



RURAL NEETS IN PORTUGAL



2009/2019
OVERVIEW



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report outlines in detail the situation of rural youths Neither in Employment, nor in Education or Training (NEET) aged between 15 and 34 years old, over the last decade (2009–2019) in Portugal. To do this, the report portrays indicators of: youth population; youth employment and unemployment; education; and, NEETs distribution. The characterisation of all indicators adopts the degree of urbanisation as a central criterion, thereby enabling proportional comparisons between rural areas, towns and suburbs, cities and the whole country. These analyses are further divided into age subgroups and, where possible, into sex groups for greater detail.

The statistical procedures adopted across the different selected dimensions involve: descriptive longitudinal analysis; using graphical displays (e.g., overlay line charts); and, the calculation of proportional absolute and relative changes between 2009 and 2013, 2013 and 2019, and finally 2009 and 2019. These time ranges were chosen to capture the indicators evolution before and after the economic crisis which hit European countries. All data was extracted from Eurostat public datasets.

The analyses show that between 2009 and 2019 the rural youth population aged 15 to 24 years has been increasing in Portugal. Although the youth unemployment rate is higher in cities, rural areas faced more difficulties in overcoming the effects of the crisis, particularly among young adults aged over 25 years. In the field of education, however, there was an absolute and relative reduction in the proportion of young people with lower qualifications compared with young people in early school leavers in rural areas between 2009–2019, even though it still remains well above the 10% target defined by the Europe 2020 strategy. Finally, the proportion of NEETs in Portugal is higher in rural areas, in all age groups with available data, compared to cities and towns and suburbs, thereby revealing territorial inequalities in access to employment and education opportunities.

SUMÁRIO EXECUTIVO

O presente relatório destina-se a caracterizar a situação dos jovens Nem em Emprego, Nem em Educação/Formação (NEEF), com idades compreendidas entre os 15 e os 34 anos, no período 2009/2019, em Portugal. De acordo com este objetivo, o relatório descreve indicadores de população jovem, emprego e desemprego jovem, educação e distribuição de jovens NEEF. A caracterização dos diversos indicadores é feita considerando o grau de urbanização como critério central. Esta opção permite a comparação entre zonas rurais, zonas suburbanas, cidades e o todo nacional. De modo a refinar as análises realizadas, os dados são também examinados de acordo com subgrupos etários e, sempre que possível, por sexo.

Os procedimentos estatísticos adotados para os diferentes indicadores envolvem uma análise descritiva longitudinal, usando representações gráficas (e.g. gráficos de linhas), bem como o cálculo de variações absolutas e relativas entre 2009 e 2013, 2013 e 2019 e 2009 e 2019. Estes pontos temporais foram escolhidos de modo a captar a evolução dos indicadores antes e depois da crise económica que afetou os países europeus. Todos os dados foram extraídos das bases de dados públicas do Eurostat.

As análises mostram que entre 2009 e 2019, a população jovem em meios rurais cresceu. Apesar de a taxa de desemprego jovem ser mais elevada nas cidades, as zonas rurais tiveram maior dificuldade em recuperar do impacto da crise, sobretudo entre os jovens adultos com mais de 25 anos. No domínio da educação, contudo, verificou-se uma redução absoluta e relativa da proporção de jovens com mais baixas qualificações e dos jovens em situação de abandono escolar precoce nos meios rurais entre 2009–2019, ainda que ainda se mantenha muito acima da meta de 10% definida pela Estratégia 2020. Por fim, a proporção de jovens NEEF nas áreas rurais é mais alta do que em zonas suburbanas e nas cidades, em todos os subgrupos etários com dados disponíveis, revelando desigualdades territoriais no acesso a oportunidades de emprego e educação.



INTRODUCTION

This report proceeds in three parts. It starts with an introductory contextualisation with the most relevant information about the Portuguese social, economic and political situation in the last two decades and key youth policies based on a review of relevant literature. (See: Youth Wiki European online encyclopaedia, <https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/youthwiki>). Following this, a methodological note explains the database used and the statistical operations carried out. The most extensive part of the report refers to the analysis carried out, with a specific focus on young people, organised by degree of urbanisation and concerning four main topics: population; employment; education; and, NEETs. The report concludes with a brief summary which highlights the main results.



1. CONTEXTUALIZATION

Portugal is a sovereign state located in south-west Europe, on the Iberia Peninsula and spreading to two archipelagos in the northern Atlantic Ocean (Azores and Madeira). The total area of its territory is 92.090 km², and is bordered by Spain on the North and the East and by the Atlantic Ocean on the West and on the South.

In June of 2020, the country had an estimated population of 10.258.392 (INE/Pordata, 2020). In the last two decades, Portugal faced the challenge of a double aging process, with an increase of the elderly and a decrease of the proportion of young people, thus resulting in the progressive decline in population. This led to a reconfiguration of the demographic structure outcomes with a growth in life expectancy, a low fertility rate, as well as an exodus of the youth population, especially during the post-2008 economic and financial crisis (Vieira et al., 2017). During this period (2008–2014), Portugal was placed under an austerity program imposed by international creditors (the TROIKA loan program) and underwent profound political and economic changes. This had a strong impact on the patterns and dynamics of its labour market, marked by high levels of unemployment, especially among young people, and job insecurity.

The Portuguese labour market has a series of structural characteristics that distinguishes it from other European Union countries, thereby making it particularly vulnerable to conjuncture factors. Despite the extension of compulsory schooling in 2009, Portugal remains among the European countries showing lowest average educational levels of the active population. Moreover, micro, small and medium size companies compose the largest part of the productive structure in Portugal. Many of them are family-based businesses that hire less educated human resources (Ferreira & Vieira, 2018).

In terms of political governance, the state administrative structure relies on a central government, supported by a national parliament. Due to their geographical singularities, the archipelagos of The Azores and Madeira have their own regional government and parliament.

Youth governance has a centralised structure in the form of a Secretariat of State for Youth



and Sport. Since 2015, this policy-making structure has been integrated within the Ministry of Education. Previously, the sector had been under the supervision of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers (European Commission, 2020). This governmental body dedicated to youth was created in 1985, marking the political acknowledgment of the importance to design and develop youth policies, beyond those dedicated exclusively to education (Ferreira et al., 2019). In 1986, Portugal joined the European Economic Community, opening the possibility to access to EEC funding and special financial packages dedicated to youth.

In Portugal, youth policy has been developed and delivered in an integrated manner, based on a youth participatory approach. This means that the solutions for youth problems are designed considering youth involvement as people with rights. This is met mostly through youth organisations and representative structures. To manage issues such as high unemployment rates, risk of poverty or school failure, inter-ministerial coordination and cross-department policy measures are usually put in place, involving departments such as Education, Social Welfare or Health, amongst others. The youth policy sector has established and strengthened itself over the years, with the first National Youth Plan launched in 2018, stemming from European priorities and in relation to the needs of Portuguese young people (European Commission, 2020).

Some sectoral policies have had a direct impact on Portuguese youths over the past decades. In terms of employment, the legal age to enter the labour market is 16 years old, as long as the youth has completed (or is enrolled in) secondary education (Código do Trabalho, artigo 68º). In the employment domain, and under the scope of the Ministry of Labour, Solidarity and Social Security, there is a public services network that implements policies in this field. Inter-ministerial collaboration is also mobilised to tackle challenges such as youth unemployment or precariousness. This coordination has been met, for instance, under the Youth Guarantee programme (Garantia Jovem), involving sectors such as employment, education, economy, youth, foreign affairs (for international mobility) and the Presidency of the Council of Ministries, which integrates the Directorate-General for Local Authorities. The creation of policies and the search for solutions for youth challenges takes place through a social dialogue with the participation of relevant social partners. This involvement transpires through the Standing Committee for Social Dialogue and other tripartite bodies. Non-governmental organisations are also active participants, contributing in various areas. For instance, the National Association of Young Entrepreneurs and



the Foundation of Youth are particularly active in the field of entrepreneurship. The Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment (CITE) acts as a national mechanism for non-discrimination in the labour market.

Education in Portugal is universal, with a large and dominant public sector, with private education also being offered. The educational system architecture is roughly divided into six levels: pre-schooling (ISCED 0); primary school (1st to 4th grade – ISCED 1); lower middle school (5th and 6th grade–ISCED 2); upper middle school (7th to 9th grade–ISCED 2); secondary education (10th to 12th grade–ISCED 3–4); and, tertiary education (ISCED 5–8) (Lei de Bases do Sistema Educativo nº 237/1986). An important policy-making decision was the increase of compulsory education enrolment from 9 to 12 school years, beginning in 2009. Furthermore, in the past decade the State has put forward several legislation packages to improve equal access conditions to education and training (e.g., the National Program for School Success Promotion) or to promote modernisation, qualifications and diversification of higher education. These legislative initiatives have also ensured larger investments in education and training of young people and adults, through specific programs such as the Qualifica program. This makes available offers in the area of training and dual certification aimed at young NEET, among others, and based upon the Youth Guarantee framework (European Commission, 2020).

The main policies in the field of social inclusion for young people are framed in the Social Inclusion and Employment Operational Programme (POISE), in coordination with the Europe 2020 Strategy. This framework involves a multi-level governance and subsidiarity approach to steer tools for person-centred and flexible interventions, based on a proximity approach and with knowledge of the local realities. Therefore, successful policy deliverance relies on a clear articulation between different national plans, programs and strategies in the fields of youth employment, sports, gender equality, citizenship, health, migrations and disabilities. There is also a coordination with the National Reform Plan (PNR) in order to articulate youth social inclusion policies with the national strategy to combat poverty. In line with this approach, specific programs are run by the State to promote youth social inclusion such as the “Choices Programme” (Programa Escolhas). This program aims to promote the social inclusion of children and young people from the most vulnerable socio-economic contexts, especially descendants of immigrants, ethnic minorities (Roma communities), and Portuguese emigrants. It is based on local initiatives and utilises youth workers (European Commission, 2020).



2. METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

The Portuguese national report uses information gathered by the National Reports Editorial Team of the Rural NEET Youth Network via the Eurostat platform. The main data presented and analysed in this report are from the following Eurostat database:

- Population Statistics: [yth_demo_O20]
- EU Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS): [lfst_r_pgauwsc]; [lfst_r_ergau]; [lfst_r_urgau]; [edat_lfs_9913]; [edat_lfse_30]; [edat_lfse_29]

Selected indicators were extracted from the different databases according to two criteria:

- Time range: the previous decade (2009–2019) in order to have a sufficiently long period of time to capture the main changes and continuities in young people's trajectories in education, training and employment. The analysis mainly covered 3 dates – 2009–2013–2019 – in order to capture the impact of the economic and financial crisis that reached its peak in Portugal in 2013.
- Age group: the age group range varies accordingly to the data available in each indicator (15–24; 15–29; 15–34; and 15–39). Whenever possible, age range also covers young adult's data (30–34 and 35–39) in order to describe the extent of impact of the crisis on these age groups.

In addition to a descriptive analysis, and in order to compare the main data changes and continuities in different time periods, absolute and relative change were calculated by considering the 3 main time points that were selected, namely 2009, 2013 and 2019. Absolute change refers to the simple difference in the indicator over two periods in time and is expressed in percentage points (pp). Relative change expresses the change of a value of an indicator during an earlier period and it is expressed in percentage terms.

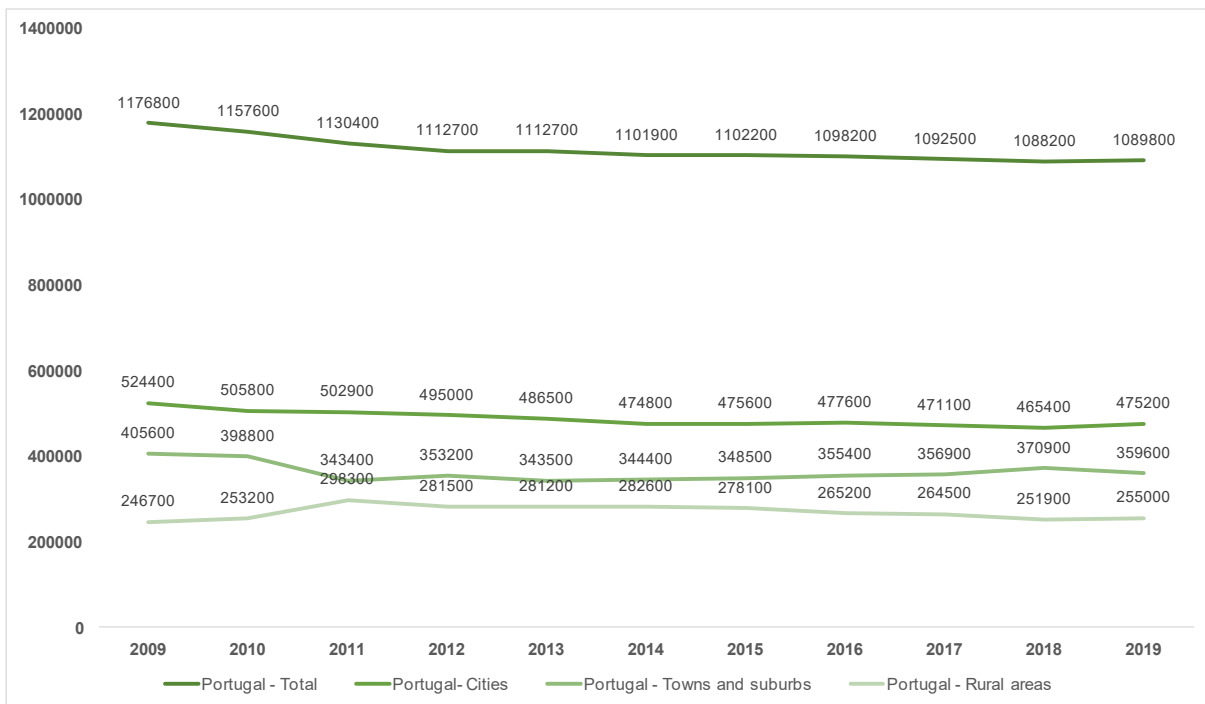


3. DATA ANALYSIS

3. 1. Population and youth population

Chart 1 summarises the evolution of the total youth population of Portugal aged 15–24 years old for different degrees of urbanisation, between 2009 and 2019. According to the chart, the total youth population is declining. In 2009, 1,176.800 of the population in Portugal fitted into this age subgroup; that number had decreased to 1,112.700 by 2013, and further declined to 1,089.800 in 2019. This trend is evident among both men (598.200, in 2009; 563.600, in 2013, 554.200, in 2019) and women (578.600, in 2009, 549.00, in 2013, 535.600, in 2019).

Chart 1. Total youth population 2009–2019 (Portugal) by degree of urbanization



Source: Eurostat (lfst_r_pgawsc) – data extracted on 12.05.2020



With some variations, the trend is identical for Portuguese cities as well as for the country's towns and suburbs. In Portuguese cities, the number of those aged 15–24 years old has declined from 524.400 in 2009, to 486.500 in 2013, and decreasing again to 475.200 in 2019. In the case of towns and suburbs, there were 405.600 people in this age group in 2009. That number had come down in 2013 to 343.500. In 2019, that number had increased to 359.600, but was still far from reaching 2009 levels. In rural areas, youth population aged 15–24 years old has evolved differently. In 2009, 246.700 youths lived in rural areas, with that number increasing to 281.200 in 2013, before declining to 255.00, in 2019. Still, when comparing 2009 to 2019, rural areas have the only level of degree of urbanisation in which population aged 15–24 years old has increased.

From 2009 to 2019, youth population (15–24 years) continuously declined in Portugal, except in rural areas, where, there was an increase in the young population in this age group, with greater incidence between 2009 and 2013 (with an increase rate of 14%).

According to Table 1, the ratio of youth population has been declining in Portugal, between 2011 and 2019, across different age classes. A negative absolute and relative change is more evident for the 25–29 years old group (– 0.1 pp; 18.87%), compared to the 20–24 years old group (– 0.3 pp; – 5.77%). The proportion of those aged between 15–19 years old has remained unchanged for the same time period. It is interesting to note, however, that the decrease of the ratio of youth population in the country was more evident between 2011 and 2015, both for those aged 25–29 years old (– 0.8 pp; –14.55%) as well as for those aged 20–24 years old (– 0.2 pp: – 3.77%), with the ratio of those aged 15–19 years old also declining (– 0.1 pp; –1.87%), compared to the evolution on the same indicator between 2015 and 2019. In this period, there is even a slight positive absolute and relative change on the ratio of youths aged 15 to 19 years old (0.1 pp; 1.85%).



Table 1. Ratio of youth population by age subgroups and absolute and relative change in Portugal (2011–2015, 2015–2019 and 2011–2019)

	2011	2015	2019	Absolute change 2011–2015 (relative change 2011–2015)	Absolute change 2015–2019 (relative change 2015–2019)	Absolute change 2011–2019 (relative change 2011–2019)
15–19	5.40%	5.30%	5.40%	-10pp (-1.87%)	10 pp (1.85%)	0 (0)
20–24	5.50%	5.30%	5.20%	-20pp (-3.77%)	-10 pp (-1.92%)	-30 pp (-5,77%)
25–29	6.30%	5.50%	5.30%	-80 pp (-14.55%)	-20 pp (-3.77%)	-100 pp (-18.87%)

Source: Eurostat: yth_demo_020 – data extracted in 13.05.20

Since 2011, the youth population ratio (15–29 years) has been continuously declining in Portugal (less 1.3 p.p., from 17.1% in 2011 to 15.9% in 2019).



3. 2. Employment and Unemployment

3. 2. 1. Youth employment

According to Table 2, at the country level, there has been a slightly negative absolute and relative variation of youth employment between 2009 and 2019 – (0.2 pp; -31%). This decline is evident in age subgroups 15–19 years old (2,5 pp; -32.89%) and 20–24 years old (- 2.2 pp; - 4.53%). Conversely, in age classes 25–29 (3.8 pp; 4.69%) and 30–34 years old (5.2 pp; 5.96%) the opposite trend is evident. This evolution across the country, for the period under analysis, has encompassed a negative absolute and relative variation of youth employment, overall and across all age subgroups, between 2009 and 2013. This has been followed by a generalised positive recovery, for the period between 2013 and 2019.

Youth employment trends overall, and by age groups across different degrees of urbanisation levels, vary. In Portuguese cities, between 2009 and 2019, there is a minor positive variation in youth employment overall (0.04 pp; .62%), which is especially remarkable across the age classes 25–29 (5.2 pp; 6.39%) and 30–34 (3.7 pp; 4.26%). By contrast, the youth employment share among youths aged 15–19 years old has decreased (- 4.9 pp; - 85.96%), with the indicator remaining almost unchanged in the 20–24 years old class (0.5 pp; 1.06%).

In towns and suburbs, between 2009 and 2019, there is a minor positive absolute and relative variation of youth employment overall (0.7 pp; 1.06%), mostly due to an increase of this indicator among those aged 25 to 29 (5.2 pp; 6.29%) and 30 to 34 years old (8.1 pp; 9.01%). This contrasts with the decrease of youth employment levels in age classes 15–19 (- 2.2 pp; - 25.00%) and 20–24 (- 4.8 pp; - 9.28%).

In turn, in rural areas, for the same period, youth employment overall has decreased (- 3.0 pp; - 5.01%). This fall in youth employment is fuelled by its reduction among those aged 20–24 years old (- 3.2 pp; - 6.85%). Conversely, across all other age classes groups, youth employment has increased, from a small increment in the 15–19 age old class (0, 2 pp; 2.08%) to larger increments in the 25–29 (5.2 pp; 6.29%) and in the 30–34 (5.4 pp; 6.41%) years old classes.



Across all degrees of urbanisation levels, for the past decade, youth employment has gone through a contraction between 2009 and 2013, followed by an increase in the subsequent period, from 2013 to 2019. However, with the exception of those aged 25 to 29 years old, the youth employment positive variation has been greater in cities as well as in towns and suburbs, when compared to rural areas.

Table 2. Youth employment (%) and absolute and relative change in Portugal by age groups (2009–2013, 2013–2019 and 2009–2019)

	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)
Country						
Overall	64.00%	56.50%	63.80%	-7.5 pp (13.27%)	7.3 pp (-11.44%)	- 0.2 pp (-31%)
15 - 19	10.10%	5.80%	7.60%	-4.7 pp (81.03%)	1.8 pp (31.03%)	-2.5 pp (32.89%)
20 - 24	50.80%	37.10%	48.60%	-3.7 pp (39.12%)	11.5 pp (23.66%)	-2.2 pp (-4.53%)
25 - 29	77.30%	68.00%	81.00%	-9.3 pp (-13.67%)	13.0 pp (16.0%)	3.8 pp (4.69%)
30 - 34	82.00%	76.90%	87.20%	-5.1 pp (-0.4%)	10.3 pp (11.81%)	5.2 pp (5.96%)
Cities						
Overall	63.80%	56.00%	64.20%	-7.8 pp (-13.93%)	8.2 pp (12.77%)	0.04 pp (62%)
15-19	9.60%	4.40%	5.70%	-5.2 pp (-118.18%)	1.3 pp (22.80%)	-4.9 pp (-85.96%)
20-24	46.80%	32.40%	47.30%	-14.4 pp (-44.44%)	14.9 pp (31.50%)	0.5 pp (1.06%)
25-29	76.20%	68.90%	81.40%	-7.3 pp (-10.60%)	12.5 pp (15.36%)	5.2 pp (6.39%)
30-34	83.10%	77.80%	86.70%	-5.3 pp (-6.81%)	8.9 pp (10.27%)	3.7 pp (4.26%)
Towns and suburbs						
Overall	65.10%	58.00%	65.80%	-7.1 pp (-12.24%)	7.8 pp (11.85%)	0.7 pp (1.06%)
15-19	11.00%	7.00%	8.80%	-4.0 pp (-57.14%)	1.8 pp (20.45%)	-2.2 pp (-25.00%)
20-24	56.50%	39.60%	51.70%	-16.9 pp (-42.67%)	12.8 pp (24.76%)	-4.8 pp (-9.28%)
25-29	77.50%	66.30%	82.70%	-11.2 pp (-16.89%)	16.4 pp (19.83%)	5.2 pp (6.29%)
30-34	81.80%	76.90%	89.90%	-4.9 pp (-6.37%)	13.0 pp (14.46%)	8.1 pp (9.01%)
Rural areas						
Overall	62.80%	55.50%	59.80%	-7.3 pp (-13.27%)	4.3 pp (7.19%)	-3.0 pp (-5.01%)
15-19	9.40%	6.60%	9.60%	-2.8 pp (-40.58%)	3.0 pp (31.25%)	0.2 pp (2.08%)
20-24	49.90%	42.40%	46.70%	-7.5 pp (-17.69%)	4.3 pp (9.20%)	-3.2 pp (-6.85%)
25-29	79.50%	68.60%	77.70%	-11.2 pp (-16.89%)	16.4 pp (19.83%)	5.2 pp (6.29%)
30-34	79.80%	75.40%	84.20%	-4.4 pp (-5.84%)	8.8 pp (10.45%)	5.4 pp (6.41%)

Source: Eurostat (fst_r_ergau) – data extracted on 29.04.2020

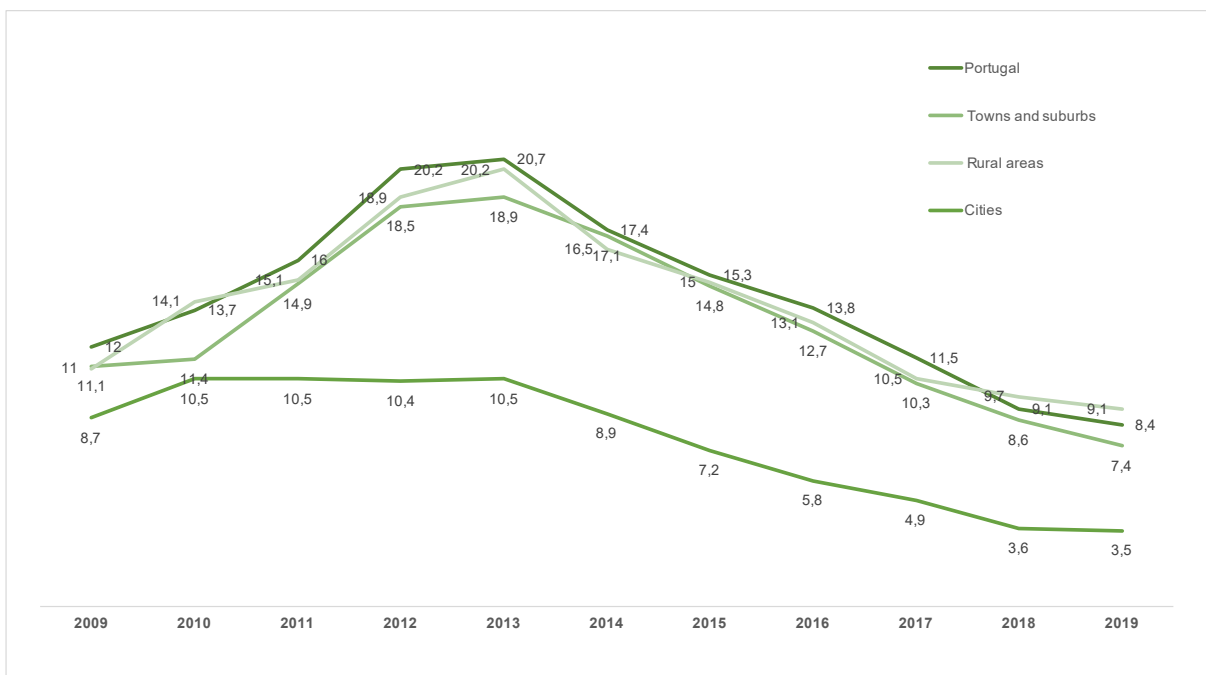
In the past decade youth employment was marked by two distinct periods, one from 2009 to 2013 – with lower rates of youth employment, and another one from 2013 to 2019 – with the progressive increase in employment rates, but with a slower growth in rural areas.



3. 2. 2. Youth unemployment

According to Chart 2, across the country, unemployment among those aged 15 to 39 years old decreased from 12.00%, in 2009, to 8.40% in 2019, reaching its peak in 2013 (20.70%). In cities, the same trend is evident, with unemployment in this age range decreasing from 13.10% in 2009 and to 8.90% in 2019. In Portuguese towns and suburbs, unemployment came down from 11.00%, in 2009, to 7.40% in 2019, reaching its highest rate in 2013 (18.90%). In rural areas, the tendency is the same, with an unemployment decrease, from 11.00% in 2009, to 9.10, in 2019, but with a remarkable peak, in 2013 (20.20%).

Chart 2. Unemployment age group 15–39 years old (%) in Portugal (2009–2019) by degree of urbanization



Source: Eurostat (lfst_r_urgau) – data extracted on 29.04.2020



Table 3 breaks down youth unemployment rates in Portugal, between 2009 and 2019, for different age subgroups. For those aged 15–19 years old, the data for rural areas is missing for several years.

Youth unemployment trends by age groups in Portugal and across the different degrees of urbanisation levels of the country it can likewise vary. For the country overall, between 2009 and 2019, the unemployment rates have shown an absolute as well as a relative decrease in the 20–24 (– 2.4 pp; – 14.63%), 25–29 (– 3.8 pp; – 45.78%) and 30–34 (– 4.2 pp; 71.10%) years old classes, with only a slight increase in the 15–19 years old class.

In Portuguese cities, between 2009 and 2019, there is a negative absolute and relative variation in youth unemployment across the age classes 20–24 (– 4.7 pp; – 27.01%) 25–29 (– 4.7 pp – 55.95%) and 30–34 (–3.8 pp; – 58.46%). By contrast, the youth unemployment share among youths aged 15–19 years old has increased (5.6 pp; 16.23%).

In towns and suburbs, between 2009 and 2019, there is also a remarkable negative absolute and relative variation of youth unemployment across 15–19 (– 1.9 pp; – 6.85%), 20–24 (–1.0 pp; – 55.60%), 25–29 (–5.1 pp; – 72.86%) and 30–34 years old (– 5.9 pp; 137.20%).

Finally, in rural areas, for the same period, youth unemployment has fallen among those aged 20–24 (– 3.2 pp; –19.63%), 25–29 (– 0.1 pp; – 1.00%) and 30–34 (–1.1 pp; – 15.49%). Still, the magnitude of this reduction across age levels is minor, compared to the same reduction of youth unemployment across age sub-groups in cities and towns and suburbs.

It is also important to note that the generalised absolute and relative decrease of youth unemployment by age subgroups was preceded by a widespread increment between 2009 and 2013.

Table 3. Youth unemployment (%) and absolute and relative change in Portugal (2009–2013, 2013–2019 and 2009–2019)

	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)
Country						
15 – 19	27.50%	53.20%	28.20%	25.7 pp (48.30%)	-25.0 pp (-88.65%)	0.7 pp (2.40%)
20 – 24	18.80%	34.90%	16.40%	16.1 pp (46.13%)	-18.5 pp (-112.80%)	-2.4 pp (-14.63%)
25 – 29	12.10%	21.90%	8.30%	9.8 pp (44.75%)	-13.6 pp (-163.86%)	-3.8 pp (-45.78%)
30 – 34	10.10%	16.70%	5.90%	6.7 pp (40.12%)	-10.8 pp (- 183.05%)	-4.2 pp (-71.10%)
Cities						
15–19	28.90%	57.30%	34.50%	28.4 pp (49.56%)	-22.8 pp (66.01%)	5.6 pp (16.23%)
20–24	22.10%	41.50%	17.40%	19.4 pp (46.75%)	-24.1 pp (138.51%)	-4.7 pp (- 27.01%)
25–29	13.10%	22.00%	8.40%	8.9 pp (40.45%)	-13.6 pp (161.90%)	-4.7 pp (- 55.95%)
30–34	10.30%	16.60%	6.50%	6.3 pp (37.95%)	-10.1 pp (155.38%)	-3.8 pp (- 58.46%)
Towns and suburbs						
15–19	29.60%	52.90%	27.70%	23.3 pp (44.05%)	-25.2 pp (90.98%)	-1.9 pp (-6.85%)
20–24	14.40%	31.30%	15.40%	16.9 pp (53.99%)	-15.9 v (103.24%)	-1.0 pp (-55.60%)
25–29	12.10%	22.00%	7.00%	9.9 pp (45.00%)	-15.0 pp (2.14%)	-5.1 pp (-72.86%)
30–34	10.20%	16.00%	4.30%	5.8 pp (36.25%)	-11.7 pp (2.72%)	-5.9 pp (137.20%)
Rural areas						
15–19	---	48.20%	---	---	---	---
20–24	19.50%	28.20%	16.30%	8.7 pp (30.85%)	-11.9 pp (73.01%)	-3.2 pp (-19.63%)
25–29	10.00%	21.60%	10.10%	11.6 pp (53.70%)	-11.5 pp (113.86%)	-0.1 pp (-1.00%)
30–34	9.50%	17.90%	7.10%	8.4 pp (46.92%)	-10.8 pp (152.11%)	-1.1 pp (- 15.49%)

Source: Eurostat (fst_r_urgau) – data extracted on 29.04.2020

Portugal has seen higher levels of youth unemployment in the period between 2009 and 2013, when it reached its pick, starting to decline gradually since then. Although the higher youth unemployment rates were registered in cities (reaching 22.30% in 2013, 2.1 pp higher than in rural areas), rural areas have struggle more to recover from the impact of the economic and financial crisis. In 2019, youth unemployment rate in rural areas (9.10%) was close to the values reached in 2009 (11.00%). In cities, as well as in towns and suburbs the decline was more pronounced.



3. 3. Education

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

Table 4 describes the population in Portugal, aged 15 to 24 years old, by ISCED levels, between 2009 and 2019, for the country and by degree of urbanization. The same table also summarizes the absolute and relative change across the different ISCED levels, for three time periods: 2009–2013, 2013–2019 and 2009–2019.

At the country level, it is evident a negative absolute and relative variation on those aged 15 to 24 years that only reached ISCED–2 (upper middle school), for the whole period under analysis (–17.8 pp; –38.36%), with relatively similar reductions in intermediate periods between 2009–2013 and 2013–2019. This reduction is paralleled by an increment of those in this age group reaching ISCED 3–4 – secondary and post–secondary education (12.2 pp; 28.63%) as well as ISCED 5–8 – tertiary education (6.6 pp; 60.00%).



Table 4. Population aged 15–24, by ISCED levels (%) and degree of urbanization in Portugal, including absolute and relative change (2009–2013, 2013–2019, 2009–2019)

	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)
Country						
ISCED 0–2	64.20%	55.00%	46.40%	-9.2 pp (-16.72%)	-8.6 pp (-18.53%)	-17.8 pp (-38.36%)
ISCED 3–4	30.40%	36.20%	42.60%	5.8 pp (16.02%)	6.4 pp (15.02%)	12.2 pp (28.63%)
ISCED 5–8	5.40%	8.80%	11.00%	3.8 pp (43.18%)	2.2 pp (20.00%)	6.6 pp (60.00%)
Cities						
ISCED 0–2	62.80%	54.00%	45.70%	-8.8 pp (-16.30%)	-8.3 pp (-18.16%)	-17.1 pp (37.42%)
ISCED 3–4	31.00%	36.20%	42.90%	5.2 pp (14.36%)	6.7 pp (15.62%)	11.9 pp (27.74%)
ISCED 5–8	6.20%	9.70%	11.40%	3.5 pp (36.08%)	1.7 pp (17.52%)	5.2 pp (45.61%)
Towns and suburbs						
ISCED 0–2	65.50%	55.40%	46.40%	-10.1 pp (-18.23%)	-9.0 pp (-19.40%)	-19.1 pp (-41.16%)
ISCED 3–4	29.20%	36.20%	42.30%	7.0 pp (19.34%)	6.1 pp (14.42%)	13.1 pp (30.97%)
ISCED 5–8	5.30%	8.40%	11.30%	3.1 pp (36.90%)	2.9 pp (25.66%)	6.0 pp (53.10%)
Rural areas						
ISCED 0–2	64.80%	56.00%	47.60%	-8.8 pp (- 5.71%)	-48.6 pp (-102.10%)	-17.2 pp (36.13%)
ISCED 3–4	31.40%	36.20%	42.70%	4.8 pp (13.26%)	6.5 pp (15.22%)	11.3 pp (26.46%)
ISCED 5–8	3.80%	7.80%	9.70%	4.0 pp (51.28%)	1.9 pp (19.59%)	5.9 pp (60.82%)

Source: Eurostat (edat_ifs_9913) – data extracted in 29.04.2020

In Portuguese cities, the evolution is similar with an absolute and relative decrease between 2009 and 2019 of those aged 15–24 years old reaching, only, ISCED 2 (- 17.1 pp; 37.42%) followed by an increase of those falling in the ISCED 3–4 (11.9 pp; 27.74%) and ISCED 5–8 (5.2 pp; 45.61%) levels. Alongside, in Portuguese towns and suburbs, the same trend is evident across ISCED 2 (-19.1 pp; -41.16%), ISCED 3–4 (13.1 pp; 30.97%) and ISCED 5–8 (6.0 pp; 53.10%). Rural areas follow an identical trajectory for ISCED 2 (- 17.2 pp; 36.13%) ISCED 3–4 (11.3 pp; 26.46%) and ISCED 5–8 (5.9 pp; 60.82%).

In the past decade, there has been a decrease of the population in Portugal with lower levels of education and an increase of the proportion of those with higher educational attainment. The proportion of population with tertiary education (ISCED 5–8) increased 60% in the last decade (2009–5.40%; 2019–11.00%). This trend cuts across cities, towns and suburbs, and rural areas.

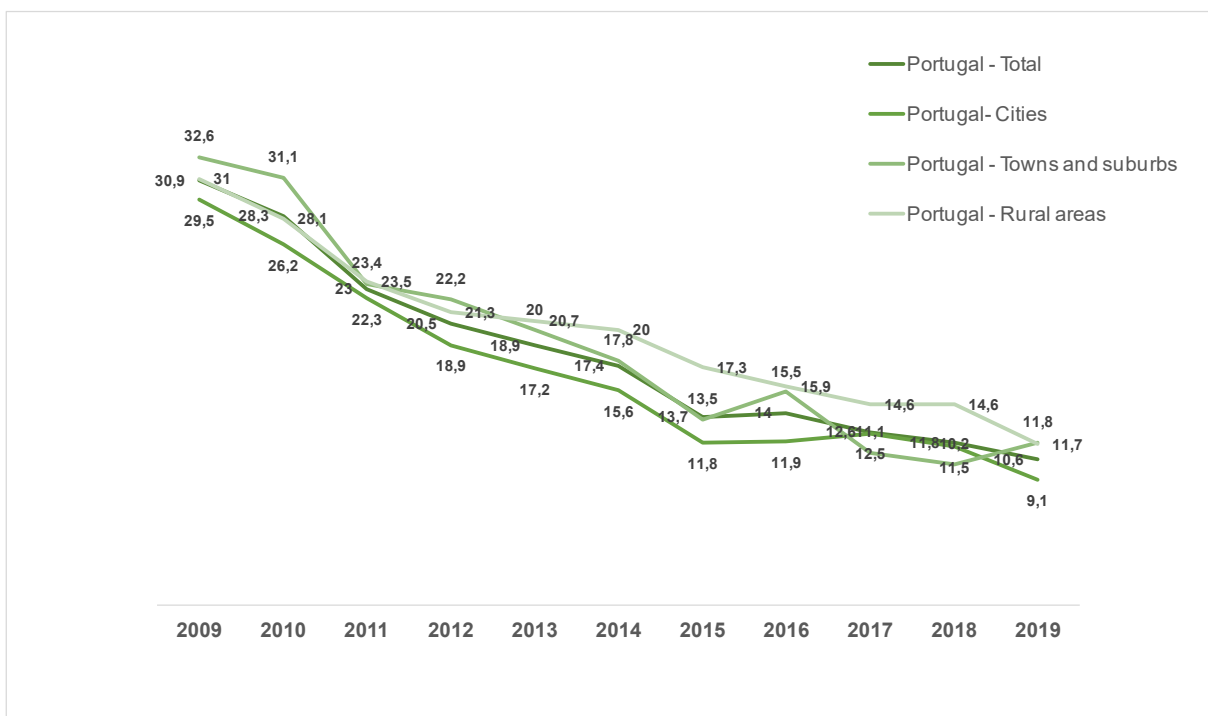


3.3.2. Early school leavers

Chart 3 displays the evolution of Early School Leavers from Education and Training (ESLET) from 2009 to 2019, in Portugal and across the different degrees of urbanisation levels.

At the country level, the ESLET rate has come down from 30.90% to 10.60%, with similar variations in terms of direction and strength in cities (from 29.50% to 9.10%), towns and suburbs (from 32.60% to 11.70%) and in rural areas (from 31.00% to 11.80%).

Chart 3. ESLET rate (%) 2009–2019 (Portugal) by degree of urbanization



Source: Eurostat (edat_lfse_30) – data extracted in 20.04.2020

There has been progressive and significant decrease of ESLET in Portugal, for the past 10 years. In rural areas, in 2019, ESLET was still 11.80%, even though it registered a decrease of 61.90% between 2009–2019. Still, with exception of cities, ESLET rates are above the EU 2020 ESLET benchmark.

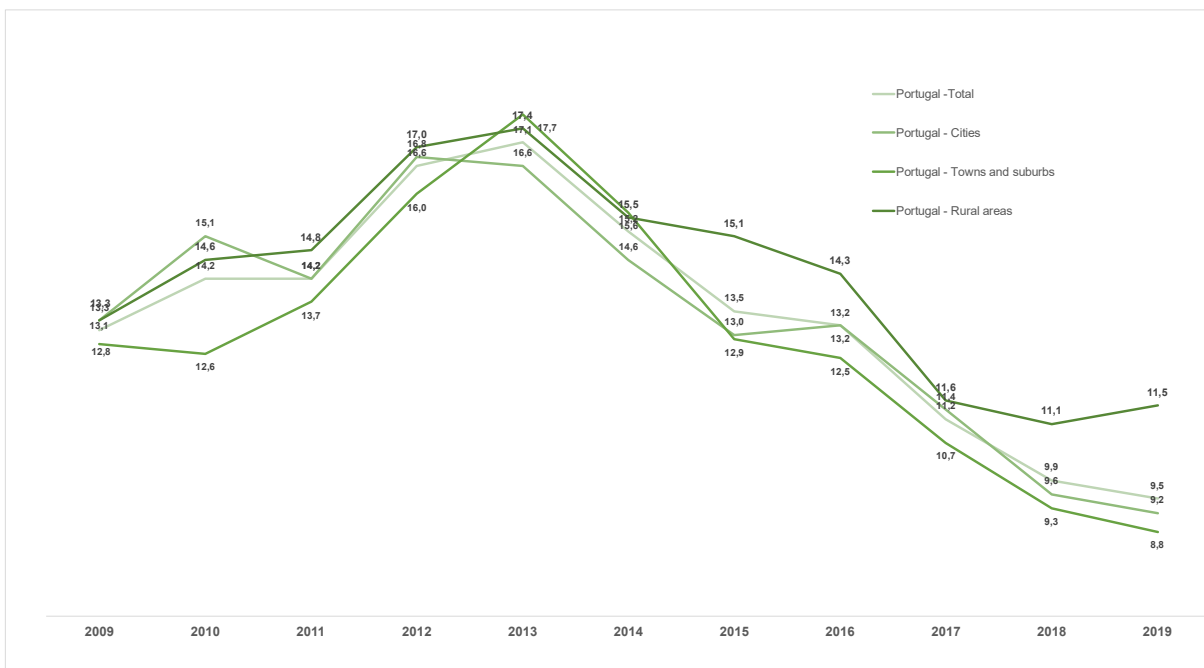


3. 4. NEET

3. 4. 1. NEET rate

Chart 4 displays the overall evolution of NEETs proportion, aged 15 to 29 years old, across the country and all degree of urbanization levels, between 2009 and 2019. According to the chart, the NEET rate in Portugal has come down from 13.10%, in 2009, to 9.50%, in 2019. In cities, this a similar variation occurred, with the NEET share coming down from 13.30%, in 2009, to 9.20%, in 2019. Alongside, in towns and suburbs, this figure has dropped down from 12.80% to 8.80%. Finally, in rural areas, the NEETs share has fallen from 13.30% to 11.50%.

Chart 4. NEETs rate, aged 15–29 (%) 2009–2019 (Portugal) by degree of urbanization



Source: Eurostat (edat_ifse_29) – data extracted in 29.04.2020



Table 5 displays the evolution of NEETs by age subgroups for the country as well as for each degree of urbanisation level. In 2019, the NEET rate in Portugal ranged between 3.40%, for those aged 15–19 years old, and 12.70%, for those aged 20–24 years old. For the same year, rural areas displayed higher NEET rates, compared to cities and towns and suburbs. This was true for those aged 20–24 (14.40% in rural areas, compared to 12.10% in cities, and 12.30% in towns and suburbs), 25–29 (15.60% in rural areas, compared to 11.20% in cities, and 9.70% in towns and suburbs), and 30–34 years old (13.30% in rural areas, compared to 10.30% in cities, and 9.20% in towns and suburbs).

The table also includes the absolute and relative variation between 2009–2013, 2013–2019 and 2009–2019. At the country level, NEETs rate has decreased from 2009 to 2019, across all age subgroups. This overall trend is evident after an incremental period, between 2009 and 2013, followed by a generalised decrease from 2013–2019. The same trend is evident across cities, towns and suburbs, and rural areas. This pattern of absolute and relative variation is fairly similar across the different levels of urbanisation, for the different age classes, with the exception of those aged 20–24 years old. In this case, the NEETs absolute decrease between 2009 and 2019 is lower in towns and suburbs (– 0.1 pp; – .08%) compared to the same indicator in cities (– 5.5 pp; – 45.45%) and rural areas (– 1.4 pp; – 9.72%). A further exception is that in the 25–29 age class, between 2009 and 2019, NEETs presented a positive absolute and relative variation (2.30%; 33.97%), conversely to what is evident in cities (– 3.7 pp; – 33.04%) as well as in towns and suburbs (– 5.3 pp; – 54.63%).



Table 5. NEET rate (%) by age subgroups and by degree of urbanization in Portugal, including absolute and relative change (2009–2013, 2013–2019, 2009–2019)

	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)
Country						
15–19	6.80%	7.30%	3.40%	0,5 pp (6.66%)	- 3.9 pp (-114.71%)	- 3.2 pp (- 94.12%)
20–24	15.50%	20.60%	12.70%	4.9 pp (23.78%)	- 7.9 pp (-62.20%)	- 2.8 pp (- 22.04%)
25–29	14.60%	20.80%	11.50%	6.2 pp (29.81%)	- 9.3 pp (- 80.85%)	- 4.1 pp (- 35.65%)
30–34	14.60%	18.90%	10.60%	4.3 pp (22.75%)	- 8.3 pp (- 78.30%)	- 4.0 pp (- 37.74%)
Cities						
15–19	6.70%	6.30%	3.00%	-0,1 pp (1.59%)	- 3.3 pp (- 110.00%)	- 3.7 pp (- 123.33%)
20–24	17.60%	21.50%	12.10%	2.9 pp (13.49%)	- 9.4 pp (- 77.68%)	- 5.5 pp (- 45.45%)
25–29	14.90%	19.20%	11.20%	4.3 pp (22.40%)	- 8.0 pp (- 71.43%)	- 3.7 pp (- 33.04%)
30–34	13.30%	17.90%	10.30%	4.6 pp (25.70%)	- 7.6 pp (- 73.79%)	- 3.0 pp (- 29.12%)
Towns and suburbs						
15–19	7.60%	8.50%	3.90%	0,9 pp (10.59%)	-3.0 pp (- 76.92%)	- 3.7 pp (- 94.87%)
20–24	12.40%	20.10%	12.30%	7.70 pp (38.31%)	- 7.2 pp (- 58.54%)	- 0,1 pp (- .08%)
25–29	15.00%	22.70%	9.70%	7.7 pp (33.92%)	- 13.0 pp (- 134.02%)	- 5.3 pp (- 54.63%)
30–34	15.00%	19.00%	9.20%	4.0 pp (21.05%)	- 9.8 pp (- 106.52%)	- 5.8 pp (- 63.04%)
Rural areas						
15–19	5.70%	7.40%	---	1.7 pp (22.30%)	---	---
20–24	15.80%	19.60%	14.40%	3.8 pp (10.33%)	- 5.2 pp (- 36.11%)	- 1.4 pp (- 9.72%)
25–29	13.30%	21.70%	15.60%	7.7 pp (35.48%)	- 13.0 pp (- 85.26%)	2.3 pp (33.97%)
30–34	17.00%	20.50%	13.30%	3.5 pp (17.07%)	- 7.2 pp (- 54.14%)	- 3.7 pp (- 27.82%)

Source: Eurostat (edat_lfse_29) – data extracted in 29.04.2020

Between 2009 and 2013, during the economic crisis, Portugal presented higher NEET rates compared to the period between 2014 and 2019 marked by an economic recovery. Although there has also been a gradual decline in NEET rates in rural areas, in 2019, compared to cities and towns and suburbs, the proportion of NEETs is 2 p.p. higher (cities – 9.20%; towns and suburbs – 8,8% and rural – 11.50%).



4. CONCLUSIONS

Youth population. Youth population in Portugal has been declining for the past decade. This is due to a negative natural growth, resulting in the decreasing of the youth population and the increase of the elderly population. This socio-demographic challenge is even greater, given that during the economic crisis period (2009–2013) Portugal faced a migratory exodus, and which was especially pronounced among young people. With Portugal's economic recovery in recent years, and the consequent reduction of unemployment rates, the migration balance turned positive and helped to mitigate the decline of the resident population. However, among the young population, the downward trend continued until 2019. Rural areas are an exception, as in the last decade the young population aged 15 to 24 has increased, with rates peaking during the economic crisis period.

Youth unemployment. Unemployment among the youngest share of the population has decreased across Portugal and among different degrees of urbanisation levels, from 2009 to 2019, and during two different periods. Specifically, an increase during the economic crisis years, followed by a decrease after 2013. This reduction is more evident in cities, towns and suburbs than in rural areas where the unemployment rate among those aged 15 to 39 years old remains higher as of 2019. Also, the impact of the economic crisis was harder in rural areas, translating into higher unemployment rates among youth workforce. Unemployment rates in Portugal were higher in 2009, and remained higher in 2019, notably among those aged 15–19 and 20–24, irrespective of the level of urbanisation. In Portuguese rural areas, unemployment is more problematic among those aged 25 or more, when compared with cities, towns and suburbs.

Educational attainment. In Portugal, between 2009 and 2019 the population aged 15 to 24 years old has become more educated. The number of those with an education equivalent to ISCED-2 has decreased, while those with an education equivalent to ISCED 3–4 and ISCED 5–8 has increased. This has happened across the country and the different education levels, and at a very similar pace. The increase of the compulsory education period to 12 years in total and the progressive reduction in school drop-out rates combined with the growth in the number of enrolled students in higher education explain this trend (Ferreira & Vieira, 2018). Still, it is important to note that the absolute and relative reduction of under-educated youths in rural areas is proportionally much larger for the period 2013–2019, when compared to cities and towns and suburbs.



ESLET. ESLET has strongly decreased in Portugal, both at the country level as well as across different degrees of urbanisation levels. In cities, in 2019 the ESLET rate was already below the expected target of 10.00% for the whole country in 2020. At the country level, as well as for towns and suburbs and in rural areas, the ESLET rate was still above the national target.

NEETs. Between 2009 and 2019, NEETs share has decreased throughout Portugal and across all degrees of urbanisation levels. However, it remains higher in rural areas when compared to cities as well as with towns and suburbs. NEET rates have decreased in the country for all age groups and across all levels of urbanisation, from 2009 to 2019. In Portugal, NEET rates are mainly composed of unemployed young people, so the fluctuation on NEET rates tends to follow the same pattern as the unemployment rate (Ferreira et al., 2017). As a consequence, NEET rates evolution between 2009 and 2019 has two distinct periods. The first is from 2009 to 2013, marked by a generalised increase of NEET rates for all age groups, across the entire country and all levels of urbanisation. This is followed by the opposite trend between 2013 and 2019. Even so, the proportion of NEETs is higher in rural areas, in all age classes with available data, compared to cities and towns and suburbs. This reveals territorial inequalities in access to employment and education opportunities, making young people in certain territories more vulnerable to becoming NEET.



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

6. IMPORTANT LINKS

National Plan for youth – <http://pnj.juventude.gov.pt/>

Youth Guarantee – <https://www.garantiajovem.pt/>

National Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan – <https://dre.pt/pesquisa/-/search/483892/details/maximized>

Youth wiki – Portuguese national youth policies – <https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/content/youthwiki/overview-portugal>

