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Social Ecological Model as Prototype of Inspiring Rural Community

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Annotation. The dynamics of social and ecological factors influence problem-solving, but the solutions of social processes have not yet been attempted to be explained using various environmental and social aspects. In this article, we propose a conceptual framework based on the four components of the socio-ecological model for building trust between social groups and developing cooperation and social partnerships. We analyze statistics of NEET rural youth in Europe as the leading group, representing the main trends. During the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine, these young people have become even more vulnerable, experiencing social exclusion and mental health problems. The work aims to analyze the creation of a Social-ecological model in rural areas involving and motivating NEET youth. Statistical analysis and case studies of success and empowerment techniques are applied. The main focus is on the search for solutions that promote the internalization of values, transformative educational priorities, and universal prototypes. We note that the NVO leaders are increasingly more flexible in integrating innovative, transformative educational methods in schools and other social and educational institutions and working together with NEET youth to create a social-ecological model. Therefore, we aim to refine and substantiate transformative education competencies to help teacher educators and in-service providers review and supplement existing practices based on developing a social-ecological model.

The analyzed three interrelated and complementary competence groups, related to social-ecological community model, which have already been presented in international studies and conferences: (1) transformational education, (2) social-emotional, (3) civic education, (4) connections of entrepreneurial competence with operational goals and Sustainable development.

Keywords: *social-ecological model, NEET youth, transformational education, children's success, positive socialization, social-emotional education, civic education competencies.*

Introduction

Analysis of statistic and literature

Much has been learned about social-emotional and behavior change communication (SEBC) over the last 50 years of research and programs, particularly in child education, well-being, health, and positive communication. SEBC practitioners are first challenged to further their understanding of how individuals behave in their social contexts and learn how some overcome social constraints and barriers to change. We are also challenged to understand how positive communication can change the underlying social and structural factors that condition people's ability to act in their best interests and achieve desired outcomes. We can then apply that knowledge to implement more effective inclusive education, social-emotional health, and positive communication programs. SEBC is best understood within a social-ecological framework that considers the interrelated influences of family, peers, community, and society on behavior. Social ecology is "the study of the influence of social context on behavior, including institutional and cultural variables". Researchers M. Caspe and L. McWilliams (2019) one of the essential features that emerge when creating an inclusive school is to base its activities on a (child)-centered and socio-ecological model design, where families or carers are included in educational processes as equal partners. The socio-ecological model of work encourages educators to organize such a way assistance process to create a simple algorithm for the involvement of families in the education process, with the aim that the voice of parents and guardians is heard, and the suggestions are responded to. The researchers draw attention to the fact that the involvement of parents in the educational process takes time because we must establish relationships based on trust and prepare an environment that encourages family consultation and cooperation, which the authors define as one of the most critical features of successful collaboration. Researchers argue that sometimes the problem they place at the beginning of the process differs from the problem that needs to be solved. E. Salamon, W. Tupan, M. Marlen, J. Aumaj (2021), E. Salamon, L. László, K. Kikis-Papadakis (2022) justify the need to analyze problems on a multifunctional basis based on testing solutions and development of new prototypes. Another vital component of the person-centered design focuses on teamwork and creating mind maps, word maps based on future workshops, or visualizations for quality collective decision-making. Since the visualization process is always based on a collaborative process, its participants envision many ways teachers can promote child-centered design (Caspe, McWilliams, 2019) when creating or transforming the culture of a school organization. Social-ecological model (SEM) seeks to explain how various social and ecological factors influence the nature of social relations in groups (i.e., demographically stable subgroups of kinship or close friendships that interact more often with each other in space and time than with other like – minded people. Social complexity can be seen similarly, as it results

from consistent variation in the frequency, pattern, and types of social interactions between individual group members. Therefore, one way to measure social complexity is to focus on the number of differentiated relationships individuals have with other group members, with a more significant number of differentiated social relationships indicating greater social complexity. Unlike the widely used factors of social complexity, such as group size, relative differences from the majority, and personalization of the educational process, the different needs of the individual are prerequisites for creating a social-ecological model and removing socio-emotional disturbances. Due to the pandemic, the world's countries experienced unprecedented changes, a change that could have far-reaching, long-term adverse effects on children and youth worldwide. Many young people's education and social life have been severely disrupted.

The COVID-19 crisis and the outbreak of war have affected education in many ways, depending on students' socioeconomic status, age, school type, the language of instruction, etc. However, the pandemic did not necessarily create new inequalities but made existing ones recognizable (Sahlberg, 2020). School closures have affected 1.5 billion students worldwide (UNESCO, 2020) and raised the question of how vulnerable youth groups are affected socially, educationally, and emotionally in this situation and how their vulnerability affects the country's sustainability. The socioeconomic conditions in which students live and learn are social determinants of health, including mental health and educational attainment. Vulnerable young people experienced more disadvantages than their peers. The level of social vulnerability reveals the lack of resilience of the social-ecological model and communities in the face of external stressors, such as the complex and cascading effects of the COVID-19 disruption (Drane et al., 2020).

Students' equal access to educational resources is a critical factor in promoting the impact of education in general and is expected. School closures and uncertainty at the outbreak of war in Europe increased stress on all social groups. They increased inequality: low-achieving students especially suffered from a lack of family support. Previous studies show that the teacher cannot meet the student's individual needs and does not have time to include vulnerable groups of students in the learning process (Mägi, 2021). This led to the growing exclusion of young people from social life and increased the inability and reluctance of young people to study further and find work. Such exclusion, in turn, can lead to the loss of social and economic sustainability of a country or region. However, some good examples exist where national institutions, agencies, schools, and NGOs have used portals and platforms to make communication and support for young people permanent. In this context, NEET (not in employment, education, or training) youth become more vulnerable and need appropriate attention. Some specific issues also relate to rural NEET youth, who have limited mobility and lack qualifications compared to urban youth. There is a need to find out the latest situation with NEET youth and present and discuss positive initiatives to draw on countries' best practices and inspirational examples. Thus, the current study aims to

fill this gap. The work aims to analyze the statistics related to NEET youth in Europe and to highlight positive initiatives for young people in the rural areas of the Baltic States, which promote positive emotions and the desire to learn.

NEET youth features

The abbreviation NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) began to be widely used in 2010, when the European Union adopted the NEET indicator as a reference indicator for a younger generation. NEET youth refers to a very diverse group that includes young people between the ages of 15 and 34 who are unemployed or inactive for four or more weeks (Eurostat Glossary, 2020). The official term NEET was used in 1999 in the United Kingdom (Mascherini, 2019) to respond to the lack of legal recognition of youth unemployment among 16–18-year-olds. NEET rates in the EU Member States for people aged 15–29 with a low level of education ranged from 6.4% in Sweden to 32.7% in Romania in 2021. Among young people aged 15–29 with a medium level of education, NEET rates ranged from 4.2% in the Netherlands to a peak of 24.9% in Italy. For this level of education, two countries recorded a NEET rate of 19% or higher (Greece and Italy), while the only country with a share lower than 5.0% was the Netherlands. Concerning people aged 15–29 with tertiary education, their NEET rates were generally considerably lower than for the other levels of education. The lowest share was 3.1% in the Netherlands, but a value as high as 26.8% was reported in Greece. The significance of the main determinants of NEET status in rural areas are better understood when their interaction with two main individual factors is considered: gender and age. Compared to more affluent areas, NEET women in rural areas are more likely to devote themselves to family responsibilities, meaning they have a higher chance of falling into the subgroup of those who cannot reach due to family commitments. In addition, women in rural areas have fewer employment opportunities (Leibert, & Wiest, 2016). Thus, it is essential to analyze the situation and opportunities of rural NEET youth. As the paper presents case studies mainly from smaller municipalities and districts, they clearly represent the potential opportunities for NEET rural youth.

Social-ecological model for engaging young people

1.2.1. A Socio-Ecological Model of Social Emotions education for Youth Engagement

The COVID-19 pandemic has severely disrupted the lives of millions of people, including young people. Discomfort is also expressed in psychological conditions related to people's mental health (Kumar, & Nayar, 2020). Various joint activities were stopped or disrupted, which hurt the youth. Youth programs are one of the main ways to promote positive youth development and, in turn, develop healthy and motivated youth who can contribute positively to society and increase the country's sustainability. Researchers analyze best practices operating based on the social-ecological model in the world, presenting innovative ways to inspire and motivate young people, engage them

in various activities, and promote their skill development and leadership during the pandemic (Ettekal, & Agans, 2020) and between other crises, like war or punishment.

Specific examples of Lithuanian are analyzed in the results of this article.

2. Statistical analysis of NEET youth situation

Social-emotional competencies are essential in the implementation of transformative education, so we agree with the researchers' Wait, 2021; Bernstein-Yamashiro and Noam, 2013; Murray and Zvoch, 2011; According to Spilt, Koomen and Thijs, 2012, to achieve a child's progress, we must not forget his social-emotional well-being and the development of resilience. Researchers Tomé Fernández (2017), Yada, Tolvanen, and Savolainen (2018) argue that teachers' positive and systematic approach towards inclusive education and the SEBCs helps establish effective inclusive school practices.

In order to make clear the situation with NEET youth, a short statistical analysis is needed. The scenarios about NEET youth are quite pessimistic in Europe – the consequences of the COVID-19 shutdown on youth unemployment in the European Union are dramatic. According to the estimations of Tamesberger and Bacher (2020) youth unemployment increase from 2.8 to 4.8 million because of the pandemic. A comparison between the two EU Member States with the highest and lowest NEET rates in 2021, reveals that the proportion of young adults who were NEETs was 4.2 times as high in Italy than in the Netherlands.

The overall share of NEETs decreased in the EU by 2.3 percentage points (pp.) between 2011 and 2021. Among the EU Member States, the largest reduction in the NEET rates (in percentage point terms) between 2011 and 2021 was by far in Ireland (-12.6 pp.) followed by Bulgaria (-7.1 pp.) and Latvia (-7.0 pp.). There were also five Member States that had increases in their NEET rates since 2011, these countries are: Luxembourg (by 2.2 pp.), Austria (0.9 pp.), Romania (0.8 pp.), Italy and Cyprus (both 0.6 pp.).[1]

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[1] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Statistics_on_young_people_neither_in_employment_nor_in_education_or_training#Development_of_NEETs_in_the_EU_over_time_for_different_age_groups

Young people (aged 15-29) neither in employment nor in education and training, 2011 and 2021
(%)
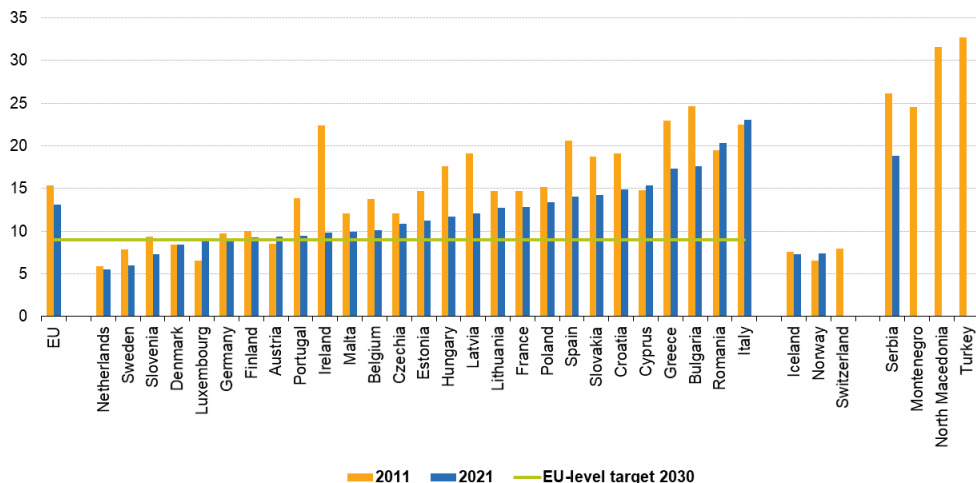
Note: Break in series in 2021.
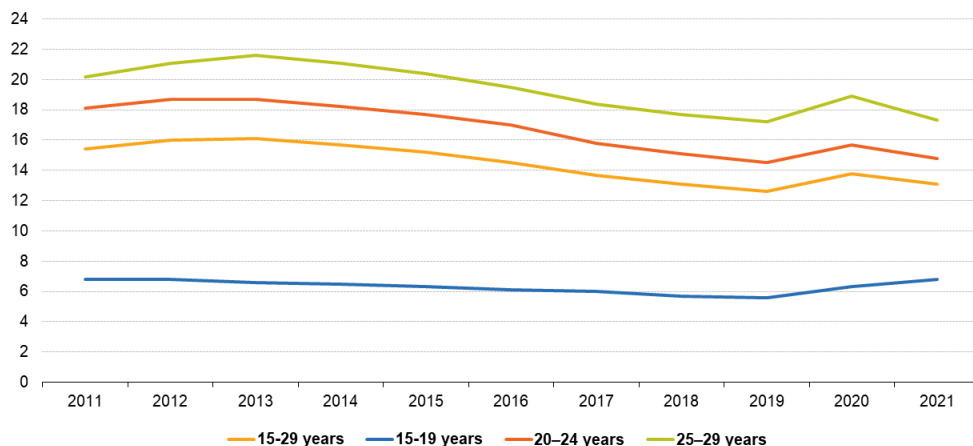*Source:* Eurostat (online data code: edat_lfse_18)

eurostat

Figure 1. Young people neither in employment nor in education and training unemployment rate 2021 by country in %

Tamesberger and Bacher (2020) have also made calculations on the share of NEETs. They forecast that the NEET rate in Europe will be historically high, ranging between 14% (optimistic scenario) and 15.2% (pessimistic scenario). Figure 3 shows that the share of NEETs decreased considerably in 2021 compared to 2020 for all age groups except for those aged 15–19. For the age group of the EU-level target the share of NEETs was 13.1% in 2021, the corresponding share was 6.8% for those aged 15–19, 14.8% for those aged 20–24 and 17.3% for those aged 25–29. In 2021 the shares were still higher than before the pandemic, but the differences were considerably smaller which might be an indication of recovery (Figure 2).

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Young people neither in employment nor in education and training, by age, EU, 2011–2021

(%)

Note: Break in series in 2021.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: edat_lfse_20)

eurostat

Figure 2. Youth not in employment, education, or training by ages 2011–2021 in EU

Poverty rates for NEETs are much higher than for non-NEET youth and rural NEETs are also significantly disadvantaged compared to youth in urban areas in terms of access to a second chance, apprenticeship, and mentoring programs. All the above arguments must be considered at the national and international level to make efforts to avoid possible negative scenarios.

Figure 3 shows young NEETs by educational attainment level. The three different levels of educational attainment are as follows:

- less than primary, primary or lower secondary level of education (ISCED 2011 levels 0–2; hereafter referred to as a low educational attainment level or low level of education);
- upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED 2011 levels 3 and 4; hereafter referred to as medium educational attainment level or medium level of education);
- tertiary education (ISCED 2011 levels 5–8; hereafter referred to as a high educational attainment level or high level of education).

Young people (aged 15–29) neither in employment nor in education and training, by educational attainment level, 2021
(%)

Note: Ranked on the overall NEET rate.
(¹) ISCED 2011 levels 5-8: low reliability.
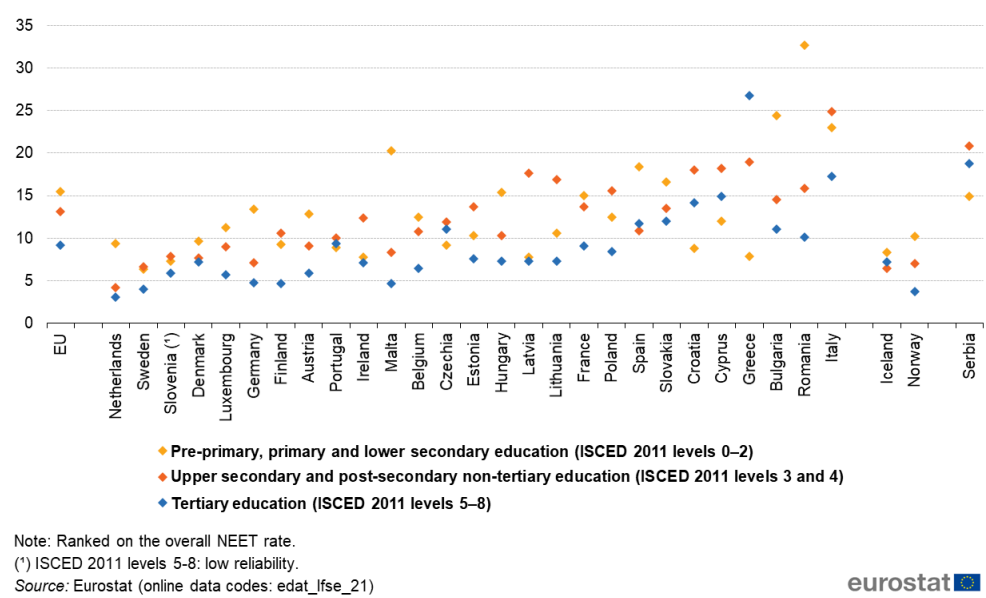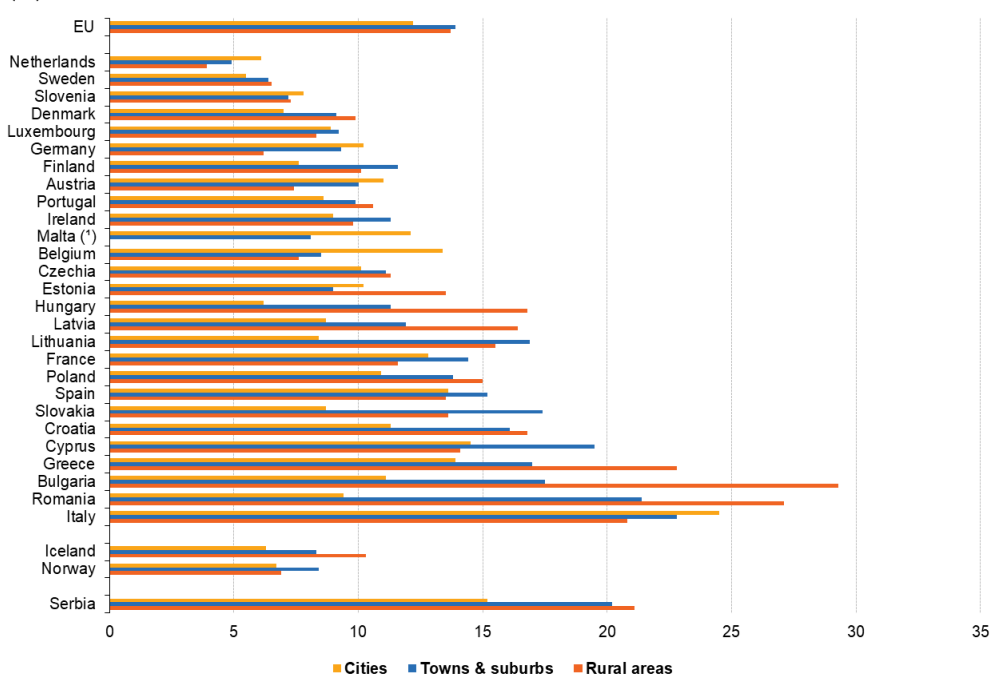*Source:* Eurostat (online data codes: edat_lfse_21)

Figure 3. Young NEET people at risk of poverty or social exclusion, 2021

Source: Eurostat

Figure 4 presents information on young people (aged 15–29) who were neither in employment nor in education or training, according to their place of residence, as defined in terms of its degree of urbanization.

In 2021, the share of young people (aged 15–29) in the EU who were NEETs was lowest in cities (12.2%) and about the same level in towns, suburbs (13.9%) and rural areas (13.7%). The pattern of lowest NEET rates in cities (as compared with both rural areas and towns and suburbs) was repeated in 15 EU Member States. The largest differences of the rates between cities and rural areas in terms of percentage points were recorded in Romania (17.7%) and in Bulgaria (18.2%).

Young people (aged 15–29) neither in employment nor in education and training, by degree of urbanisation, 2021
(%)

Note: Ranked on the overall NEET rate.
(¹) Rural areas: not available due to a very low reliability.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: edat_lfse_29)

Figure 4. NEET Youth by degree of urbanization

2.2. Socio-Ecological Model of Positive Communication for Social-emotional and Behavioral Change

Because the socio-ecological model of communication and behavior change, presented in Figure 5, is itself embedded in the physical environment and infrastructure and the communication process that affects it, it is also a general ecological model of behavior and the biological sciences, describes the complex social change. 8 Ecology, as derived from interrelationships among organisms and the environment in which they are embedded. The social-ecological positive communication model takes a systemic rather than a reductionist approach to analysis. It describes the complexity, interrelationship, and totality of the components of a complex holistic system rather than just one specific component isolated from the method in which it is located. Two central features of the socioecological model of communication and behavior change are the assumption of embeddedness, the state in which one system is embedded in a hierarchy

of other systems at different levels of analysis, and emergence, where the system at each level is "greater than the sum of its parts". One of the main strengths of the social-ecological approach is that many sources of resistance to change at one level can be traced to barriers that exist not only at that level but also at higher levels. Behavior changes positive communication programs – in the past often defined solely at the individual level – are less effective than they should be because the program ignores the barriers to change in the systems in which individuals are embedded. Those individuals often cannot dismiss the constraints within their social networks, communities, institutions, and the larger society. The social-ecological positive communication model is a metamodel or metatheory in that each level represented in the model includes theories of change at a particular group. Thus, the conceptual model of communication and behavior change fits at the individual level; the idea of interpersonal relations and the theory of limited normative influence include the social network level; the participatory development communication model is applied to the community level; and mass media impact theories correspond to the societal level. A vital contribution of the ecological model is to highlight how higher levels facilitate or constrain change at lower levels of analysis, suggesting that planned change interventions should be effective in all four groups, depending on the nature of the challenges the program addresses. Most programs operate at more than one level; some programs need to work across all four to achieve meaningful change at the population level.
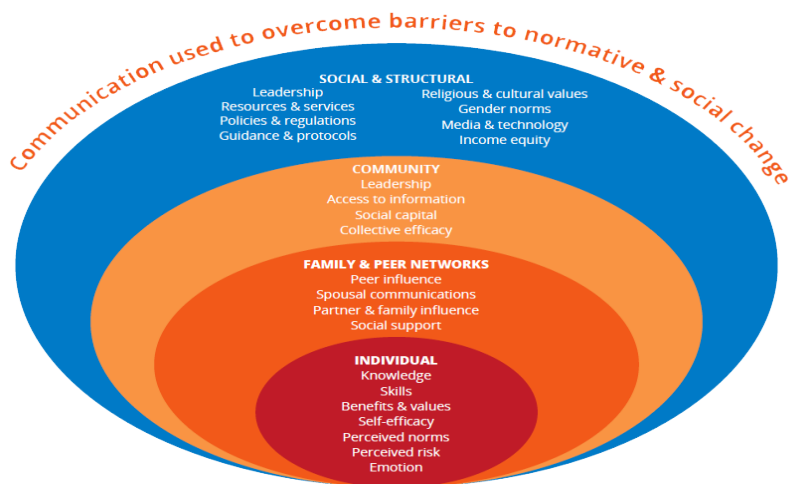

Figure 5. The Socioecological Model of Positive Communication and Behavior Change adaptive from[2]

[2]   https://sbccimplementationkits.org/sbcc-in-emergencies/learn-about-sbcc-and-emergencies/what-is-social-and-behavior-change-communication/; https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/svpreventiona

2. Cases of Lithuanian experience

2.1. General provisions of Lithuanian labour market

On 01 July 2017 **the Law on Employment of the Republic of Lithuania** came into force. In accordance with this law, the labor market provides different services for job seekers. The support measures for youth learning includes initiatives intended to early school leavers. They are as follows:

- organization of vocational training according to formal vocational training programs under the provisions set forth in a tripartite or bipartite agreement.
- employment under the contract of apprenticeship.
- traineeship as a period of voluntary practical training intended for improvement, renewal or development of work-related skills or vocational qualification.
- recognition of competences acquired by means of non-formal education or self-education.

The labour market also gives additional support to some vulnerable groups of people, including long-term unemployed persons under 25 years of age whose unemployment continues for more than 6 months. **Lithuania's** economy has almost doubled in size since 2000. In 2017, the UN changed the status of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania from Eastern European countries to the states of Northern Europe. However, Lithuania needs to cope better with the problems of youth emigration and inclusion, which are decreasing slightly, and young people who have left Lithuania are now returning to their homeland slowly. Lithuanian youth policy is targeted at young people (aged 14–29) who presently amount to more than 630,000 (21%) of the country's population. According to Eurostat, in 2021, 12.7% of the youth population were NEETs. The percentage of NEETs in rural areas is higher (15.5%) and in Towns and suburbs (16.9%) is higher than in urban areas (8.4%). There is also a higher percentage of females (13.5%) compared to males (11.9%). In **Lithuania**, there is no specific strategy on social inclusion of youth as a special group. However, the Action Plan for Increasing Social Inclusion for 2014–2020 mentions youth among other target groups. In 2014, the Action Plan for Increasing Social Inclusion for 2014–2020 was revised, distinguishing target groups of residents, revising measures and planning for the funds allocated for the implementation of the measures. In 2020, the forecast on social exclusion and poverty levels demonstrated that despite COVID-19 pandemic, young people are less likely to be at risk of social exclusion and poverty than older persons. Nevertheless, rural areas in Lithuania could be characterised by emigration of young people, decreasing birth rate and ageing of population, thus, Rural Development Programme for Lithuania 2014–2020 focused on social integration and elimination of distinctions between rural and urban areas. This Programme aimed to strengthen human capital and decrease youth unemployment by providing support to vocational training, advisory services, information actions and young farmers' start-ups. No specific national strategy to increase youth participation

exists. In December 2010, the Government of the Republic of Lithuania approved the National youth policy development program for 2011–2019. It is the main, overarching, strategic public document integrating the major directions to be followed in the policy making on youth at national level in Lithuania including the encouragement of youth participation in the society.

For solving the problems of residents' employment which are especially urgent nowadays by combining the efforts of business, education, and labor market sectors and by including social partners and municipalities in the formulation of the employment policy the **Employment Growth Program 2014–2020** was prepared in Lithuania (Employment growth program, 2013). The preparation of the program was conditioned by the need to reduce the youth unemployment. Due to lack of vocational skills and work experience the young people (aged 15–24) are the most vulnerable group encountering the problems of integration into the labor market. Later separate cities developed their own employment growth programs: Vilnius (2019–2020), Kaunas (2021–2023), Alytus (2021), Šiauliai (2021–2023) (Vilnius employment growth program, 2019; Kaunas employment growth program, 2021; Alytus city municipality, 2021; Šiauliai employment growth program, 2021) and other.

3.2.2. Lithuanian youth policy

Lithuanian youth policy is aimed at young people (14–29 years old). There were about 486000 such people in Lithuania at the beginning of 2021, according to Statistics Lithuania.

Youth policy in Lithuania has been developed for more than 20 years. Lithuania has created a legal framework and institutional system for the formation and implementation of youth policy. The principles, areas, organization, and management of youth policy have been established. To create the right conditions for young people to take an active part in an open and democratic society, programs are being set up to encourage initiatives by young people, youth organizations and young people. In addition, the links of youth non-governmental organizations with state and municipal institutions are strengthened, and support from the EU structural funds and programs is provided (Youth policy, 2021).

The main institutions formulating and implementing youth policy are:
- Commission for Youth and Sports Affairs of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania
- Ministry of Social Security and Labor
- Department of Youth Affairs under the Ministry of Social Security and Labor
- Youth Affairs Council
- Municipal Youth Affairs Council
- Youth Coordinator
- National Association of Youth Coordinators

Programmes implemented on the national level related to youth policy are:

- National Youth Policy Action Plan 2021
- Action Plan for the Implementation of the Youth Guarantee Initiative

Throughout the new phase (2021–2027), 'Erasmus +' programme will encourage organizations and young people to focus on EU policy priorities in projects or participation: inclusion and diversity, ecology and sustainability, digital transformation, youth participation in democratic processes and active citizenship (Youth policy, 2021; Kvieskiene, Kvieska, & Celiešiene, 2020).

3.3. Research and Qualitative analysis

The object of the study was the analyse sustainable competencies of transformative education with social-emotional, civic education, entrepreneurship competencies, and sustainable development goals.

Research methods: a content analysis of reports of four international conferences, analysis, 3 workshops, synthesis, interpretation, and evaluation of international organizations, research, and scientific literature, and four future seminars with experts in the field.

The overall sample obtained is a non-probabilistic, so-called "snowball" sample, and 73 responses were collected, of which 53 responses were validated. Two criteria were used to validate the responses: having answered yes to the two filter questions and having completed at least the first dimension of the questionnaire: characteristics of the project. All 73 respondents responded that the project covered rural areas, 53 answers were effectively validated (i.e., only those completely in the first section of the survey). All of the identified projects are of national scope (N = 53), are sustainable and most have international experiments (N = 49). The municipalities with the highest number of projects identified were Vilnius: N = 6 Trakai: and Plungė N = 2, others marked with black dots N = 1.
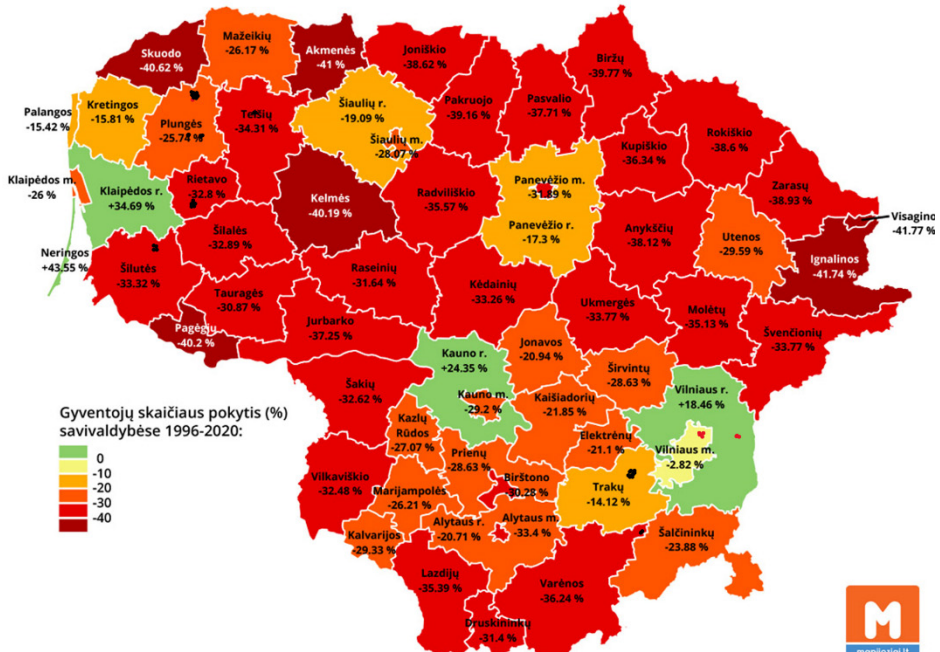
6 Figure. Population dynamics in Lithuania 1996–2020 and Location of Projects

Source: https://mapijoziai.lt/lietuvos-savivaldybes-gyventoju-skaicius-1996-2020-m/

It was unnecessary to have an active role in the project to respond to our survey. In some cases, the projects were identified by members of our working group, who filled out the study with the requested information. This justifies that among the respondents, (N = 21) did not play any role in the project described in the study. Among the respondents who had some role in the projects, consultants (N = 11) and those with some coordination function (N = 6) stand out. Also significant is the number of employees (N = 15).

Project ID

As for longevity, for this analysis, we selected those projects that have been successfully running for more than ten years and are financed in a mixed way (1), from more than 3 sourses: receiving funds from the state, municipal budgets, private funds, and international funds (N = 53) have long term partnership experiments and agreements (2) with universities or higher schools (N = 48), implement projects in rural areas(3) (N = 45) and work with socially marginalized groups (4) (N = 35), have innovative

pedagogy and other sustainability (see table 1) features. Qualitative analysis of projects has been taking place since 2012.

Sources of project financing (N = 32), the primary sources of financing are European funds (N = 16), municipal and regional funds (N = 13), national government funds: N = 11).

Regarding human resources (5), most projects have less than ten employees (N = 15). Social pedagogues (N =), social workers (N = 19), pedagogues (40.0%; N = 14), and representatives of seven other specialists (37.1%; N = 13) participate in the project.

Regarding the financial resources (6) needed to implement projects, the majority mentioned support from partners (N = 33), full-time human resources (N = 26), computers (N = 36), and offices (N = 25). (Table 1).

Table 1

Feature of Innovation: Sustainable, Inspiring cases

n terms of **resources** needed to implement the project, the majority mentioned a full-time human resource (N = 26), a computer (N = 26), and a room/office (N = 25).

The subjects responsible for the projects are primarily non-governmental organizations (N = 33), government (N = 10), municipalities (N = 8), and private organizations (N = 2). Local-level organizations should also be emphasized; some projects are promoted by local associations or community organizations (N = 7) and local government entities (N = 5). Most tasks involve partners and other institutions that do not financially support institutions (N = 53). These are mainly non-governmental organizations (N = 14), local associations or community organizations (N = 12), national government bodies (N = 10), local authorities (N = 9), universities, or other research organizations. Also noteworthy is the involvement of the private sector through private companies (N = 7), youth organizations (N = 7), and international organizations (N = 6). Other partner institutions such as schools (N = 4), universities (N = 2), and others (N = 2) are less critical. The collected data allowed us to describe the target group of the project. Regarding the age of the target group, most of the analysed projects are aimed at 15–19-year-olds (N = 42) and 20–25-year-olds (N = 31). It is also worth noting the part of projects intended for 12–15-year-old youth (N = 22). As for social groups, the majority turn to self-help institutions and local community organizations for comprehensive help (N = 21). Specific social groups identified were Roma (N = 15), children and youth with particular needs (N = 13), migrants and refugees (N = 11), etc.: ethnic minorities, women, people with behavioural disorders, and addictions (N = 10).In terms of employment/educational status, the majority of projects target disadvantaged children and young people, non-working young people (N = 22), NEET youth (N = 21) and recent school leavers (N = 30). Respondents were also asked about the main goals of the project. Most of the project's objectives were related to youth motivation for careers, integration into the labour market, improving work skills (N = 26), empowering youth (N = 26), creating and finding new jobs (N = 19)

and facilitating the transition from school to work (N = 12). Although less relevant, the following goals were also mentioned in the dimension of integration into the labor market: facilitating the matching of labor demand and supply (N = 11), financial support for young people in the job search process (N = 6). Reducing inequalities by working with particularly vulnerable groups is another aspect of the identified projects. In this dimension, the main goals are reducing inequality (N = 15) and promoting social inclusion of vulnerable groups (e.g. migrants, refugees, disabled) (N = 15). It is also worth noting the goals related to increasing participation (N = 15), restoring ties with biological family, and promoting intergenerational relationships (N = 10), improving mental health and well-being (N = 10). Involvement of young people. In the identified projects, the involvement of young people was guaranteed during the implementation phase of the project, with a smaller proportion of young people participating in the initial phase of the project, namely in its design and planning (N = 11) and follow-up (N = 16). Most of the young people participate in the projects only as participants (N = 34) beneficiaries (4N = 21), while some of the working young people play a more active/resolute role in the projects, because in the projects (N = 7); volunteers (N = 6), leaders (N = 6), consultants (N = 6) or mentors (N = 5). Training (N = 27) and consultation (N = 27) were the main activities carried out in the identified projects. Other activities should also be emphasized, i.e., community events (N = 22), life coaching/mentoring (N = 20) and information campaigns (N = 20). Finally, in terms of channels used by projects to communicate and involve young people are social networks, especially FB and Instagram, sharing information through local community institutions/organizations such as: community centres, schools, municipalities, and youth associations (N = 25) or promote their initiatives on the project website and other social networks, network organizations or by e-mail (N = 25). There are also open meetings (N = 12), dissemination through press, radio, television (N = 12).

Methodology

The main problem of our research presented in this chapter is the connection of transformational education competencies with innovative pedagogy with social-emotional, civic participation, entrepreneurial competencies, and sustainable development goals to find common priorities that would help modernize the education system, refine educational and professional development priorities that would help teacher training and for qualification improvement. Assuming that positive socialization as a policy of positive actions (scenarios of positive socialization) is an acceptable instrument by which teachers and educational specialists or competent persons can adjust not only the behavior of children and young people but also the learning results, we raise the question of what competencies of transformative education should be priorities of the educational process and should be consistent with the goals of sustainable development. A total of 126 educational support professionals (17% men and 83% women) participated in five contact discussions and workshops and answered the questionnaire. The

analysis took place in stages of gradually increasing depth. First, the Authors selected the data (2021–2022) from international studies, scientific articles, and social networks; later, the concepts were simplified and coded into subgroups by clustering. The analysis was based on two questions: what strategies and factors do experts, and educational support specialists identify as necessary when visualizing their desired future of an inclusive school? The second question is: what competencies are most important for transformative education? During the analysis process, coding, clustering, and abstraction were carried out in several stages based on the ideas that emerged during the analysis. Authors refined the research during seminars, where project leaders and volunteers participated as a target group (53).

Innovative pedagogy for sustainable ecological model: research findings

All successful cases presented in our chapter contributes to the development of the socio-ecological model (picture N.) and the development of the learning system. [3] In finding Process evaluation encompasses an assessment of the following: (i) program implementation, (ii) specific intervention activities, (iii) context surrounding the activities, (iv) responsible personnel, (v) target audiences, and (vi) level of effort. To understand context, we first reviewed all the community, organizations, and projects programs' initiation documents, including financial resources and project communication reports. Next, we reviewed documents related to activity implementation, individual activity reports, monthly and quarterly reports, PowerPoint presentations and minutes from planning meetings, information in social networks, and municipality and institution websites. Assessment of documents for program research. We reviewed social-ecological research documents to understand the program's diffusion in the community and community awareness. The scanned documents included formative assessments, evaluative surveys (quantitative and quality/cross-sectional), rapid qualitative assessments, and participatory action research reports. National surveys, including Lithuanian NEET and community surveys, were reviewed to corroborate the projects related to social and economic model approach program research reports. The aim was to understand the program's progress in addressing performance measures/indicators.

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[3]   (19) (PDF) A process evaluation of the Communication for Healthy Communities adolescent health program in Uganda. Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/337545043_A_process_evaluation_of_the_Communication_for_Healthy_Communities_adolescent_health_program_in_Uganda [accessed Mar 24 2023].
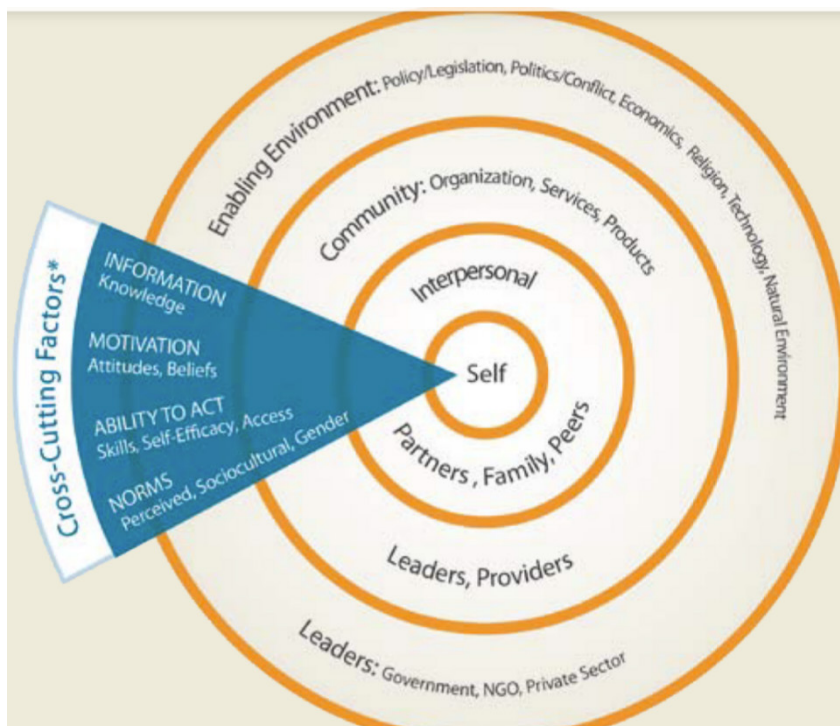
Figure 7. Social-ecological model, applying Healthy Communities adolescent health program model[4]

Competencies are combinations of knowledge, skills and attitudes that students develop and apply for successful learning, living and working. They emphasize aspects of learning that apply within and across all subject areas. "Turn to the children" projets promotes development children and youth independent living skills competencies, which are streamlined expressions of the competencies in the new recomendation of Lithuanian Ministry Education, Science and Sport[5]. Lithuanian College of Democracy promote, that Students are the artists, scientists, thinkers, innovators and leaders of the future. They will be tasked with solving the problems of today, while imagining and creating a new tomorrow. Competencies are critical for equipping students with the knowledge, skills and attitudes that they will need to successfully navigate their personal journeys in learning, living and working. Lithuanian children fund develop competencies when they encounter unfamiliar or challenging situations. Competencies help students draw and build upon what they know, how they think and what they can do. In school, students develop and apply competencies through subject-area content and learning experiences.

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[4] https://www.researchgate.net/publication/337545043_A_process_evaluation_of_the_Communication_for_Healthy_Communities_adolescent_health_program_in_Uganda [accessed Mar 24 2023].

[5] https://www.mokykla2030.lt/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Gyvenimo-Igudziu-BP-pristatymas_2021-05-05.pdf

What is the socio-educational model related to? Learning culture, features of innovative pedagogy, context, content, and inspiring cases analyses. We can find content everywhere, and context is key.

Conclusions and Discussion

- This section highlights the cases that helped manage the impact of the COVID-19 quarantine on children and NEETs. We can name these consequences as restriction of social contacts, isolation, family tension and problems caused by isolation at home; increased level of anxiety; increased social-emotional and mental health problems due to the limitation of face-to-face meetings with friends; increasing unemployment among vulnerable families, complex employment process for at-risk youth, increased number of less educated and disadvantaged youth.
- Rural children and NEET youth are the most vulnerable regarding employment, mobility, qualifications, and social exclusion. Therefore, we believe that the success cases presented in the chapter on sustainable and innovative organizations reveal that such organizations are not only characterized by qualified human resources, (1) which is one of the characteristics of a sustainable organization. An essential feature is mixed funding (2), which proves that the organization is trusted not only by the government and municipalities but also by international experts (EU) and other projects, as well as private financing for the development of the organization (4), the expansion of the organization to rural areas (5) and the integration of children and youth living there into innovative programs.
- The examined cases in harmonious organizations create networks and expand partnerships by developing the self-confidence and self-esteem of rural NEET youth, but also create conditions for positive socialization, strengthening positive social-emotional health, and solving mental health problems. At the same time, children's creativity, youth mobile work, networking, and the development of knowledge and skills are encouraged. These qualities help young people to enter the labor market and thus contribute to the economic sustainability of countries.
- The study is not without limitations. In this part, only Lithuanian cases were analyzed, and the initiatives of other countries could be interpreted in further studies. In addition, a comparative analysis of NEET youth statistics between countries could be more detailed according to the status of activities and participation in socio-ecological model-oriented projects. Then it could be more beneficial to draw appropriate conclusions enabling decision-makers to make the right decisions.

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Socialinis-ekologinis modelis: įkvepiančios kaimo bendruomenės prototipas

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Santrauka

Socialinių ir ekologinių veiksnių dinamika turi įtakos problemų sprendimui, tačiau socialinių procesų sprendimai nebandomi spręsti pasitelkiant aplinkos ir socialinius aspektus. Šiame straipsnyje siūlome keturiais socialinio ir ekologinio modelio komponentais pagrįstą konceptualią sistemą, skirtą socialinių grupių pasitikėjimui kurti ir bendradarbiavimui bei socialinei partnerystei plėtoti. Analizuojame NEET kaimo jaunimo statistiką Europoje kaip vieną svarbiausių socialinių grupių, reprezentuojančią pagrindines tendencijas. Per COVID-19 pandemiją ir karą Ukrainoje šie jaunuoliai tapo dar labiau pažeidžiami, patiria socialinę atskirtį ir psichikos sveikatos problemų. Darbe siekiama išanalizuoti socialinio-ekologinio modelio kūrimą kaimo vietovėse, įtraukiant ir motyvuojant NEET jaunimą. Taikoma sėkmės ir įgalinimo metodų statistinė analizė ir atvejų analizė. Daugiausia dėmesio skiriama vertybių internalizavimą skatinantiems sprendimams, transformuojantiems ugdymo prioritetus universalių prototipų paieškai. Pastebime, kad NVO vadovai vis lanksčiau integruoja inovatyvius, transformuojančius ugdymo metodus mokyklose ir kitose socialinėse bei ugdymo įstaigose ir kartu su NEET jaunimu kuria socialinį-ekologinį modelį. Todėl siekiame išgryninti ir pagrįsti transformuojamojo ugdymo kompetencijas, kurios galėtų padėti mokytojų rengėjams ir kvalifikacijos kėlimo paslaugų teikėjams peržiūrėti ir papildyti esamą praktiką, remiantis socialinio-ekologinio modelio kūrimu.

Analizuojamos trys tarpusavyje susijusios ir viena kitą papildančios kompetencijų grupės, susijusios su socialiniu-ekologiniu bendruomenės modeliu, kurios jau buvo pristatytos tarptautinėse studijose ir konferencijose: (1) transformacinis ugdymas, (2) socialinis-emocinis, (3) pilietinis ugdymas, (4) verslumo kompetencijos sąsajos su veiklos tikslais ir darni plėtra.

Esminiai žodžiai: *socialinis-ekologinis modelis, NEET jaunimas, transformacinis ugdymas, vaikų sėkmė, pozityvi socializacija, socialinis-emocinis ugdymas, pilietinio ugdymo kompetencijos.*