <li>• training within the company</li> <li>• internship programme</li> <li>• offering trial work for at least 5-10 persons</li> <li>• accommodation, support of travelling costs</li> <li>• weekly paid wages</li> </ul> <p>general:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• personal mentoring</li> <li>• wage support</li> <li>• doctor - psychologist</li> </ul>	<p>We are suggesting only those, that were not mentioned before or were mentioned by not more than 2-3 participants. Raising hands, and fast answers at the maximum.</p>	<p>need for support, services, openness to company related possibilities 20'</p>
Closing		3'
		123'