

# RURAL NEETS IN HUNGARY



2009/2019  
**OVERVIEW**

## AUTHORS

Zsombor Farkas – zsombor\_farkas@yahoo.com  
Eötvös Loránd University, Department of Social Work – ELTE

Andrea Rácz – racz.andrea.aniko@tatk.elte.hu  
Eötvös Loránd University, Department of Social Work – ELTE

Dorottya Sik – sikdorka@gmail.com  
Eötvös Loránd University, Department of Social Work – ELTE

Judit Sági – juditsagi@gmail.com  
Eötvös Loránd University, Department of Social Work – ELTE

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Hungary, NEET Youth are faced with many problems: social exclusion; lack of opportunities (e.g., education, health, infrastructure, public transport, labour market conditions); low socio-economic status; and, a lack of relationships outside the enclosed settlements.

In Hungary, the most frequent risk factors are: a socio-economically disadvantageous environment; low levels of education and schooling problems; lack of proper housing; financial problems; learning difficulties; dissatisfaction with the school; socio-emotional disorders; delinquency; health problems; homelessness; and, drug or alcohol abuse. NEET Youth are facing with this multi-dimensional difficulties, regional disparities and a lack of proper services.

The general employment statistics have been improving in Hungary since 2010. The employment rate of the 15-39-year-old population has increased from 53.0% to 62.5% between 2009 - 2019. The employment rate improved in every type of settlement/area. The improvement can be attributed to the community work in the marginalised regions micro-regions and settlements. The NEET rate shows a considerable improvement of nearly 40% between 2009 and 2019 in the urban environment for all age groups. A slight improvement can be detected in the towns and urban environment, which amounts to 25% for all age groups between 2009 and 2019. However special services and targeted programmes are required to make a difference for NEET Youth.

## ÖSSZEFOGLALÓ MAGYARORSZÁG

Magyarországon a hátrányos helyzetű fiatalok több szempontból is komoly nehézségekkel, kihívásokkal kell, hogy megküzdjenek. Az oktatási egyenlőtlenségek, a regionális különbségek, az abból fakadó rossz infrastruktúra és közlekedés, a munkaerőpiaci helyzet és a szolgáltatások hiánya összességében egy nagyon sérülékeny társadalmi csoportot eredményez. Magyarországon a munkaerőpiaci statisztikák 2010 óta javuló tendenciát mutatnak. A 15–39 éves korosztály tekintetében a javulás 9 százalékos 2009 és 2019 között. A munkanélküliségi ráta minden településtípus tekintetében javult. Ugyanakkor nem szabad elfelejteni, hogy ez a statisztikákban megjelenő javulás a hátrányos helyzetű kistérségekben a közmunka elterjedésének az eredménye, és nem a valós, elsődleges munkaerőpiacon való elhelyezkedés. A NEET fiatalok helyzetében a statisztikák alapján javuló tendencia figyelhető meg minden korcsoport és területi különbségek tekintetében. Ugyanakkor megfelelő, speciális, az érintett csoportot célzó szolgáltatások és programok kialakítása és megvalósítása szükséges a jövőben, a tartós és eredményes változás érdekében.



## 1. CONTEXTUALIZATION

Hungary is a landlocked country in East-Central Europe with a land area of 93,030 km<sup>2</sup>. It has 2,106 km of borders, shared with Austria to the west, Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia to the south and southwest, Romania to the southeast, Ukraine to the northeast, and Slovakia to the north. Administratively, Hungary is divided into 19 counties, Budapest as the Capital of Hungary is independent of any county government. The official languages are Hungarian, 98.3 % of the population identify themselves Hungarian, 3.2 % Romani and 1.8% German. Distribution of religious affiliation is 54.3% Christianity (39% Catholicism, 13.8 % Protestantism, 3.3% other Christians, 0.2% Orthodox Church, 0.1% Judaism). Hungary is a unitary, parliamentary, representative and democratic republic. The Hungarian political system operates under a framework reformed in 2012 and the constitutional document is the Fundamental Law of Hungary. Amendments generally require a two-thirds majority of parliament. The fundamental principles of the constitution (as expressed in the articles guaranteeing human dignity, the separation of powers, the state structure, and the rule of law) are valid in perpetuity.

**Youth, Youth Policy:** The age of legal adulthood in Hungary is 18, the age of culpability is 14 and the compulsory educational age is until 16. During the democratic transition of Hungary from 1989 to 2010, there was no top-level youth strategy that overarched alternating governmental cycles. This tendency of discontinuity was broken with the adoption of the National Youth Strategy, which was passed by the Hungarian Parliament under resolution 88/2009. (X. 29.). The completion of the strategy received strong support from the government, and it was also built on a wide consensus between NGOs, experts and political parties. In 2010, the government established top-level bodies by integrating formerly independent ministries. Youth policy was moved under the umbrella of the largest single body of the administration, the Ministry of Human Capacities. (Youth Policy Review in Hungary, 2016). The current youth policy framework programme of the government was published in 2012, called "For the Future of the New Generation" (Youth Policy Review in Hungary, 2016). After the 2014 elections, no major changes were made to the basic structure of the government, but youth policy was separated from sports and moved to a newly formed State Secretariat for Family, Youth and International Affairs, where a deputy secretary of state was assigned to youth affairs. As a part of this re-organisation, the implementation of the New Generation framework programme was also taken over by the State Secretariat.



Furthermore, a consultative body was created in 2013: The Youth Expert. Its task is to advise and coordinate between the different youth policy actors. (Youth Policy Review in Hungary, 2016). The two most important umbrella youth organisations of Hungary are the National Youth Council (Nemzeti Ifjúsági Tanács), founded in 2012 and acting as an institution for supporting young people and representing youth organisations of Hungary, as well as the Hungarian Youth Conference Alliance (Magyar Ifjúsági Konferencia) (established in 1999), a forum of Hungarian youth and their organisations in Hungary (Youth Policy Review in Hungary, 2016).

*“Hungary presented a Youth Guarantee (YG) Implementation Plan on 6 December 2013, which was updated in April 2014. The Youth Guarantee (YG) scheme in Hungary was formally launched on 1 January 2015 and was rolled-out progressively in three phases of implementation linked to target groups: until the end of June 2016 the Hungarian YG focused on long-term unemployed (LTU) youth, until end 2017 on those unemployed for at least 4 months, and since the beginning of 2018 the guarantee has extended to all young people. Since February 2017, registration can be performed online or via the PES. The Ministry for the National Economy has overall responsibility for the Hungarian Youth Guarantee programme, in close cooperation with the Ministry of Human Resources. The National Employment Services (PES) have primary responsibility for the implementation and coordination of the scheme.”*

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1161&langId=en&intPagelId=3338>

**Education:** Education in Hungary is predominantly public, and run by the Ministry of Human Resources. Pre-school kindergarten education is compulsory and provided for all children between three and six years old, after which school attendance is also compulsory until age of sixteen. Primary education usually lasts for eight years. Secondary education includes three traditional types of schools focused on different academic levels: the Gymnasium enrolls the most gifted children and prepares students for university studies; the secondary vocational schools for intermediate students lasts four years and the technical school prepares pupils for vocational education and the world of work. The system is partly flexible and bridges exist, graduates from a vocational school can undertake a two years program to have access to vocational higher education for instance. ([https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/magyarorsz%C3%A1g/organisation-education-system-and-its-structure\\_hu](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/magyarorsz%C3%A1g/organisation-education-system-and-its-structure_hu))



**Employment:** The legal age of entry into the labour market is 18, however, after 16 it is not compulsory to learn, so with the permission of the parents it is legal to work from the age of 16. Hence, the legal adulthood age is 18. Youth work in Hungary fits with the discontinuous traditions of youth policy. Its contemporary understanding and infrastructure were created by Mobilitás National Youth Service, and since 2013 most of the methodological support and knowledge base of youth work can be found in the New Generation Centre Non-profit Ltd. (Új Nemzedék Központ)

Since 2003 different forms of formal youth worker education have been in existence, but the prestige and recognition of the youth profession is still incomparable to other fields of education. There is no official definition of youth work in Hungary. The National Youth Strategy (Nemzeti Ifjúsági Stratégia) refers to youth work as one of the youth services that play a key role in the development of youth. Nowadays youth work in Hungary appears to have three pillars, namely three organisational modes. Certain 'grassroots' youth communities can be identified at the local small scale level. There are numerous NGOs and civil organisations (including the scouting movement and other religious youth organisations) active in the field. These are typically project-funded by the general government or (mostly) by EU grants. Finally, there is the public infrastructure, mainly connected to the New Generation Centre Public Ltd. (Új Nemzedék Központ Nonprofit Közhasznú Kft.) which serves as the methodological background to youth work, or is related to the mandatory youth activities of the municipal governments. <https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/content/youthwiki/10-youth-work-hungary>

Formulation of the National Youth Guarantee in Hungary ensures that young people between the ages of 16–24 are provided with good quality offers to improve their labour market situation, including: a job opportunity (with or without wage subsidy); entrepreneurship support; first job experience; apprenticeship; traineeship; redirection to public education; further education (including second chance education); and, vocational education or training within 4 months after registered by PES serving as the only entry point.

<https://ngmszakmaiteruletek.kormany.hu/download/9/4c/c0000/Youth%20Guarantee%20Implementation%20Plan.pdf>





## 2. METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

Most of the data was gathered and analysed from the available Eurostat Database. Regarding population, youth population, education, employment, poverty and NEET in this report the database was used in order to show the situation of the NEET population. Beside these databases, in order to understand the Hungarian political circumstances and social policy regarding the topic, other background analyses and papers were detected and applied.



### 3. DATA ANALYSIS

#### 3. 1. Population and youth population

##### 3. 1. 1. Population

According to latest Eurostat data (2019) the current population of Hungary is 9.77 million. It is known that Hungary's population has been declining for four decades. This translates into a 2.57% percentage decline (260 000 inhabitants in absolute value). Demographic decline was higher among females (3.25 percent; 170 900 capitals) than among males (1.8 percent; 87 229 individuals). In spite of the tendency, the ratio of females is 52.2% of the Hungarian population.

**Table 1 Hungary: Total population by sex (capital); relative (percentage) and absolute (capital) changes, 2009, 2013, 2019**

	2009	2013	2019	Absolute change 2009-2013 (Relative change 2009-2013)	Absolute change 2013-2009 (Relative change 2013-2019)	Absolute change 2009-2019 (Relative change 2009-2019)
Females	5 267 925	5 192 845	5 096 935	-1.43 (-75 080)	-1.85 (-95 910)	-3.25 (-170 990)
Males	4 763 050	4 715 953	4 675 821	-0.98 (-47 097)	-0.85 (-40 132)	-1.83 (-87 229)
Total	10 030 975	9 908 798	9 772 756	--1.21 (-122 177)	-1.37 (-136 042)	-2.57 (-258 219)

Source: Eurostat, Population on 1 January by age and sex; [demo\_pjan]. Extracted on 28.06.20.



The distribution of Hungary’s population by degree of urbanisation was almost equal: equally one-third of Hungarians lived in cities (32.8 percent), in towns and suburbs (33.9 percent) and in rural areas (33.3 percent) in 2019. Within the analysed period, the most significant change can be seen in towns and suburbs and in rural areas between 2009 and 2013. The population of towns and suburbs increased from 20.1 percent to 32.7 percent; the relative change is 62.69 percent. Accordingly, rural areas have lost more than one-fifth (22 percent) of their population. In the whole period (between 2009 and 2019) many Hungarians moved to towns and suburbs (and abroad) mainly from rural areas: the relative increase was 68.66 percent in the case of towns and suburbs, and the relative decline was 30.91 percent in rural areas. It is necessary to note that rural areas located in disadvantaged regions of Hungary are the most affected by general demographic decline. It can be a significant reason for the disparate ratio of changes (69 percent versus -31 percent). The ratio of city population has essentially not been changed since 2009 (Table 2).

**Table 2 Hungary: Distribution of Hungary’s population by degree of urbanisation (percentage); relative (percentage) and absolute (percentage point) changes, 2009, 2013, 2019**

	2009	2013	2019	Absolute change 2009–2013 (Relative change 2009–2013)	Absolute change 2013–2009 (Relative change 2013–2019)	Absolute change 2009–2019 (Relative change 2009–2019)
Cities	31.70	29.80	32.80	-5.99 (-1.90)	10.06 (3.00)	3.47 (1.10)
Towns and suburbs	20.10	32.70	33.90	62.69 (12.60)	3.67 (1.20)	68.66 (13.80)
Rural areas	48.20	37.60	33.30	-21.99 (-10.60)	-11.44 (-4.30)	-30.91 (-14.90)
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	-	-	-

Source: Eurostat, Population on 1 January by age and sex; [demo\_pjan]. Extracted on 28.06.20.



### 3. 1. 2. Youth population

Most developed countries' societies, among others in the European Union, are ageing drastically. Demographic tendencies are similar in Hungary. The Hungarian population has been ageing and declining for decades. In this context, the ratio of youth population decreased (not significantly) in each of the analysed age groups between 2009 and 2013 and between 2013 and 2019. In the ten-year period (2009–2019) the most significant changes can be observed in the population aged 30–34 years (26.74 percent relative and 2.30 percentage points absolute decline) and in the sub-group aged 15–19 years (18.03 percent relative and 1.10 percentage points absolute decrease) (Table 3).

**Table 3 Hungary: Ratio of youth population in the total population by age groups (percentage); relative (percentage) and absolute (percentage point) changes, 2009, 2013, 2019**

	2009	2013	2019	Absolute change 2009–2013 (Relative change 2009–2013)	Absolute change 2013–2009 (Relative change 2013–2019)	Absolute change 2009–2019 (Relative change 2009–2019)
15–19 years	6,10	5,70	5,00	-6.56 (-0.40)	-12.28 (-0.70)	-18.03 (-1.10)
20–24 years	6,50	6,40	5,70	- 1.54 (-0.10)	-10.94 (-0.70)	-12.31 (-0.80)
25–29 years	7,20	6,20	6,40	- 13.88 (-1.00)	3.23 (0.20)	-11.11 (-0.80)
30–34 years*	8,60	7,20	6,30	-6.98 (-0.60)	-12.50 (-0.90)	-26.74 (-2.30)

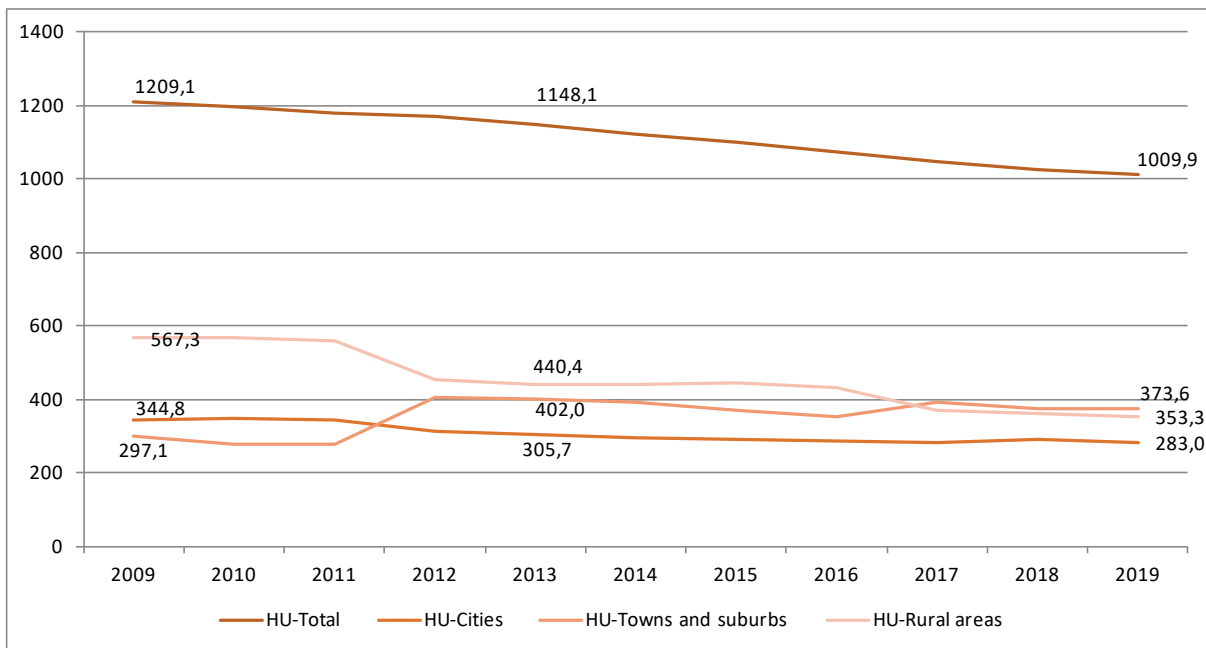
Source: Eurostat, Ratio of young people in the total population on 1 January by sex and age [yth\_demo\_020] Extracted on 28.06.20.

\*Source: Own calculation based on: Eurostat, Population on 1 January by age and sex [demo\_pjan] Extracted on 28.06.20.



As Chart 1 indicates, the youth population aged 15–24 also declined during the ten-year period analysed. According to Eurostat data, their number decreased from 1.209 million to 1.009 million between 2009 and 2019 (equivalent to a 17 percent relative decline). The tendency was similar in Hungarian cities where the measure of decline is almost the same (18 percent). The most significant demographic decrease occurred in rural areas: the 38 percent relative decline means that these parts of the country lost more than 200 000 inhabitants between 2009 and 2019. It is not surprising that most of the youth population try to move away because of poor conditions and hopelessness. The tendency is more significant in disadvantaged rural areas, especially in Northern and Eastern Hungary. As an obverse tendency, towns' and suburbs' populations aged 15–24 years increased from 297 000 to 373 000, implying a 26 percent relative growth in the ten-year period (Chart 1).

Chart 1 Hungary: Number of youth population aged 15–24 years by degree of urbanisation, 2009–2019, thousand



Source: Eurostat, Population by sex, age, country of birth, labour status and degree of urbanisation [lfst\_r\_pgauwsc]  
Extracted on 28.06.20.



According to relevant Eurostat data, the youth population aged 15–29 years had a ratio of males (51.4%) higher than the ratio of females (48.6%) in 2019. The proportion was almost the same in 2013 (51.2% vs. 48.8%).<sup>1</sup> (Eurostat data is not available for 2009). Detailed data is available by age groups, but there is no data on the whole, broad age group (15–34 years). The ratio of males is a little bit higher than the ratio of females in each of the age groups and in each of the data years also (Table 4).

**Table 4 Number and distribution of the youth population by age group and sex, 2009, 2013, 2019**

		2009	2013	2019	2009	2013	2019
		Number			Distribution, percent		
15–19 years	Females	298 807	276 125	236 508	48,9	48,7	48,6
	Males	312 485	290 914	250 546	51,1	51,3	51,4
	Total	611 292	567 039	487 054	100,0	100,0	100,0
20–24 years	Females	318 424	305 834	272 262	49,1	48,6	48,5
	Males	330 172	323 531	289 541	50,9	51,4	51,5
	Total	648 596	629 365	561 803	100,0	100,0	100,0
25–29 years	Females	6,20	6,40	- 13.88 (-1.00)	3.23 (0.20)	-11.11 (-0.80)	
	Males	371 369	311 264	325 446	51,1	51,0	51,7
	Total	726 726	609 842	629 354	100,0	100,0	100,0
30–34 years*	Females	425 376	354 712	296 687	49,1	49,4	48,5
	Males	441 528	363 084	315 030	50,9	50,6	51,5
	Total	866 904	717 796	611 717	100,0	100,0	100,0

Source: Eurostat, Population on 1 January by age group and sex; [demo\_pjangroup]. Extracted on 08.09.20.

<sup>1</sup> Source: Eurostat, Youth. Youth population on 1 January by sex, age and country of birth [yth\_demo\_060] Extracted on 08.09.20.

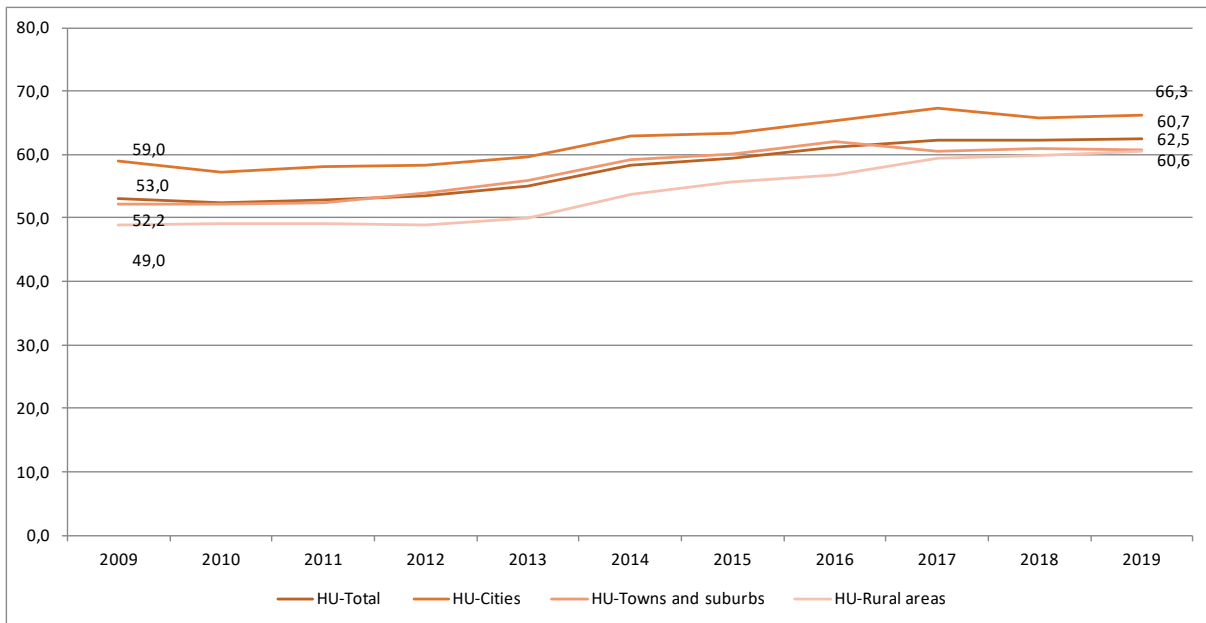


## 3. 2. Employment and Unemployment

### 3. 2. 1. Youth employment

In Hungary, overall employment statistics have been improving since approximately 2010. Positive tendencies can be seen in the youth population also. The employment rate of the population aged 15–39 years increased from 53.0 percent to 62.5 percent between 2009 and 2019. The employment rate has improved in each of the settlement/area types: in the ten-year period, the rate increased from 59.0 percent to 66.3 percent in cities (12.4 percent relative change); from 52.2 percent to 60.7 percent in towns and suburbs (16.3 percent relative change); and, from 49.0 percent to 60.6 percent in rural areas (23.7 percent relative change) (Chart 2). Therefore the relative change was the highest in rural areas. But it is necessary to note that in disadvantaged regions, micro-regions and settlements the most significant reason for improvement is the public work.

Chart 2 Hungary: Employment rate of youth population aged 15–39 years by degree of urbanisation, 2009–2019, percent



Source: Employment rates by sex, age and degree of urbanisation (%) [lfst\_r\_ergau] Extracted on 29.04.20.



Table 5 includes information about youth employment rate by age groups and degree of urbanisation. Detailed data indicate significant improvement in each of the age groups and in all settlement/area types, especially between 2013 and 2019 and in the ten-year period (2009–2019). In Hungary, the employment rate of the population aged 15–19 increased from 2.00 percent to 6.30 percent between 2009 and 2019; the relative change was 215.00 percent (it is the second highest value among the analysed data). The tendency is positive, but it should be emphasised that the members of this age group basically should study in secondary school. In the next age group (20–24 years) the employment rate increased from 33.40 percent to 48.40 percent, which also implies a significant relative change (44.91 percent) in the ten-year period. The ratio of employed population increased from 67.40 percent to 77.80 percent in the youth population aged 25–29 (15.43 percent relative change) and from 71.80 to 80.90 in the last age group (30–34 years) (12.67 percent relative change). The employment rate increased from 30.50 percent to 41.00 percent between 2009 and 2019, which indicates a 34.43 percent relative change (the relative increase was almost 40 percent between 2013 and 2019).

It is also important to note that the employment rates of the following two age groups (25–29 years, 30–34 years) were more than 80 percent in the final data year (2019). Regarding towns and suburbs, the significant change in the population aged 15–19 must be highlighted: the absolute increase was only 3.50 percent, but the relative change was 166.67 percent in the ten-year period. Both the relative (42.60 percent) and the absolute (14.70 percent) increases of employment rate were also remarkable in the next age group (20–24 years). In reference to rural areas it is crucial to pay attention to the youngest age group (15–19). On the one hand, the highest relative increase (272.73 percent between 2009 and 2019) can be realised in this group. On the other hand, according to latest data (2019) young people (in fact children) aged 15–19 living in rural areas have the highest employment rate (8.20 percent) compared to corresponding age groups living in cities (4.50 percent) and in towns and suburbs (5.60 percent). It also draws attention to the difficult position of young people living in disadvantaged rural regions of Hungary (Table 5).





**Table 5 Hungary: Youth employment rate (percentage) by age groups and degree of urbanisation; relative (percentage) and absolute (percentage point) changes, 2009, 2013, 2019**

	2009	2013	2019	Absolute change 2009–2013 (Relative change 2009–2013)	Absolute change 2013–2009 (Relative change 2013–2019)	Absolute change 2009–2019 (Relative change 2009–2019)
<b>Country</b>						
<b>Age groups</b>						
Overall (15–39)	53.00	55.00	62.50	3.77 (2.00)	13.64 (7.50)	17.92 (9.50)
15–19	2.00	2.30	6.30	15.00 (0.30)	173.91 (4.00)	215.00 (4.30)
20–24	33.40	35.70	48.40	6.89 (2.30)	35.57 (12.70)	44.91 (15.00)
25–29	67.40	69.00	77.80	2.37 (1.60)	12.75 (8.80)	15.43 (10.40)
30–34	71.80	73.50	80.90	2.37 (1.70)	10.07 (7.40)	12.67 (9.10)
<b>Cities</b>						
<b>Age groups</b>						
Overall (15–39)	59.00	59.70	66.30	1.19 (0.70)	10.05 (6.60)	12.37 (7.30)
15–19	no data	no data	4.50	-	-	-
20–24	30.50	28.90	41.00	-5.25 (-1.60)	39.67 (12.10)	34.43 (10.50)
25–29	72.70	74.10	80.40	1.93 (1.40)	8.50 (6.30)	10.59 (7.70)
30–34	76.80	77.20	86.00	0.52 (0.40)	11.40 (8.80)	11.98 (9.20)
<b>Towns and suburbs</b>						
<b>Age groups</b>						
Overall (15–39)	52.20	56.00	60.70	7.28 (3.80)	8.39 (4.70)	16.28 (8.50)
15–19	2.10	2.30	5.60	9.52 (0.20)	143.48 (3.30)	166.67 (3.50)
20–24	34.50	38.90	49.20	12.75 (4.40)	26.48 (10.30)	42.60 (14.70)
25–29	67.50	69.50	76.30	2.96 (2.00)	9.78 (6.80)	13.03 (8.80)
30–34	71.00	75.70	78.20	6.62 (4.70)	3.30 (2.50)	10.14 (7.20)
<b>Rural areas</b>						
<b>Age groups</b>						
Overall (15–39)	49.00	49.90	60.60	1.84 (0.90)	21.84 (10.70)	23.67 (11.60)
15–19	2.20	2.50	8.20	13.64 (0.30)	228.00 (5.70)	272.73 (6.00)
20–24	34.80	38.30	54.10	10.06 (3.50)	41.25 (15.80)	55.46 (19.30)
25–29	62.80	63.20	76.50	0.64 (0.40)	21.19 (13.30)	21.82 (13.70)
30–34	67.70	67.40	77.90	-0.44 (-0.30)	15.58 (10.5)	15.07 (10.2)

Source: Eurostat, Employment rates by sex, age and degree of urbanisation (%) [lfst\_r\_ergau] Extracted on 29.04.20.  
\*Checked on 28.06.20.



According to the latest data (2019), as in the total population, the male employment rate (53%) is higher than the female rate (41%) in the youth population aged of 15–29 years. (Data is not available on the total youth population aged 15–34 years.) In this broader age group, the males’ employment rate was 40 percent and the females’ rate was 31 percent in 2009. Between 2009 and 2019 it means a 32–33 percent improvement in the case of males and females as well. In spite of the gender gap this is a permanent characteristic of the labour market inequalities. The employment rates have been increasing since 2009 in each of the sub groups, but the disparity between males and females has not decreased. Indeed, it was less than 9 percentage points in 2009 and more than 11 percentage points in 2019. This tendency (with higher disparities) can be recognised in each of the age groups (Table 6.)

**Table 6 Hungary: Youth employment rate (percentage) by age groups and sex, 2009, 2013, 2019**

		2009	2013	2019
Age groups	Number			
15–19 years	Females	1,5	1,7	4,3
	Males	2,4	2,8	8,2
	Total	2,0	2,3	6,3
20–24 years	Females	29,7	30,6	41,5
	Males	36,6	40,5	55,5
	Total	33,2	35,6	48,6
25–29 years	Females	58,8	62,1	68,9
	Males	75,8	76,3	86,0
	Total	67,4	69,4	77,7
30–34 years*	Females	31,3	32,4	40,6
	Males	39,9	41,0	53,0
	Total	35,7	36,8	47,0

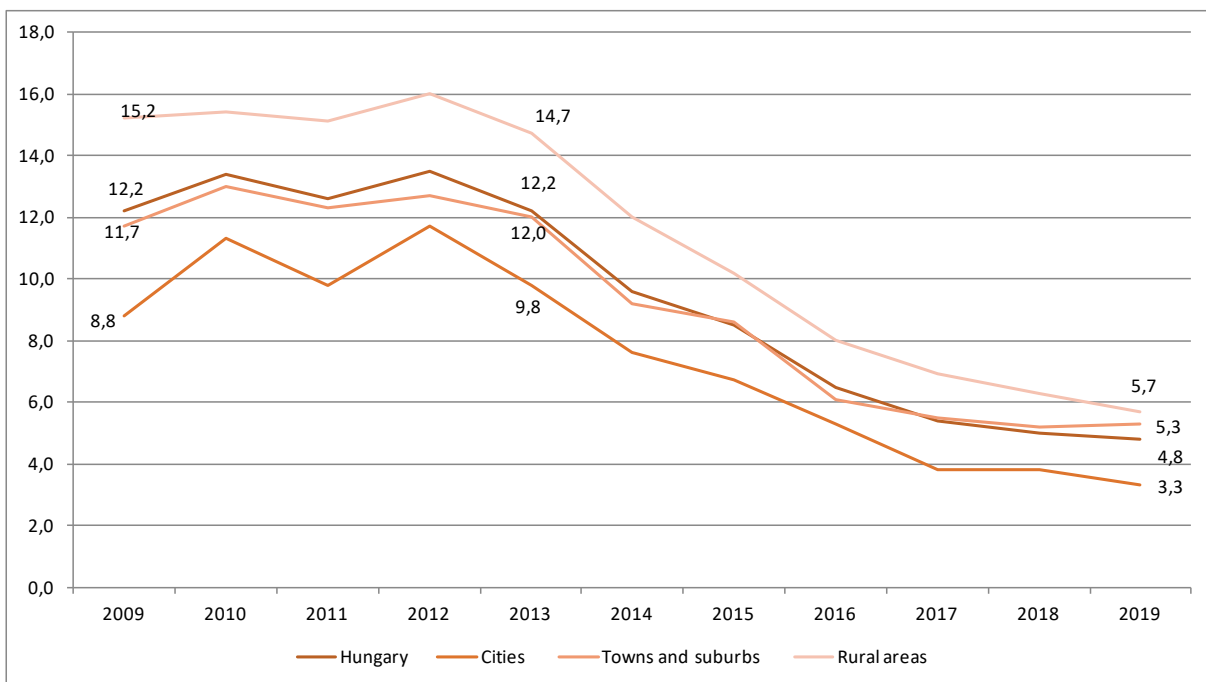
Source: Eurostat Youth, Youth employment rate by sex, age and country of birth (yth\_empl\_O20) Extracted on 08.09.20.



### 3. 2. 2. Youth unemployment

According to improving employment statistics, significant decreases can be experienced in unemployment rates. In Hungary, the unemployment rate of the youth population aged 15–39 years has decreased from 12.2 percent to 4.8 percent throughout the whole period (2009–2019). In cities, the unemployment rate reduced from 8.8 percent to 3.3 percent; the relative change was 62.5 percent between 2009 and 2019. The value of relative change was the same in rural areas (62.5 percent); the unemployment rate decreased from 15.2 percent to 5.7 percent. The unemployment rate of young people living in towns and suburbs was halved; the relative change was 54.7 percent in the analysed period (2009–2019) and the current rate is 5.3 percent (2019) (Chart 3).

Chart 3 Hungary: Unemployment rate of youth population aged 15–39 years by degree of urbanisation, 2009–2019, percent



Source: Eurostat Youth, Youth employment rate by sex, age and country of birth (yth\_empl\_020) Extracted on 08.09.20.



According to detailed statistics, in the first period (2009–2013) relative changes are mostly negative: unemployment rates increased in most cases. In the next period (2013–2019) and in the whole (2009–2019) periods, there were only positive tendencies: unemployment rates decreased in each of the age groups and each of the settlement/area types. In Hungary, the rate of the population aged 15–19 years declined from 49.70 percent to 23.30 percent, the rate of the next age group (20–24 years) decreased from 24.50 percent to 9.80 percent. The following two age group's unemployment rate also appreciably improved between 2009 and 2019. The highest relative decrease (70.33 percent) occurred among young people aged 30–34 years. But relative reductions are significant in the other age groups as well (53.12 percent – 61.98 percent) (Table 5).

It is known that the youngest people (aged 15–19 years) have the highest unemployment rate, and it does not depend on the type of the settlement/area. According to the latest data, in 2019 the age group's unemployment rate was 23.30 percent in Hungary, 22.80 percent in towns and suburbs and 22.40 percent in rural areas (city data is not available for this age group). Generally, we can say that unemployment rates are the lowest in cities: in 2019, 8.20 percent in the population aged 20–24 years, 3.90 percent in the next age group (20–24 years) and only 2.80 percent among young people aged 30–34 years (the last data refers to 2018, because data is not available for 2019). The unemployment rates of towns and suburbs and rural areas do not differ significantly and the values of relative declines are also similar in the ten-year period (49.30 percent – 69.30 percent) (Table 7).



**Table 7 Hungary: Youth unemployment rate (percentage) by age groups and degree of urbanisation; relative (percentage) and absolute (percentage point) changes, 2009, 2013, 2019**

	2009	2013	2019	Absolute change 2009-2013 (Relative change 2009-2013)	Absolute change 2013-2009 (Relative change 2013-2019)	Absolute change 2009-2019 (Relative change 2009-2019)
<b>Country</b>						
<b>Age groups</b>						
Overall (15-39)	12.20	12.20	4.80	0.00 (0.00)	-60.66 (-7.40)	-60.66 (-7.40)
15-19	49.70	52.40	23.30	5.43 (2.70)	-55.53 (-29.10)	-53.12 (-26.40)
20-24	24.50	24.30	9.80	-0.82 (-0.20)	-59.67 (-14.50)	-60.00 (-14.70)
25-29	12.10	11.90	4.60	-1.65 (-0.20)	- 61.34 (-7.30)	-61.98 (-7.50)
30-34	9.10	9.60	2.70	5.49 (0.50)	-71.88 (-6.90)	-70.33 (-6.40)
<b>Cities</b>						
<b>Age groups</b>						
Overall (15-39)	8.80	9.80	no data	11.36 (1.00)	-66.33 (-6.50)	-62.50 (-5.50)
15-19	no data	no data	8.20	-	-	-
20-24	20.10	23.30	3.90	15.92 (3.20)	-64.81 (-15.10)	-59.20 (-11.9)
25-29	8.40	8.90	80.40	5.95 (0.50)	-56.18 (-5.00)	-53.57 (-4.50)
30-34	7.30	8.90	no data (2018: 2.80)*	21.92 (1.60)	-68.54 (-6.1)*	-61.64 (-4.50)*
<b>Towns and suburbs</b>						
<b>Age groups</b>						
Overall (15-39)	11.70	12.00	5.30	2.56 (0.30)	-55.83 (-6.70)	-54.70 (-6.40)
15-19	no data	51.30	22.80	-	-55.56 (-28.50)	-
20-24	21.30	23.80	10.80	11.74 (2.50)	-54.62 (-13.00)	-49.30 (-10.50)
25-29	12.40	12.20	4.70	-1.61 (-0.20)	-61.48 (-7.50)	-62.10 (-7.70)
30-34	8.90	8.80	3.80	-1.12 (-0.10)	-56.82 (-5.00)	-57.30 (-5.10)
<b>Rural areas</b>						
<b>Age groups</b>						
Overall (15-39)	15.20	14.70	5.70	-3.29 (-0.50)	-61.22 (-9.00)	-62.50 (-9.50)
15-19	51.70	56.10	22.40	8.51 (4.40)	-60.07 (-33.70)	-56.67 (-29.30)
20-24	28.50	25.20	9.80	-11.58 (-3.30)	-61.11 (-15.40)	-65.61 (-18.70)
25-29	15.30	14.90	5.40	-2.61 (-0.40)	-63.76 (-9.50)	-64.71 (-9.90)
30-34	11.00	11.30	3.40	-2.73 (0.30)	-69.91 (-7.90)	-69.09 (-7.60)

Source: Unemployment rates by sex, age and degree of urbanisation (%) [lfst\_r\_urgau] Extracted on 29.04.20. \*Checked on 28.06.20.



In the ten-year period (2009–2019) significant improvement can be recognised in the field of unemployment. In the youth population aged of 15–29 years the unemployment rate has decreased from 17 percent to 7 percent. This is an almost 60 percent decline between 2009 and 2019 and there are no significant differences between males and females. In 2019 the males’ unemployment rate was 7.7 percent and the females’ rate was 7.1 percent (18.1% vs. 16.2% in 2009). The gender gap can be realised, but it is not remarkable. Moreover, in certain age groups the males’ unemployment rate is higher than the females’ rate (Table 8).

**Table 8 Hungary: Youth employment rate (percentage) by age groups and sex, 2009, 2013, 2019**

		2009	2013	2019
Age groups				
15–19 years	Females	50,3	54,6	27,0
	Males	48,8	51,4	21,2
	Total	49,4	52,6	23,2
20–24 years	Females	22,7	25,5	8,9
	Males	26,0	23,4	10,7
	Total	24,6	24,3	9,9
25–29 years	Females	11,4	11,0	4,9
	Males	12,5	12,5	4,6
	Total	12,1	11,9	4,7
(Total ) 30–34 years*	Females	16,2	17,6	7,1
	Males	18,1	17,9	7,7
	Total	17,3	17,8	7,4

Source: Eurostat, Youth. Youth unemployment rate by sex, age and country of birth [yth\_empl\_100] Extracted on 08.09.20

## 3. 3. Education

### 3. 3. 1. Young people by educational attainment level

Table 9: 15–24 years old age, young people's educational attainment level related to urbanisation

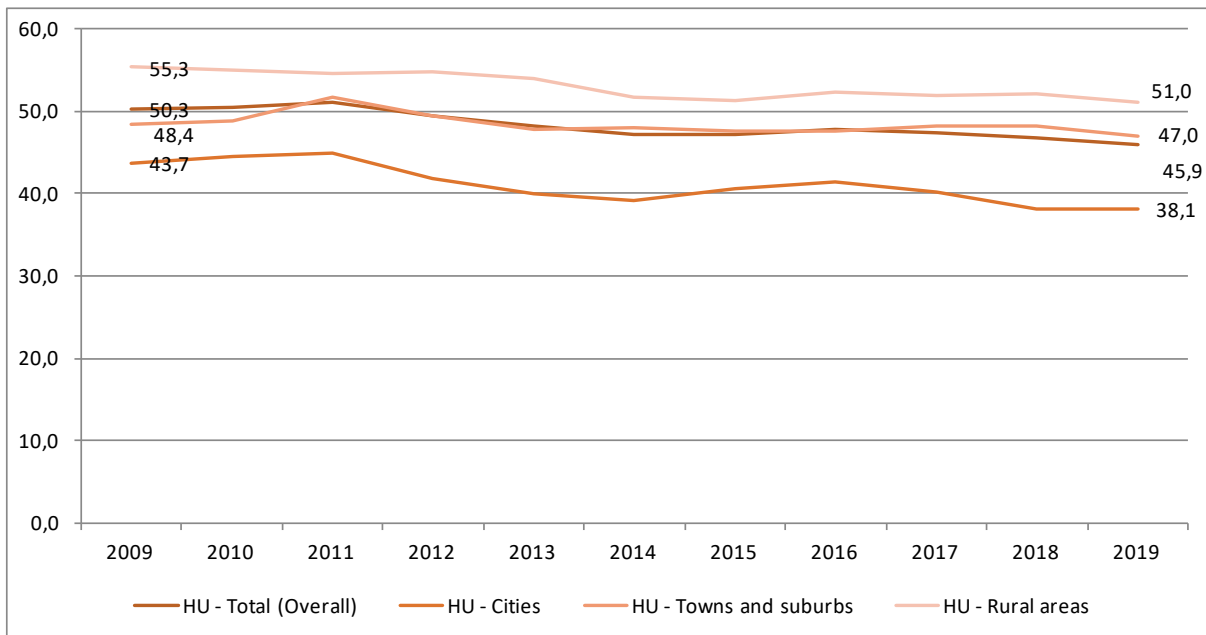
	2009	2013	2019	Absolute change 2009–2013 (Relative change 2009–2013)	Absolute change 2013–2009 (Relative change 2013–2019)	Absolute change 2009–2019 (Relative change 2009–2019)
<b>Less than primary, primary and lower secondary education (levels 0–2)</b>						
Overall	50,3	48,1	45,9	-4.57 (-2.20)	-4.79 (-2.20)	-9.59 (-4.40)
Cities	43,7	39,9	38,1	-9.52 (-3.80)	-4.72 (-1.80)	-14.70 (-5.60)
Towns and suburbs	48,4	47,8	47,0	-1.26 (-0.60)	-1.70 (-0.80)	-2,98 (-1.40)
Rural areas	55,3	54,0	51,0	-1.90 (-1.30)	-5.40 (-3.00)	-8.43 (-4.30)
<b>Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (levels 3 and 4)</b>						
Overall	46,4	47,3	50,0	+1.90 (+0.90)	+5.40 (+2.70)	+7.20 (+3.60)
Cities	52,9	54,1	56,4	+9.52 (+2.22)	+2.30 (+4.08)	+ 3.50 (+6.21)
Towns and suburbs	48,2	47,5	48,7	+1.20 (-0.6)	-1.70 (-0.8)	-2,98 (-1.4)
Rural areas	41,6	42,4	46,3	+1.89 (+0.80)	+8.42 (+3.90)	+10.15 (+4.70)
<b>Tertiary education (levels 5–8)</b>						
Overall	3,3	4,6	4,1	+28.26 (+1.30)	-12.20 (-0.50)	+19.51 (+0.80)
Cities	3,5	6,0	5,6	+41,67 (+2.50)	-7.14 (-0.40)	+37.50 (+2.10)
Towns and suburbs	3,5	4,7	4,2	+25.53 (+1.20)	-11.90 (-0.50)	+16.67 (+0.70)
Rural areas	3,1	3,5	2,7	+11.43 (+0.40)	-29.63 (-0.80)	--14.81 (-0.40)

Source: Eurostat, Employment rates by sex, age and degree of urbanisation (%) [lfst\_r\_ergau] Extracted on 29.04.20. \*Checked on 28.06.20.



The ratio who have less than primary, primary and lower secondary education degree was reduced between 2009 – 2013 to around 5%. The biggest positive changes come from the cities with its 6% whereas a moderate reduction can be observed in the towns and suburbs and in rural areas also. At the upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education level, there is a positive change: with nearly 4%, the portion of such young people was increased in this category. It's interesting that in the cities and in rural areas there is a relevant change, while in towns the changes are very moderate. In tertiary education, after a small increase, we can see a reduction in most forms of urbanisation.

**Chart 4: Less than primary, primary and lower secondary education rate (%) between 2009–2019 by degree of urbanisation in the 15–24 years old age group**



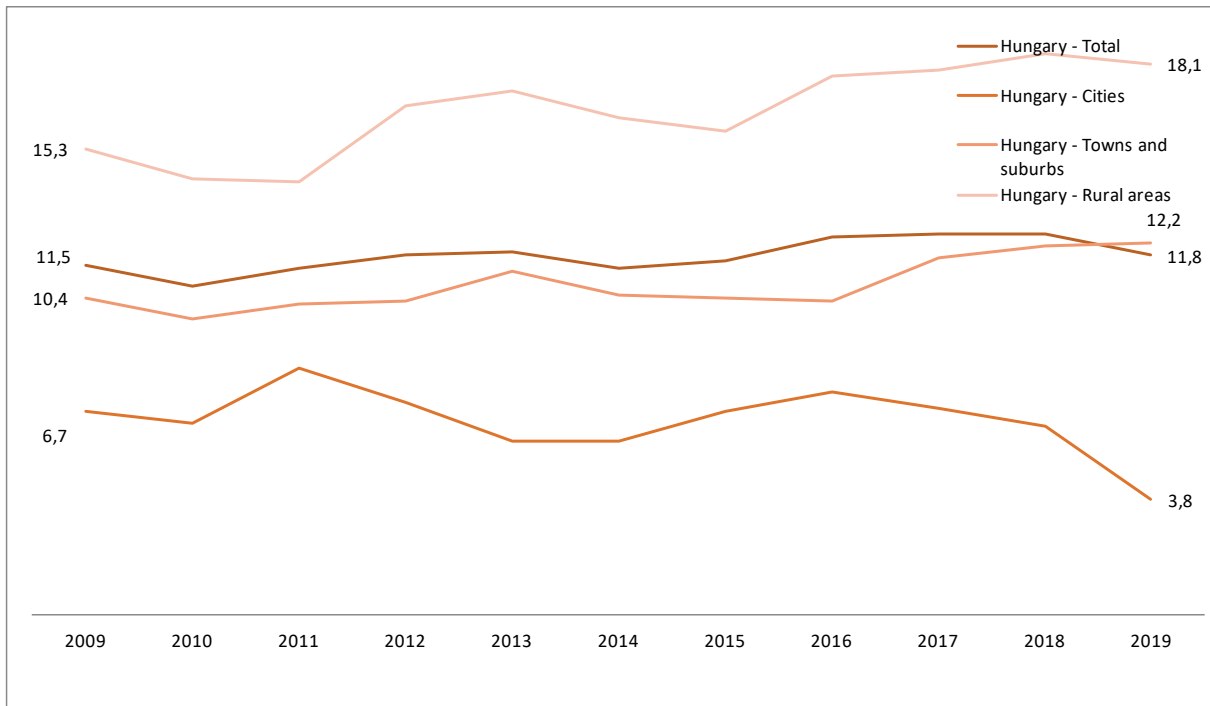
Source: Eurostat [edat\_lfs\_9913] – data extracted in 20.04.2020





### 3.3.2. Early school leavers

Chart 5: Early school leavers in the 18–24 years age group related to urbanisation

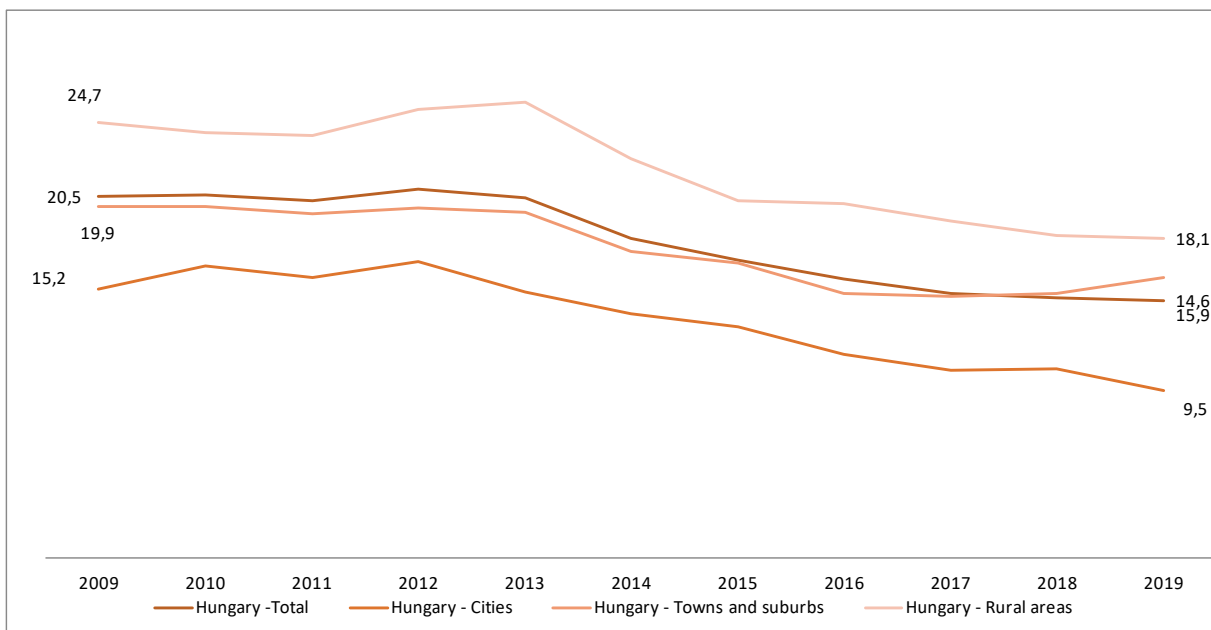


Source: Eurostat (edat\_lfse\_9913) – data extracted on 29.04.2020



As we see from Chart 6, in the 18–24 age group in the rural areas early school rate grown from 15,3% to 18,1 %. Except for the cities, in all form of urbanisation the portion of school leavers increased. Positive changes come from the cities the percent of the early school leavers decreased from 6,7% to 3,8%. Women have a better position, but trends are the same in both sexes in the last ten years.

Chart 6: ESLET rate (%) 2009–2019 (Hu) by sex and degree of urbanisation in the 18–24 years old age group



Source: Eurostat [edat\_lfse\_30] – data extracted in 20.04.2020



### 3. 4. Poverty and social exclusion among NEET youth

#### in rural Hungary

In Hungary, no overall research has been done into the NEET youth category nor has it been present in the mainstream of European common thought. The research mostly focuses on the labour market situation and economic activity which may only imply the actual situation of the NEET youth (Bokányi, Szabó, 2015). Regional disparities have been making a massive difference in Hungary since 1989, and these disparities and disadvantages are increasing, which is generating a huge gap between Hungarian micro-regions and regions. The NEET youths often grow up under uncertain and difficult financial circumstances, which goes back to as far as three generations. Young people living in the urban areas, in ruined apartments, in poverty are at risk of becoming NEET. The most frequent risk factors are the socio-economically disadvantageous environments with low levels of education and schooling problems. They are accompanied by traumatic incidents of the families, learning difficulties, dissatisfaction with the school, socio-emotional disorders, delinquency, health problems, homelessness, drug or alcohol abuse, lack of support and financial needs. (Bynner and Parsons, 2002 refer to Bokányi-Szabó, 2015) Due to their situation, the NEET youth are faced with a higher risk of social exclusion. The NEET youth's risk of social exclusion is triple that of the non-NEET counter parts based on a 2016 study (Eurofound, 2016b refer to Sánta, 2017). The NEET youth who live under inappropriate dwelling conditions in an area infected with crime may get involved in delinquencies more often than their demographic counterparts from other areas. (Coles et al., 2010 refer to Sánta, 2016) The escalating drug abuse and use and dealing in the new type of designer drugs poses a risk for the young people in a desperate situation in the first place.

**Employment situation:** Not even the population metrics can be clearly defined as to how many young people do not register themselves at the local job centre. The absorbing effect of the public labour programme significantly improved the official statistics. However, this is misleading. The NEET group and the group of young unemployed people are not identical. However, they do overlap. (Sánta, 2017) They run a higher risk of marginalisation than the EU average. This group comprises the under 25's who get involved in the public labour programme in high numbers.



The following categories can be regarded as specifically exposed: 1, those returning to the labour market and education; 2, short-term jobless; 3, permanently jobless; 4, passive; 5, young people with disabilities; 6, family responsibilities (care, nursing); and, 7, others (Eurofound, 2016a). Since the beginning of the 1990s the labour market engagement of the young has been steadily decreasing. Young adults were on the losing side of labour market conditions arising from the recession, along with other social groups. The Central Statistics Office reports that the employment indicators were improved by 52,000 people joining the public labour scheme in 2015. This means that the more favourable figures in employment were brought about by the public labourers, with young adults under 25 making up the largest segment. In 2014, it was 30,500 people, which made up about 17 % of the total number of people working under the public labour scheme. Nearly half of them (49.2%) had only met their elementary education obligations, or not even that. (Sánta 2016c).

In Hungary more and more families are forced to disengage their children from education when they pass the age of compulsory education and direct them towards the local public labour scheme. These young people are on the labour market, however, due to their low level of education they are considerably threatened by dependence on this scheme and they are more exposed. The public labour scheme is a dangerous trap for young adults under 25. (Sánta, 2016). Since end of March 2017, people under 25 cannot enter the public labour scheme and they must be employed through the Youth Guarantee Programme instead.

**Schooling:** The recession of 2008 hit the rural areas much harder than the more developed regions, especially the marginalised micro-regions. The risk of poverty, social exclusion and lack of services are higher in these regions and the micro-regions of Hungary. In these regions, a high number of these young people have children at an early age or take care of a member of the family, so they fall out of both the labour market and education. The public labour scheme is quite often the only way for them to start working. Low levels of education makes young people extremely vulnerable. Mitigating against against early dropping out is key, with schemes to reintegrate the drop-outs, support for the period after the school and before the first job as well as trainings are crucial. Quality vocational training and education make the transition between school and work easier for them. Vocational education and training prepares them for entry into the labour market. It is important that the practical part of education is work-based.

<https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/105be7ec-hu/index.html?itemId=/content/component/105be7ec-hu>



### 3. 5. NEET

Table 10 NEET rate (%)

	2009	2013	2019	Absolute change 2009–2013 (Relative change 2009–2013)	Absolute change 2013–2009 (Relative change 2013–2019)	Absolute change 2009–2019 (Relative change 2009–2019)
<b>Cities</b>						
<b>Age groups</b>						
Overall	20,5	20,4	14,6	-0,49 -0,1	-39,72 -5,8	-40,41 -5,9
15–19	3,5	3,8	3,4	7,89 / 0,3	-11,76 -0,4	-2,94 -0,1
20–24	12,5	14,3	7,8	12,58 / 1,8	-83,33 -6,5	-60,25 -4,7
25–29	17,1	15,7	10,7	-8,91 -1,4	-46,72 -5	-59,81 -6,4
30–34	21,6	21,4	13,1	-0,93 -0,2	-63,35 -8,3	-64,88 -8,5
<b>Cities</b>						
<b>Age groups</b>						
Overall	19,9	19,6	15,9	-1,53 -0,3	-23,27 -3,7	-25,15 -4
15–19	5,3	7,4	6,3	28,37 / 2,1	-17,46 -1,1	15,87 / 1
20–24	19,4	22,1	15,7	12,21 / 2,7	-40,76 -6,4	-23,65 -3,7
25–29	24,9	24,6	19,2	-1,21 -0,3	-28,12 -5,4	-29,68 -5,7
30–34	27,5	23,0	20,9	-19,56 -4,5	-10,04 -2,1	-31,57 -6,6
<b>Rural areas</b>						
<b>Age groups</b>						
Overall	24,7	25,4	18,1	2,75 / 0,7	-40,33 -7,3	-36,46 -6,6
15–19	6,9	8,9	9,3	22,47 / 2	4,30 / 0,4	25,8 / 2,4
20–24	28,0	30,2	20,3	7,28 / 2,2	-48,76 -9,9	-37,93 -7,7
25–29	32,7	32,6	20,6	-0,30 -3,9	-58,25 -12	-58,73 -12,1
30–34	31,2	31,9	21,8	2,19 / 0,7	-46,33 -10,1	-43,11 -9,4

NEEDs Source: Young people neither in employment nor in education and training by sex, age and degree of urbanisation (NEET rates) [edat\_lfse\_29]



## 4. CONCLUSIONS

The NEET rate demonstrated a considerable improvement of nearly 40% between 2009 and 2019 in the urban environment for all age groups. A slight improvement can be detected in the towns and urban environment, which amounts to 25% for all age groups between 2009 and 2019.

### 4. 1. General context indicators

The NEET youths often grow up under uncertain and difficult financial circumstances, in poverty and which goes back as far as three generations. The risk of poverty and social exclusion is higher in Hungary among the Roma, single parents, elderly, families raising three or more children and families raising disabled or permanently ill children. The most frequent risk factors are socio-economically disadvantageous environments, low levels of education and schooling problems, lack of proper housing, financial problems, learning difficulties, dissatisfaction with school, socio-emotional disorders, delinquency, health problems, homelessness and drug and/or alcohol abuse.

Hungary's population has been aging and decreasing for decades. The ratio of the young decreased in every analysed age group between 2009 and 2019 and in the rural areas the relative decrease is 38%. The NEET rate shows a considerable improvement of nearly 40% between 2009 and 2019 in the urban environment for all age groups. The trend improves in the towns and urban environment.



## 4. 2. Employment

In Hungary, the general employment statistics have been improving since 2010. The employment rate of the 15–39 year–old population increased from 53,0% to 62,5% between 2009 – 2019. The employment rate improved in every type of settlement/area. In the ten–year period, the rate increased from 59,0% to 66,3% in the urban areas (12,4% relative change), from 52,2% to 60,7% in urban and suburban areas (16,3% relative change) and from 49,0% to 60,6% in the rural areas (23,7% relative change). The improvement can be attributed to the community work in the marginalised regions, micro–regions and settlements. Owing to the improvement of the employment statistics, the unemployment rates have decreased considerably. Unemployment rates are the lowest in cities: in 2019, 8.20 percent in the population aged 20–24 years, 3.90 percent in the next age group (20–24 years) and only 2.80 percent among young people aged 30–34 years (the last data refers to 2018, because data is not available for 2019). The unemployment rates of towns and suburbs and rural areas do not differ significantly and the values of relative declines are also similar in the ten–year period (49.30 percent – 69.30 percent)

## 4. 3. Education

The ratio of those who have less than primary, primary and lower secondary education certificate reduced between by about 5%. The biggest positive changes come from the cities with its 6%, and a moderate reduction can be observed in the towns and suburbs and in rural areas also. At the upper secondary and post–secondary non–tertiary education level, there is positive change: the ratio of those young people in this category increased by nearly 4%. We can see a negative tendency in the last 10 years for the 18–24–year–old age group regarding drop–out rates. Except for the cities, in all forms of urbanisation the portion of school leavers increased. The biggest increase can be observed in rural areas. Positive changes come from the cities, because during these 10 years the number of the early school leavers fell from 6,7% to 3,8%. Women have a better position overall, but trends are the same in both sexes over the last ten years.



## 4. 4. Poverty, social exclusion

Deprivation of opportunities in the long term (i.e., education, health, infrastructure, public transport and labour market conditions), low socioeconomic status, lack of relationships outside the enclosed settlements, low family income, a low level of employment and education and also permanent unemployment can combine to generate a high-risk scenario for young people and their possibility of becoming NEETs. Due to their situation, the NEET youth are faced with a higher risk of social exclusion. The NEET youth's risk of social exclusion is triple that of the non-NEET counter parts based on a 2016 study. New kinds of designer drugs pose a risk for the young people in a desperate situation in the first place. Deviant behaviour is more often than not met with police proceedings in Hungary as the sole response.





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COST Action CA18213  
Rural NEET Youth Network:  
Modeling the risks underlying rural  
NEETs social exclusion

## 6. IMPORTANT LINKS

**Magyar Ifjúsági Konferencia** <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1161&langId=en&intPagId=3338>

<https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/content/youthwiki/10-youth-work-hungary>

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1161&langId=en&intPagId=3338>

**National Youth Strategy (Nemzeti Ifjúsági Stratégia)**

<https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/content/youthwiki/13-national-youth-strategy-hungary>