



YOUTH@WORK

FOSTERING YOUTH WORK AND
MANAGEMENT IN NGO'S

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AUSTRIA NATIONAL REPORT

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Austria



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INTRO- DUCTION

This document is the Austrian contribution to the Youth@Work research and assessment of current needs on youth work in Austria. The study report gives an overview on the following points: The current situation of youngsters in the Austrian society, their needs and problems, experiences and needs of youth workers working with the youngsters, recommendations and key elements of youth work in Austria as well as examples of good practices.

2.METHODOLOGY

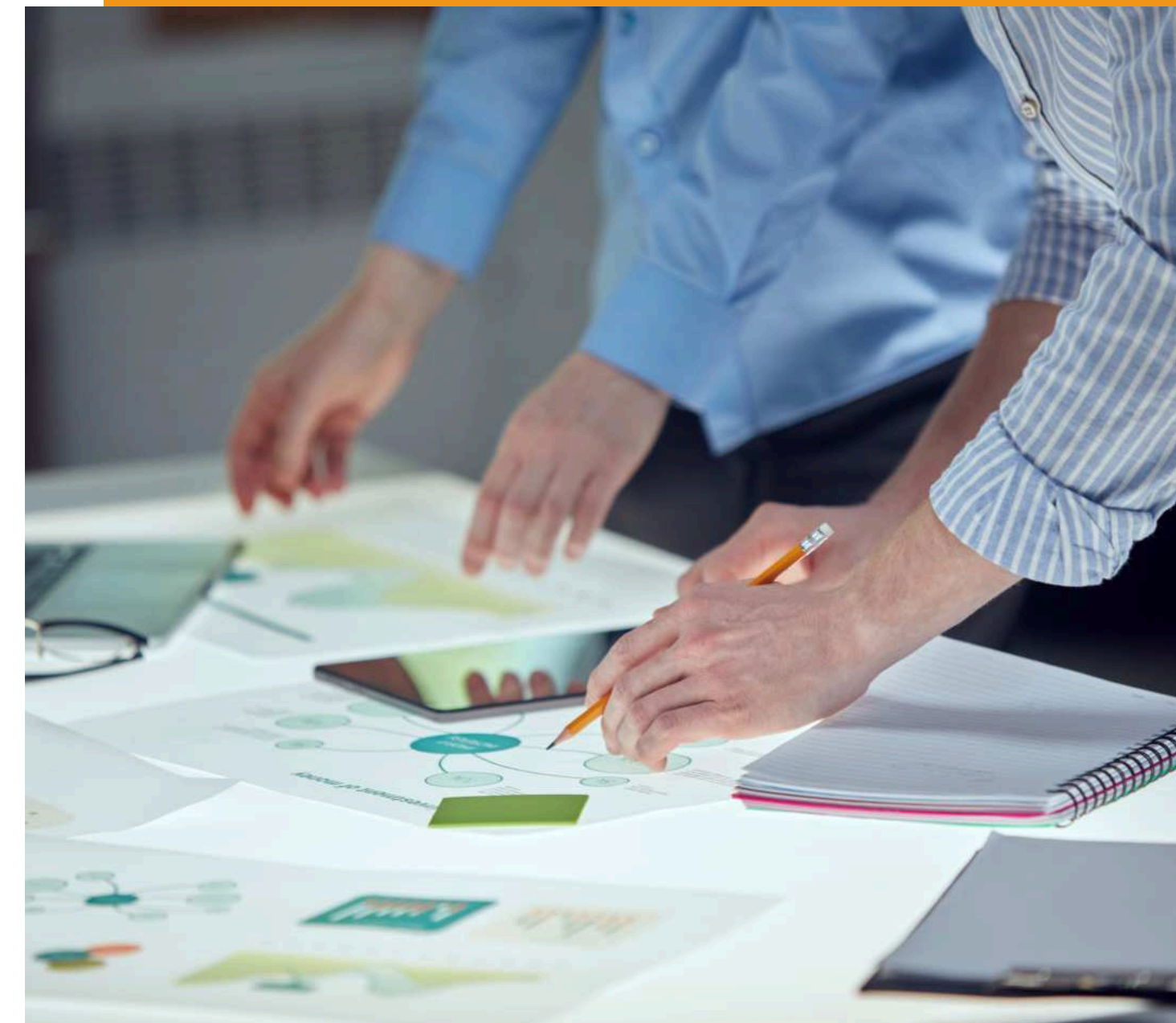
The research phase lasted from March to April 2024. The method consists of two main components: A theoretical part – the comparative results of a literature study (data, document and web research) and an empirical part – the results of the focus group discussion.

The theoretical part mainly includes the comparison of the inno4impact Erasmus+ project with the current situation in Austria and further web research inspired by inno4impact.

Therefore, a brief introduction to inno4impact and an explanation of why the theoretical part of Youth@Work is based on it follows. The aim of the report from inno4impact was to firstly gain an insight into the current situation of youth work with young people from disadvantaged background in Austria compared to the partner countries of that project: Italy, Spain, Türkiye and Germany. Then, due to the comparison, inno4impact formulated proposals for further training needs. The report provided general and comparative data about disadvantaged young people and youth social work in each partner country, as well as tools and good practice in this field. The focus of the comparison for Youth@Work lies on Austria.

Apart from this comparison, the theoretical desk research is about in-depth research on recent data and projects in Austrian youth work with disadvantaged youths.

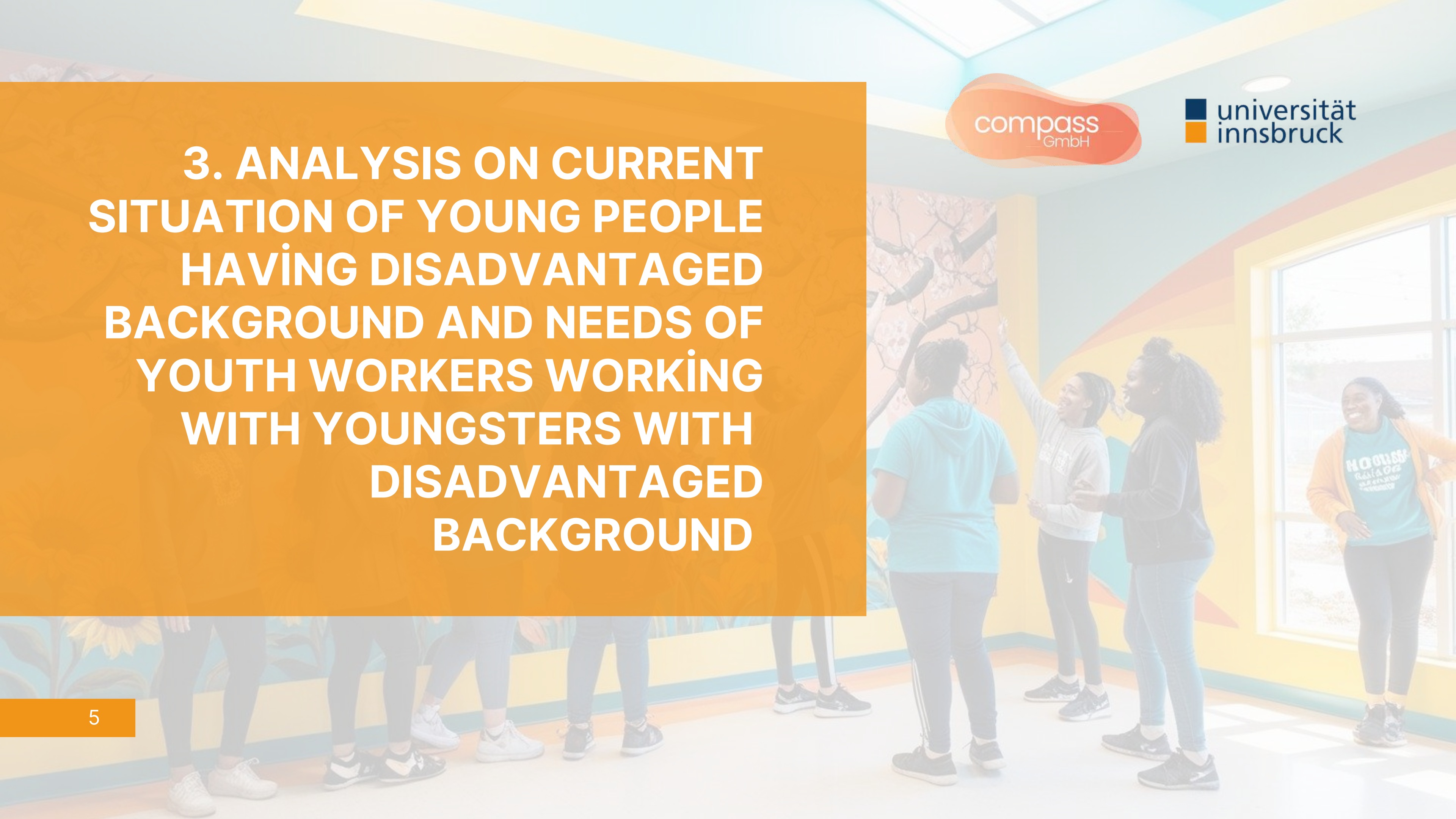
After the desk research, focus groups with XX participants were carried out. The focus groups targeted youth workers, social workers and youth coaches who worked with young people in their daily work life. The participants mainly worked in the field of open youth work.



3. ANALYSIS ON CURRENT SITUATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE HAVING DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUND AND NEEDS OF YOUTH WORKERS WORKING WITH YOUNGSTERS WITH DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUND

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3.1 FRAMEWORK OF YOUTH WORK IN AUSTRIA



What makes young people in Austria have a disadvantaged background? Disadvantaged in this context means socio(-economic) disadvantage. Disadvantaging factors are, for example, gender, growing up in the countryside or in the city, parents' level of education, migration background, as described, for example, in a text on early school leaving and school failure[1]. In general, it is noticeable that a disadvantaged background among young people in Austria is often discussed in the literature in relation to unemployment, education and labor market integration[2][3][4][5]:.

It is therefore useful to take a look at the statistics on youth unemployment in Austria[6]:

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- [1]Steiner, Mario (2009). Early School Leaving und Schulversagen im österreichischen Bildungssystem. In: Nationaler Bildungsbericht Österreich 2009. (Hrsg.) Specht, Werner. Bm:uk. <http://www.equi.at/dateien/NBBBand2.pdf#page=144>
- [2]Mosberger, Brigitte; Sturm, René (2006). Jung, dynamisch, arbeitslos? Beiträge zur Fachtagung ‚Neue Ansätze in der Berufsorientierung und -ausbildung benachteiligter junger Menschen‘ vom 18. Juni 2006 in Wien. AMS report, No. 59, ISBN 978-3-85495-239-2, Arbeitsmarktservice Österreich (AMS), Wien. <https://hdl.handle.net/10419/97907>
- [3]Knecht, Alban (2014). Soziale Arbeit mit benachteiligten Jugendlichen in Zeiten der Krise: Emanzipatorische Befähigung versus Arbeitsmarktintegration. In: Soz Passagen, 6:219-236, Springer Fachmedien, Wiesbaden. DOI 10.1007/s12592-014-0177-3
- [4]Knecht, Alban (2016). Die Bedeutung von psychischen Ressourcen für benachteiligte Jugendliche am Übergang von der Schule in Ausbildung und Beruf. In: Verhaltenstherapie & psychosoziale Praxis, 48. Jg. (4), 847-860. <https://www.albanknecht.de/publikationen/Psychische-Ressourcen-Benachteiligte-Jugendliche.pdf>
- [5]Knecht, Alban (2024). Mit Sozialpolitik regieren. Eine ressourcentheoretische PolicyAnalyse der Beschäftigungsförderung benachteiligter Jugendlicher in Österreich. Verlag Barbara Budrich, Opladen, Berlin, Toronto. ISBN 978-3-8474-3041-4
- [6] Statista (2024). Anzahl der jugendlichen Arbeitslosen in Österreich von 2013 bis 2023. <https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/820428/umfrage/jugendarbeitslosenzahl-in-oesterreich/>

3.1 FRAMEWORK OF YOUTH WORK IN AUSTRIA

In this statistic, young people are defined as those aged between 15 and 24. The national statistics institute of Austria confirms a youth unemployment rate of 10.4%. According to the international definition, the unemployment rate is the proportion of unemployed people in the labor force. The results come from the microcensus labor force survey[7].

One term that comes up again and again is NEET. NEET young people are "neither in education, nor employment, nor in training". This concept is more meaningful when it comes to illustrating the impact of disadvantage on young people. In 2022, the average proportion of NEET young people in Austria was 8.1%[8].

[7] Statistik Austria (2024). Arbeitslose, Arbeitssuchende. <https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/820428/umfrage/jugendarbeitslosenzahl-in-oesterreich/>

[8] Statista (2024). Anteil der nichterwerbstätigen Jugendlichen (NEET) in Österreich von 2012 bis 2022. <https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/1244494/umfrage/anteil-der-nichterwerbstaetigen-jugendlichen-neetin-oesterreich/#:~:text=Im%20Jahr%202022%20lag%20der,er%20im%20Vergleich%20zum%20Vorjahr>

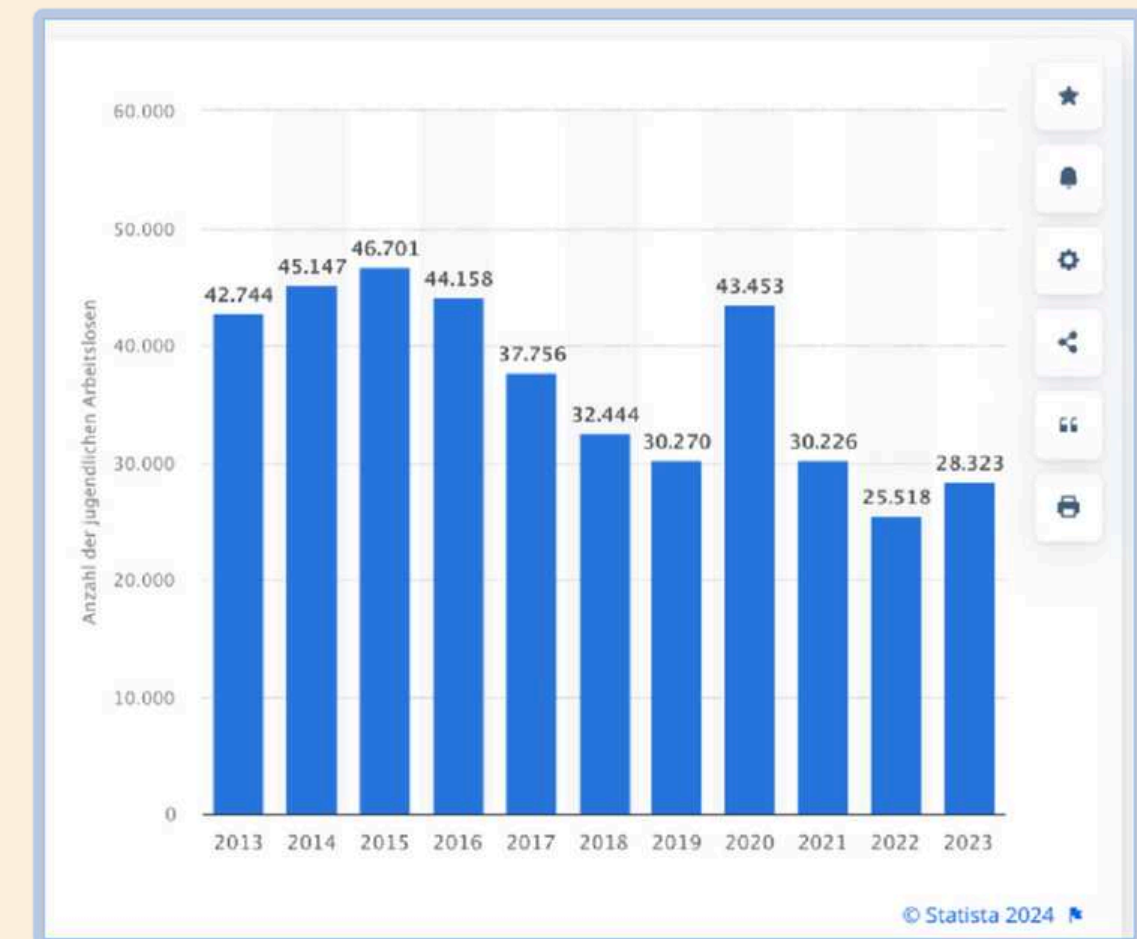


Figure 1: Number of young unemployed in Austria from 2013 to 2023. (c) Statista 2024

3.1 FRAMEWORK OF YOUTH WORK IN AUSTRIA



Figure 2: NEET youngsters 2022 according to migration background (c) Statistik Austria 2023



As mentioned above, Figure 2 shows that the proportion of NEETs among young people with a migration background is significantly higher than among young people without a migration background. The first generation is the most affected with a share of 14%.

In Vienna, the relative share of NEETs among all young people between the ages of 15 and 24 was 10.9% in 2019-2022. However, there are strong fluctuations in relation to the factors of gender and migration background and, above all, the intersectionality between these two factors.

3.1 FRAMEWORK OF YOUTH WORK IN AUSTRIA



Figure 2: NEET youngsters 2022 according to migration background (c) Statistik Austria 2023



As mentioned above, Figure 2 shows that the proportion of NEETs among young people with a migration background is significantly higher than among young people without a migration background. The first generation is the most affected with a share of 14%. In Vienna, the relative share of NEETs among all young people between the ages of 15 and 24 was 10.9% in 2019-2022. However, there are strong fluctuations in relation to the factors of gender and migration background and, above all, the intersectionality between these two factors.

3.1 FRAMEWORK OF YOUTH WORK IN AUSTRIA

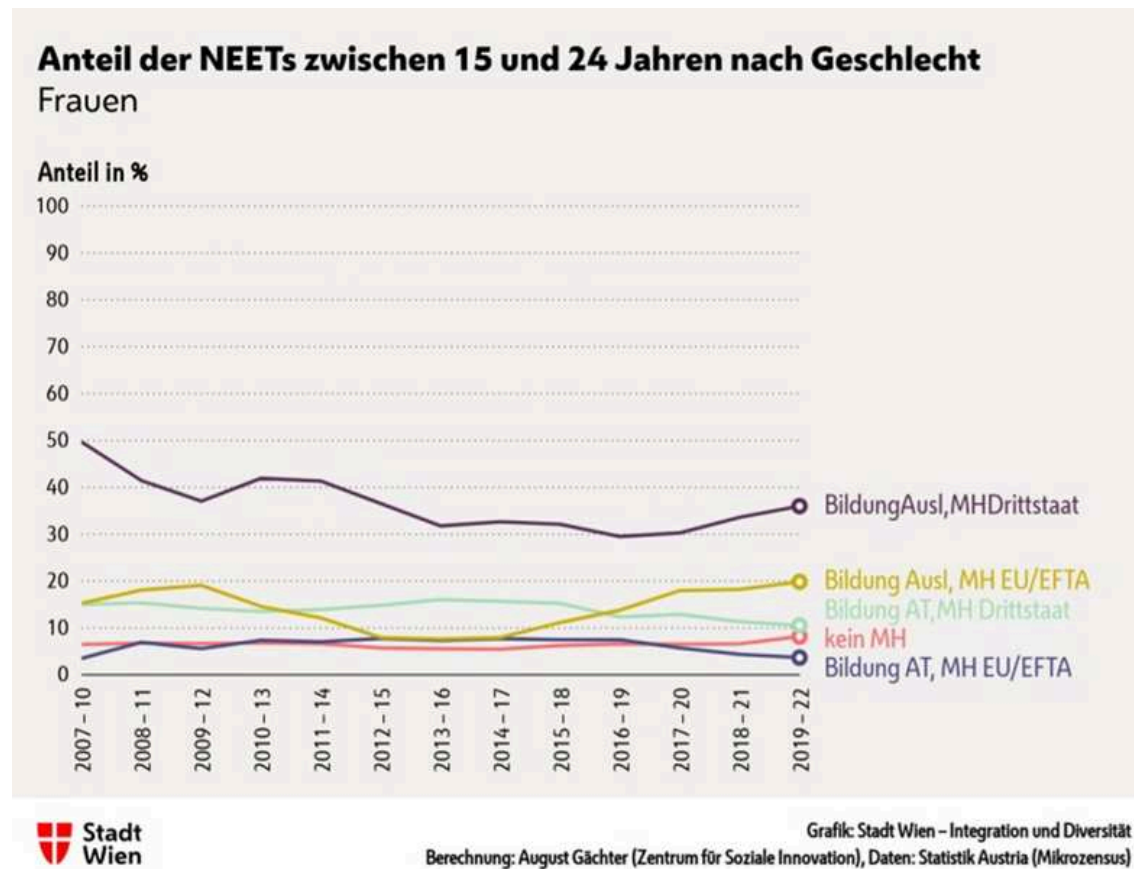


Figure Abbildung 3: Proportion of NEE1: Anteil der NEETs zwischen 15 und 24 Jahren nach Ts aged between 15 and 24 by gender

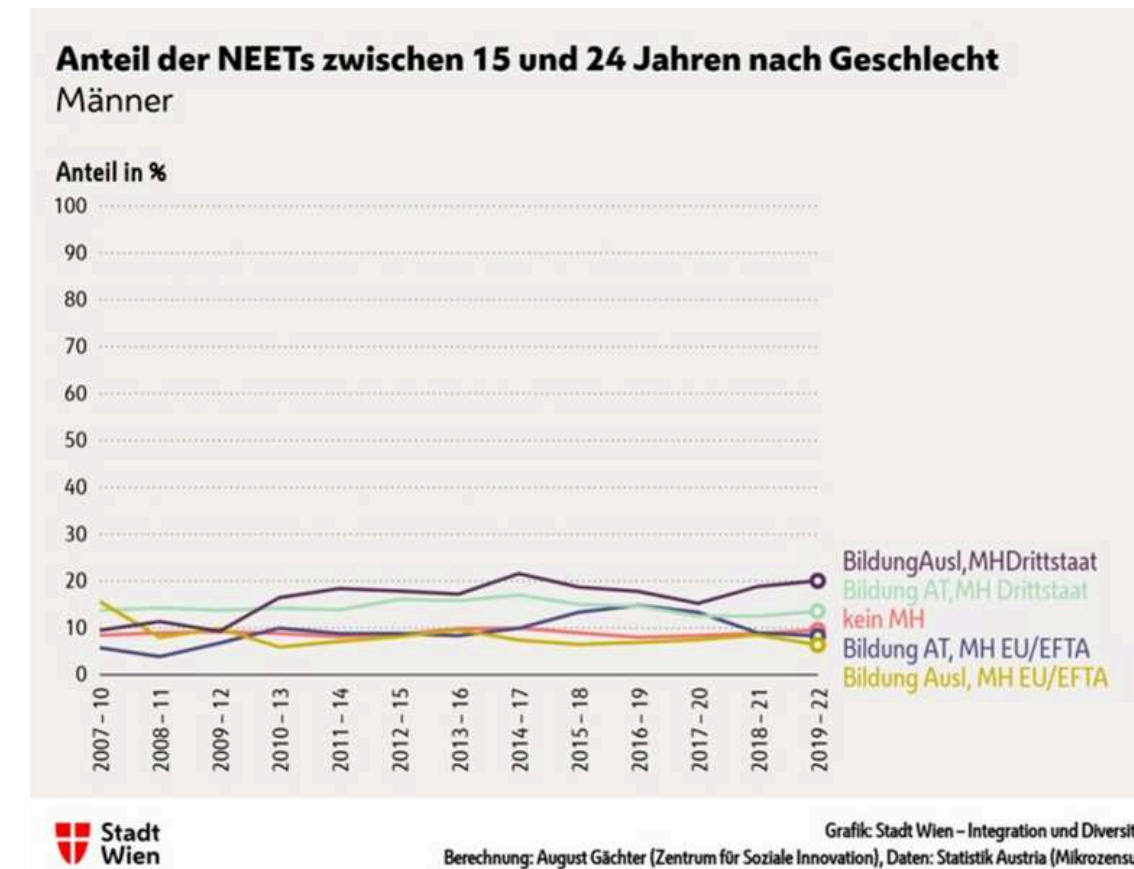


Figure Abbildung 4: Proportion of NEE2: Anteil der NEETs zwischen 15 und 24 Jahren nach Ts between 15 and 24 by gender - - female (c) Stadt Wien (2023)Geschlecht - Frauen (c) Stadt Wien2023) male (c) Stadt Wien (2023)Geschlecht - Männer (c) Stadt Wien(2023)

3.1 FRAMEWORK OF YOUTH WORK IN AUSTRIA



Figure 3 and Figure 4 show that the proportion of NEETs among Viennese adolescents and young adults is highest among Viennese educated in third countries, both among women and men. In the last period under review, the proportion of NEETs among young women was 36%. However, this proportion is significantly higher among women than among young men, where the proportion is 20% [9].

In the remaining three sections of the population with an education from Austria, the proportion of NEETs is higher among men. In Vienna, the proportion of NEETs is therefore significantly higher among women with a foreign education who immigrated from a third country or the EU/EFTA than among men.

In his scientific paper, Johann Bacher (2020) identifies two main reasons for NEET: illness and early school leavers and recognizes that the probability of dropping out of school is higher among young women with a migrant background in the first generation. Johann Bacher also issues recommendations for NEET measures:

- o Prevention and early intervention
- o Consideration of heterogeneity through target group-specific programs
- o Low-threshold offers
- o Sustainability and follow-up support
- o Making the age limit more flexible, e.g. in psychiatries and care facilities
- o Networking between stakeholders[10]

9] Stadt Wien (2023). Integrationsmonitor 2023. 5.7 Neets – nicht in Beschäftigung, Ausbildung oder Trainings stehende Jugendliche. <https://www.wien.gv.at/spezial/integrationsmonitor/bildung/neets-nicht-in-beschäftigungsausbildung-oder-trainings-stehendejugendliche/#:~:text=Der%20relative%20Anteil%20der%20NEETs,3%20und%2011%2C3%20%25>.

10] Bacher, Johann (2020). NEET-Jugendliche in Österreich: Problemausmaß, volkswirtschaftliche Kosten und Handlungsempfehlungen. Momentum Quarterly, 9 (1), 18-34. <https://doi.org/10.15203/momentumquarterly.vol9.no1.p18-34>.

3.1 FRAMEWORK OF YOUTH WORK IN AUSTRIA



In Austria, the responsibilities for youth policy, non-school children and youth work are divided between the nine federal provinces and the federal government. Youth agendas are found in all ministries. The aim of the youth policy is to protect children and young people and to promote their development as independent personalities in order to lead an independent and responsible life and to use their productive and creative potential for community and social commitment.

The “national youth strategy” was created in 2012 and is part of every ministry. In 2020 the government at that time decided to continue with the policy and decided on clear action fields in each national ministry with concrete measures.

The youth strategy includes the European Youth Goals as well as 35 youth aims in 4 fields of action. Those 4 fields of action are:

- Education and employment
- Participation and commitment
- Quality of life and togetherness
- Media and information [11]

[11] Bundeskanzleramt. Jugendstrategie Grundlagen.
<https://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/agenda/jugend/oesterreichische-jugendstrategie/jugendstrategiegrundlagen.html>

3.1 FRAMEWORK OF YOUTH WORK IN AUSTRIA



In Austria, the ministry of Social Affairs is the highest contact point for issues related with social services and social work. The two main aims of the ministry of Social Affairs concerning the national youth strategy are the transition from school to training to work and psychosocial health. Therefore, the ministry formulated several measures to be taken: Since the compulsory school leaving certificate is often not enough to find an apprenticeship or a job, the compulsory training should be elevated to the age of 18 and lead young people to a higher qualification level. Additionally, there are apprenticeship-oriented qualification offers from the AMS – the Arbeitsmarktservice (employment service). Also, individual counseling and support services are being offered by the Ministry of Social Affairs. And especially for NEET youths and young people with learning difficulties, there are motivational and low threshold offers. Another measure is to enforce the participation offers for young people with disabilities. The connection with the European Youth Goals lies in number 3 (inclusive societies), 6 (promoting youth in rural areas) and 7 (good work for all)[12].

In Austria, there are three main areas of non-school child and youth work:

- Associations
- Youth Information
- Open Youth Work [13]

Apart from these three components, there is school social work, child and youth services as well as recreational pedagogy. The three components will be explained more deeply in part 3.5.

[12] BMSGPK (2024). Österreichische Jugendstrategie. <https://www.sozialministerium.at/Themen/Soziales/Soziale-Themen/jugendstrategie.html>
[13] Jugendarbeit in Österreich (2024). Jugendarbeit. <https://jugendarbeitinoesterreich.at/jugendarbeit/>

3.2 WHAT IS THE PROFILE OF YOUTH WORKERS IN YOUR COUNTRY?



The main task of professionals in youth work is to support young people in various areas and situations in their personal and identity development. They organize various leisure activities, support young people with their homework, inform and advise them about educational and career opportunities and are on hand to help them with any problems or questions they may have. The focus is on developing the young person's personality with a focus on independence, personal responsibility and empowerment.

Austrian youth work is mainly carried out by studied social workers, youth social workers, youth coaches, youth pedagogues, psychologists and educators [14].

Since December 2023, social work has become a legally protected professional title. About 43.000 people in Austria work as social workers or social pedagogues. The Social Work Designation Act (Sozialarbeitsbezeichnungsgesetz) stipulates the conditions under which a person may call themselves a social worker or social pedagogue. Since the professional law has only recently come into force, there are no statistics yet on how many people employed as social workers have actually studied social work at university level and how many have undergone other studies and then continued to attend further training courses in order to achieve a similar level of professionalism[15].

The practice of social work shows that due to the late professionalization of social work in Austria and due to a structural lack of skilled workers, some people employed as social workers originally studied in other fields, but worked in social organizations for a long time and completed several additional trainings.

[14] AMS (2024). Berufslexikon. Fachkraft in der Offenen Jugendarbeit. <https://www.berufslexikon.at/berufe/2867-Fachkraft-Jugendarbeit/#ausbildung>. 15 BMSGPK (2023). Soziale Arbeit wird gesetzlich geschützte Berufsbezeichnung. <https://www.sozialministerium.at/Services/Neuigkeiten-und-Termine/Archiv-2023/Dezember-2023/sozialearbeit-berufsbezeichnung.html>

[15] BMSGPK (2023). Soziale Arbeit wird gesetzlich geschützte Berufsbezeichnung. <https://www.sozialministerium.at/Services/Neuigkeiten-und-Termine/Archiv-2023/Dezember-2023/sozialearbeit-berufsbezeichnung.html>

3.3 WHAT ARE THE NATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR YOUTH WORK AND PRIORITIES OF THE NATIONAL POLICIES ON YOUTH WORK?



As already mentioned above, the national youth strategy was developed in 2012 with the aim to protect children and young people and to promote their development as independent personalities in order to lead an independent and responsible life and to use their productive and creative potential for community and social commitment. The government program (2020-2024) provides for the Austrian youth strategy to be continued in the action fields and with specific aims.

The four action fields are:

- Education and employment
- Participation and commitment
- Quality of life and togetherness
- Media and information

The Austrian government states two principles, that need to be followed in relation to the national youth strategy: First, needs and concerns of young people themselves must always be considered. Second, Youth policy cannot be fixed in one department alone, rather be taken into account in all policy areas, therefore on all political levels and in all ministries [16].

[16] BMSGPK (2024). Österreichische Jugendstrategie. <https://www.sozialministerium.at/Themen/Soziales/Soziale-Themen/jugendstrategie.html>. 17 Bundeskanzleramt (2023). Österreichische Jugendstrategie. Umsetzungsbericht 2022. https://www.parlament.gv.at/dokument/XXVII/III/1082/imfname_1603165.pdf. 18 Bundeskanzleramt. Handlungsfelder der Österreichischen Jugendstrategie. <https://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/agenda/jugend/oesterreichische-jugendstrategie/handlungsfelder.html>. 19 Bundeskanzleramt. Jugendziele. <https://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/agenda/jugend/oesterreichischejugendstrategie/jugendziele.html>.

3.3 WHAT ARE THE NATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR YOUTH WORK AND PRIORITIES OF THE NATIONAL POLICIES ON YOUTH WORK?



One measure to integrate the youth into the national youth strategy are the reality so called Reality Checks. In the Reality Checks, direct or indirect feedback is obtained from young people on the youth goals and measures developed. This allows the relevance and significance of the youth goal to be considered from the perspective of young people.

All federal ministries have appointed a departmental coordinator. Their longerterm tasks are recognizing and stimulating youth policy points of contact in the department, stimulating opportunities for young people to participate and considering the realities of young people's lives in the department [17].

Most important for this project is the action field "education and employment". The federal chancellery in Austria states, that the basis for prosperity in Austria is first and foremost the talents and qualifications of the people employed. Therefore, this field of action is dedicated to ensuring that all young people develop their talents in the best possible way and make the most of their opportunities in order to meet current and future challenges in the world of work[18]. 12 youth goals are assigned to this field of action and to different ministries [19].

In general, youth workers are important in all the four fields of action. Youth workers are especially mentioned in the national youth strategy in the following field of action and youth aims. In the field of action "media and information", youth workers are dedicated to strengthening information literacy and providing youth-friendly and youth-relevant information, especially in times of cyberbullying, hate speech and "fake news". Another particularly emphasized topic in the extracurricular youth work is strengthening the psychosocial health of the youth.

[17] Bundeskanzleramt (2023). Österreichische Jugendstrategie. Umsetzungsbericht 2022.

https://www.parlament.gv.at/dokument/XXVII/III/1082/imfname_1603165.pdf

[18] Bundeskanzleramt. Handlungsfelder der Österreichischen Jugendstrategie.

<https://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/agenda/jugend/oesterreichische-jugendstrategie/handlungsfelder.html>

[19] Bundeskanzleramt. Jugendziele. <https://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/agenda/jugend/oesterreichischejugendstrategie/jugendziele.html>

3.4 TOOLS AND INITIATIVES SUPPORT FOR EMPOWERMENT OF YOUTH WORKERS WORKING WITH DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUND?



The three areas of youth work in Austria (associations, youth information and open youth work) each offer their own principles and working methods that help youth workers in their work with disadvantaged young people. Open youth work has the lowest threshold, therefore the target group here are especially disadvantaged youths.

There are two forms of open youth work: location-based and mobile open youth work. Both forms follow professional orientations and concepts that are fundamental to open youth work, regardless of the individual types of services. They contain essential statements about the self-image of the professionals, form part of the professional identity and can be regarded as a guideline for action. The professional orientations are namely subject and life-world orientation, resource orientation and empowerment and social environment orientation. A wide range of social and human science methods and techniques (methodological elements) are used in open youth work settings. In practice, these often merge seamlessly into one another. Open youth work can therefore be described as method-integrative, as methods and settings are always intertwined and influence each other. Methods and techniques from different traditions of social work are applied in the context of their life-world and subjectrelated, socio-spatial as well as resource and needs-oriented practice. These include individual case work, social group work, community, social space and network work as well as street social work, youth cultural work, leisure, experience and media education.

The key for professionalism in open youth work is **relationship skills**. Essential elements that make up professional relationship skills are being well connected with oneself, seeing one's counterpart and recognizing their reality. It means shaping interactions in a way that strengthens and builds relationships.[20]

During Covid 19-pandemic the bOJA (Bundesweites Netzwerk Offene Jugendarbeit) has compiled important information, offers, practical tips, examples, tools and concepts for youth workers regarding digital open youth work [20].

The website Jugendarbeit in Österreich created the “Wirkungsbox Jugendarbeit” (Youth Work Impact Box) which provides a comprehensive collection of empirically proven and substantiated impacts of extracurricular child and youth work. Depending on the intended use, users can filter the impact box according to different criteria of the respective impact or activity: e.g. one can choose the type of impact, the organizational forms and fields of action, the target group, the method for measuring impact or other categorizations [21].

3.5 TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS INCLUDING IN YOUTH WORK AND ACTIVITIES OF ORGANIZATIONS CARRYING OUT YOUTH WORK?



In Austria, there are three main areas of non-school child and youth work: Associations, Youth Informations and Open Youth Work[22].

The Associations: The organizational child and youth work is the oldest form of extracurricular child and youth work in Austria. Currently, there are 38 youth associations. Most organizations have existed for decades and offer a wide range of age-appropriate activities. Many children's and youth organizations are also publicly committed to the concerns of children and young people – e.g. with their own campaigns and events. The associations are mainly supported by volunteers and reach over 1.6 million young people. Most organizations have well-developed structures – from the local group to the regional or state level to the national organization. The organizations have different orientations and goals, which derive from their denominational, cultural, ecological or partypolitical background. A common aim is the voluntary and participatory commitment and the high degree of self-organization. It is designed by young people for young people: children and young people contribute their knowledge and skills and are responsible for organizing projects and activities themselves. The associations impart a variety of competences and knowledge, enhance soft skills, technical or organizational abilities and enforce commitment to the civil society. The effect of the association's youth work has been limited due to access barriers such as membership, membership fees and temporally / organizationally prescribed rules of use.

[22] Jugendarbeit in Österreich (2024). Jugendarbeit. <https://jugendarbeitinoesterreich.at/jugendarbeit/>

3.5 TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS INCLUDING IN YOUTH WORK AND ACTIVITIES OF ORGANIZATIONS CARRYING OUT YOUTH WORK?

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Youth Information: General youth information has been available in Austria for more than 30 years. It is not limited to specific topics, but offers young people a first point of contact for all questions in the form of a “one-stop-shop”. With a total of 28 offices in all federal provinces, the Austrian Youth Info Centers provide a comprehensive service and make relevant and easy-to-understand information available to young people. The core target group is 12 to 26-year-olds. There are five main objectives of this youth area: giving the youth orientation, strengthen the autonomy of the youth, promoting young people’s participation and initiative in societal issues, promoting young people’s own initiative, and strengthening young people’s information skills. The information services are tailored to the needs and interests of young people. The preparation and provision of information for young people are only for noncommercial purposes.

Open youth work in Austria is aimed at young people regardless of gender, religion, education, social class and origin. As a result, open youth work also reaches a large number of young people who are exposed to social and structural disadvantages and thus makes an important contribution to preventing exclusion. It has become an indispensable part of modern municipal and regional youth policy. Open youth work takes place in youth centers, youth clubs, youth cafés and other facilities, but can also be found in public spaces such as parks or train stations. There are currently 341 providers of open youth work in Austria with a total of 637 facilities. The majority of the facilities are youth centers and clubs which primarily work on a location-specific basis. 13 percent of the facilities are part of mobile open youth work. There are governmentplanned youth centers, church-planned and other non-governmental youth centers.

The aims of open youth work are personal development, action competence, identity development and social inclusion and participation.

3.6 WHAT ARE THE NATIONAL RESULTS OF YOUTH WORK?

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The Austrian Federal Chancellery writes about the results of youth work, that developing effective measures in youth work requires drawing on research and practical insights. The impact box mentioned above, is an example for this. Youth work research is a young, interdisciplinary field, it draws on various methodological disciplines and focuses on topics derived from the fields of youth work. Research topics are often determined by situations and developments in the field.

To evaluate the results of youth work, it is not enough to look at the number of visitors. A higher number of visitors is not synonymous with an increase in efficiency or greater success of an offer. Rather, the examination of effectiveness in the context of evaluation processes is a relevant professional management tool of social work that can be found in all planning cycles and process models. Depending on the case, impact orientation can serve professional development in the sense of quality development or merely legitimization towards the "top" or "outside" [23].

The umbrella organization "Bundesjugendvertretung" (engl.: Federal Youth Representation) published a paper summarizing the impact of the children and youth work association in 2022. The results were the following: (1) Members of youth work associations show a higher level of values. (2) The members have a good self-confidence and trust their abilities, they are team players and have leadership aspirations. Those characteristics and softskills are valuable for the youths' personality and the labour market. (3) Members of youth work associations came through the covid-19 pandemic more easily and already had better mental health on average than young people as a whole. (4) Members of youth work associations feel a stronger sense of belonging to society. (5) When it comes to sustainability and climate protection, members of youth organizations are more aware than young people in general [24].

[23] bOJA (2021). Offene Jugendarbeit in Österreich. Ein Handbuch. Mandelbaum Verlag, Berlin. ISBN 978-3-85476-960-6.
https://www.boja.at/sites/default/files/wissen/2022-01/Handbuch_mitCover.pdf

[24] Bundesjugend Vertretung (2022). Wirkung der verbandlichen Kinder- und Jugendarbeit in Österreich. Studie des SORA-Instituts im Auftrag der Bundesjugendvertretung. https://bjv.at/wpcontent/uploads/2022/10/BJV_SORA-Studie_Jugendarbeit_Ergebnisse.pdf

3.6 WHAT ARE THE NATIONAL RESULTS OF YOUTH WORK?

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(Open) youth work is part of the life world of many young people. Therefore, kinds of informal learning always take place. These educational processes promote skills that enable young people to lead self-determined lives. They experience themselves as co-designers of their own education. It is equally selfevident that the basic mission of open youth work includes non-curricular, participatory, low-threshold and voluntary educational processes.

Central topics include the promotion of political education and participation, health literacy, cultural education, gender- reflective identity development, digital education and media literacy. Hence, a need for basic and further training for youth workers also arises in this context.

3.7 MAIN CHALLENGES OF YOUTH WORKER WHO WORK WITH YOUNGSTERS HAVING DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUND IN THEIR DAILY IMPLEMENTATION

Past research with social workers yielded the following results on main challenges of youth workers who work with youngsters having disadvantaged background: The interviewees emphasized a need for financial support, media and political recognition to raise awareness. They called for more campaigns and institutions promoting vocational training for youths. The interviewees advocated also for increased corporate openness to disadvantaged youth and suggested establishing a lower-pressure career starting point for the young people. Additionally, they highlighted the importance of promoting and recognizing youth work by Muslims and migrants, who are often overlooked and viewed with suspicion [27].

[27] Inno4Impact (2019). Comparative Research and Assessment of Current Needs, Study Report on Youth Work. <https://inno4impact.eu/results/>



3.7 CURRENT SITUATION ON PARTICIPATION OF YOUNGSTERS WITH DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUND INTO YOUTH WORK

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The handbook of open youth work in Austria from the nationwide network Open Youth Work (bOJA) lists five dimensions of the impact of open youth work:

1. Expansion of competence
2. Identity development
3. Coping with everyday life
4. Representation of interests
5. Participation [28]

On the one hand, this is about empowering young people so that they can participate politically themselves, for example. But it is also about the participatory design of spaces, offers and common rules of conduct in open youth work. After all, experiences of participation and self-efficacy on a small scale have an impact on young people's social participation and democratic awareness. There is documentation, such as master's theses, on the implementation of participatory methods in open youth work, but there is a lack of representative data. One problem with the scientific observation of participatory measures is that the participants may behave differently than in their normal everyday lives. Another difficulty is that children and young people are often not used to being asked for their opinion, which can make participation work more difficult. For some young people, it is also not easy to articulate wishes that can be realized. What has also been shown in individual cases is that although everyone has the opportunity to get involved in participatory methods and would have the same rights

to have a say, in reality everyone has their own role in youth center operations. These prefabricated roles make fair participation and co-determination more difficult [29].

[28] bOJA (2021). Offene Jugendarbeit in Österreich. Ein Handbuch. Mandelbaum Verlag, Berlin. ISBN 978-3-85476-960-6. https://www.boja.at/sites/default/files/wissen/2022-01/Handbuch_mitCover.pdf

[29] Graßmugg, Birgit (2014). Partizipation in der Offenen Jugendarbeit. Masterarbeit, Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz. <https://unipub.uni-graz.at/download/pdf/336829>

3.9 FURTHER SUGGESTION IN TERMS OF TRAINING NEEDS FOR YOUTH WORKERS WORKING WITH DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUND



As mentioned above, in the context of professionalization of social work, people working in this field had to absolve a lot of trainings to maintain their status of a social worker. Also, a lot of people had to take university courses in Social Work. Since March 2023, to be called and employed as social worker, a Bachelor degree in Social Work is needed. Therefore, a lot of trainings for Social Workers lead in this direction.

4. GOOD PRACTICES



Name/Title of Good Practice/project/National, regional or local	Narrative-biographical conversation in youth centers as an everyday and flexible method (as part of the BI:JU research project)
Year of Good practice	October and November 2021
Promoting organisation/institution	Youth center of the Vienna Youth Centers Association "Hirschstetten"
Analyse the good practice considering cultural, generational or gender issues.	The aim of biographical work is to improve knowledge about oneself and to identify resources that can help to overcome difficult situations. This can provide impetus for change or support and strengthening at an individual or group level. On the other hand, biographical work can also help to break away from restrictive, negative sources of impetus such as a criminal clique. During the interviews and conversations between youth workers and young people visiting the Youth Center "Hirschstetten", the methodological approach of dialogical biographical work led to topics like family, migration, relationship issues, experiences of violence, the threat of deportation from Austria, experiences of racism, problems in connection with extremist youth scenes, etc.
What are the main activities delivered during the good practice?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth workers work on their questioning technique (narrative questioning techniques; strong listening role; sensitivity) • They try to find spontaneously or create suitable low threshold interview situations • Protocol with general data and information about the interview, the nature of the interview and key points of content
Main Achievements obtained by the good practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project started with the assumption that biographical work in youth work takes place more or less constantly; in conversations with young people, youth workers constantly learn biographical details from the lives of young people. The methodological approach sharpened and reflected the dialogical biography work • Gained information • Getting to know the young people better • Deepening relationship (relationship work) • More systematic reflection on narrativebiographical interventions in the day-to-day running of a youth center
References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://www.uibk.ac.at/irks/publikationen/2024/irks-working-paper-23_neuburg_mayrhofer2024_biografiearbeit-in-der-offenenjugendarbeit_fin.pdf • Hölzle, Christina (2011): Gegenstand und Funktion von Biografiearbeit im Kontext Sozialer Arbeit. In: Hölzle, Christina/Jansen, Irma (Hrsg.): Ressourcenorientierte Biografiearbeit. Grundlagen – Zielgruppen – Kreative Methoden. 2., durchgesehene Auflage, Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, S. 31–4. • Kilb, Rainer (2011): Die Bedeutung des biografischen Arbeitens in der Konfrontativen Pädagogik. In: Weidner, Jens/Kilb, Rainer (Hrsg.): Handbuch Konfrontative Pädagogik. Grundlagen und Handlungsstrategien zum Umgang mit aggressivem und abweichendem Verhalten. Weinheim und München: Juventa, S. 208–211.

4. GOOD PRACTICES



Name/Title of Good Practice/project/National, regional or local	Space Plus – Angebote für NEET-Jugendliche
Year of Good practice	February to June 2021
Promoting organisation/institution	Caritas Tirol Youth Center “Space” in cooperation with Management Center Innsbruck
Analyse the good practice considering cultural, generational or gender issues.	Characterization of the target group (NEET-youth between 14-24 y/o) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs and interests (with regard to employment) • Opportunities for NEET young people in the area of the “Space” youth center • Reasons why those young people fell out of existing services Job opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest and needs taken into account in selection process for potential areas of work • By the end of the project, potential cooperation opportunities for work assignments for which there is an actual demand from businesses or public institutions in Tyrol.
What are the main activities delivered during the good practice?	-Order clarification -Literature research - Qualitative research -Evaluation Results report
Main Achievements obtained by the good practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEET young people have need for financial security, for extra-parental support through individual, professional care, for appreciation, praise and recognition • Male NEET youths tend to be interested in technical professions, while female NEET youths tend to be interested in service professions • Heterogeneous needs and interests of NEETs • Employment should be meaningful and form a basis for positive, better future prospects in the lives of NEET youths • Low-threshold nature of the offers and smooth transition between work and leisure are success factors for employment projects • Strengthening self-confidence of NEET young people should play central role in design of the offers • Consideration of the individuality and heterogeneity of NEETs should be ensured through a wide range of choices in an employment project • Work and decision-making processes should be as participatory as possible • All participants benefit from open communication, close cooperation and clearly defined framework conditions: transparency, visible end product, clear mandate, exact number of people, cost structure, time required
References	https://www.mci4me.at/de/news-filter/91community-projekte/1555-space-plus https://spaceplustirol.wixsite.com/start/überspace-plus



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