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### **Characteristics and features of NEET youth in the context of country analysis**

#### **Abstract**

*Object:* To identify measures to reduce NEET youth based on the study of international experience.

*Methods:* Methods of system, dynamic, structural and correlation analysis.

*Results:* Youth is a special socio-demographic group that has a complex internal structure. Today, the increase in the number of young people not involved in the labor and educational spheres (NEET – Not in Education, Employment, or Training) requires certain measures to minimize this group.

*Conclusions:* Analysis of the obtained material allowed us to conclude that the indicators of NEET youth and youth unemployment have a strong relationship for many countries. Based on the study of the structure of NEET-youth in the context of country analysis, measures to minimize the segment of NEET-youth are determined. Analysis of the world experience in minimizing the NEET youth allowed us to identify the following areas: Wage subsidy programs; public works programs; development of flexible forms of employment; development of youth entrepreneurship; educational programs for young people.

**Keywords:** NEET youth, labor market, youth, youth employment, economic activity, youth unemployment, NEET rate.

#### **Introduction**

NEET youth is an integral part of Generation Z. All the characteristics of Generation Z are also applicable to NEET youth, except that this part of the population has neither material nor social opportunities for their full realization (Bulanova, 2019).

To overcome youth unemployment, international statistics use a special category of young people who do not work, do not study, and do not receive vocational training (NEET). Being cut off from the fields of education and employment noticeably reduces their chances of successful employment and integration into the social structure of society (Godunova, 2020). Its use makes it possible to analyze the difficulties of interaction between the educational sphere and the labor market (Education Indicators in Focus. OECD, 2013), and the young people in this group can be described as vulnerable (Education at a Glance. OECD, 2013), prone to involvement in informal employment, excluded from the labor market and society as a whole (Mascherini et al., 2012). Developed European countries encountered the NEET phenomenon in the late 1980s. The concept of NEET youth first appeared in 1999 in a public discussion in the UK Government Report (Bridging the gap: New opportunities for 16–18-year-olds not in education, employment, or training, 1999). The problem of modern society is the large proportion of young people who do not study and do not work. Young people have great potential, but despite they experience difficulties in employment. As a result, there is a growing number of NEET youth who are exposed to social exclusion and poverty. Thus, issues in the field of employment and youth employment are among the key problems of the modern labor market (Yakovleva, 2016).

Thus, the study of the characteristics and NEET youth in the context of the country analysis allows identifying measures to minimize the NEET youth segment in Kazakhstan. Now, the main question of our consideration is what measures are used to reduce NEET youth in foreign countries?

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### **Literature Review**

In recent years, interest in the NEET youth category has emerged in the academic community that studies youth issues. Empirical estimates of the share of NEET are given in studies by E.Y. Varshavskaya and A.A. Zudina. As A.A. Zudina notes, singling out the NEET category entails solving complex research problems related to issues of economics and sociology of labor, social stratification, and inequality. These include the human capital quality of NEET youth who do not attend school, the impact of NEET status on subsequent employment and wages, poverty and social stratification, as well as the place of NEET youth in the system of inequality (Zudina, 2019).

E.A. Varshavskaya connects belonging to the NEET category with the low education level and lack of work experience. Those who had work experience were employed in unstable and unqualified jobs, and this influenced their further unemployment (Varshavskaya, 2016).

Some authors define professional self-determination as one of the ways to minimize NEET, as one of the results of this self-determination process is the formation of a certain plan of educational and professional activity by the young generation (Shafranov-Kutsev & Gulyaeva, 2019).

J. Avis's study considers "NEET" as an ideological and discursive phenomenon in a socio-economic context. He reviews the models that consider wage labor as the basis for integrating youth into society as increasingly controversial in the economic conditions of modern Western countries (Avis, 2014).

S. Carcillo et al. emphasize that factors such as the growing unemployment rate, segmentation of the labor market and the uncertainty faced by school graduates when entering the labor market make young people who do not have or have little work experience the most vulnerable. In this regard, the number of young people who are not engaged in professional, educational activities is growing (Carcillo et al., 2015).

S. Yates and M. Payne suggest that a commitment to NEET reduction goals leads authorities to take hasty action that prevents them from focusing on areas of support where it could be most effective (Yates & Payne, 2006).

Thus, the current features of the manifestation of the most acute problems of young people, among which dependency is one of the new, are relevant and least studied.

### **Methods**

The official data from the International Labor Organization, OECD, and Eurostat were used for the analysis. Analytical, search, comparative, statistical and other methods were used to achieve the goal. Methods of dynamic and structural analysis were used in the processing of statistical and departmental data describing the quantitative parameters of NEET youth.

### **Results**

At the beginning of the XXI century, the scale of NEET youth has increased dramatically, which was a long-term social problem, because, in the aftermath, these young people are more likely to become unemployed and economically inactive compared to those who previously received a professional education (Batrakova, 2021).

An important issue is the definition of the essential characteristics of the concept of "NEET youth". Thus, the International Labour Organization defines NEET youth as the number of young people who are not in education, employment, or training as a percentage of the total youth population. For this indicator, youth is defined as all persons between the ages of 15 and 24 (inclusive) (ILOSTAT).

According to the ILO methodology, NEET youth indicators are calculated as follows:

$$\text{NEET rate (\%)} = \frac{\text{Youth} - \text{Youth on employment} - \text{Youth not in employment but in education or training}}{\text{Youth}} * 100 \quad (1)$$

It is advisable to begin the analysis of the NEET youth in the labor market with a study of its scope and dynamics (Figure 1).

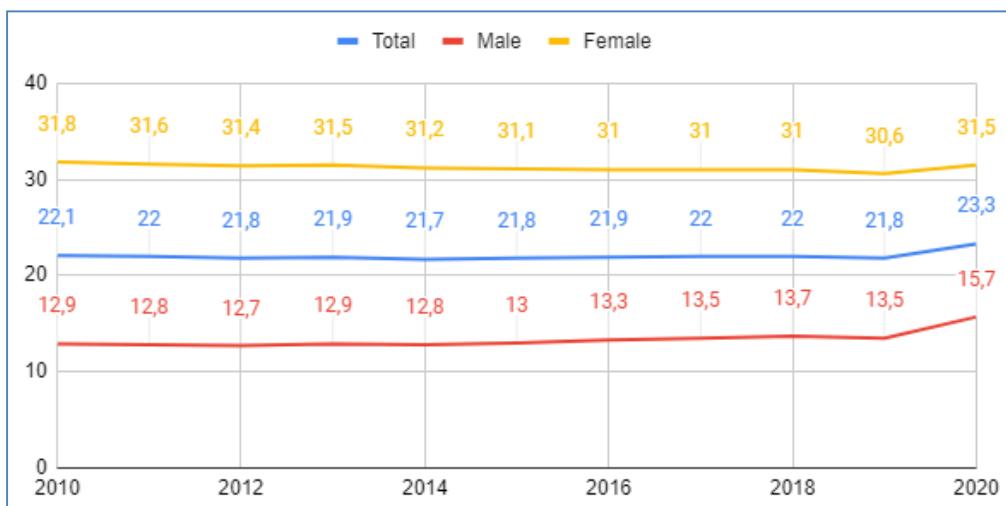


Figure 1. World proportions of youth (aged 15–24 years) not in education, employment or training, (%)

Note – Compiled by the authors on the basis of ILOSTAT, <https://ilostat ilo.org/data/>

According to ILOSTAT, there has been a steady increase in the number of NEET youth worldwide over the past decade, in particular, a sharp increase is observed in male NEET youth from 12.9% to 15.7%. Nevertheless, the proportion of NEET female youth remains high compared to males; it has remained at 31% over the past 10 years and will be 31.5% in 2020 (Figure 2).

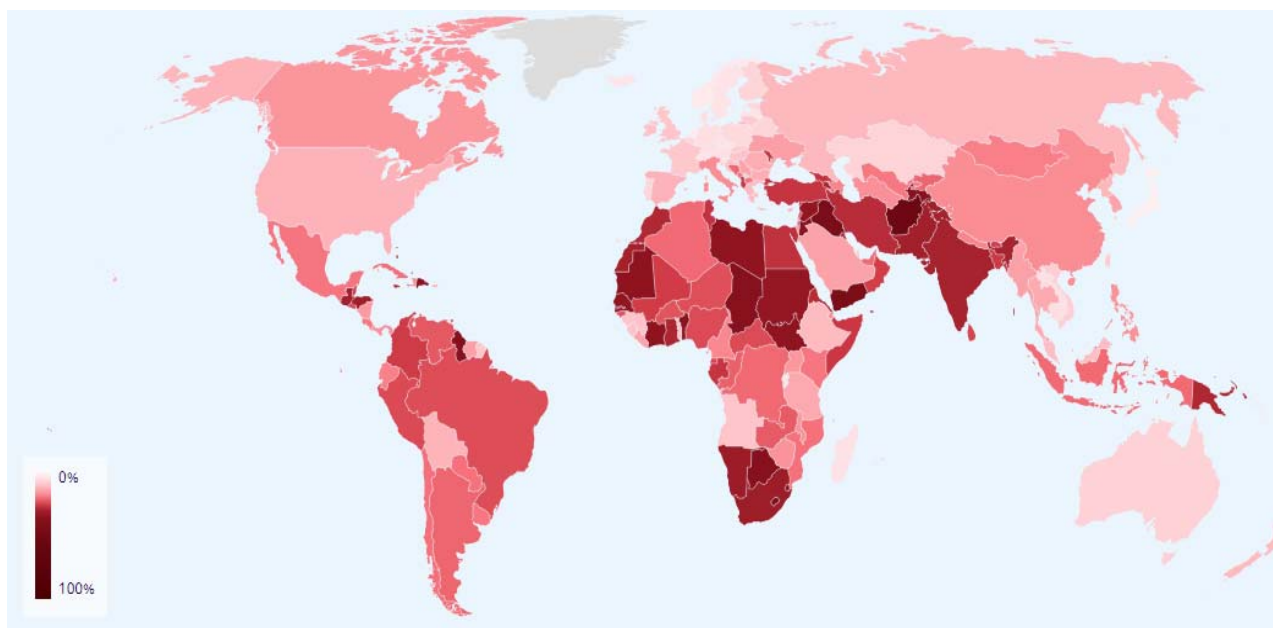


Figure 2. Share of youth aged 15–24 not in employment, education or training (NEET), ILO modelled estimates for 2020

Note – Taken from <https://ilostat ilo.org/topics/youth/>

According to the International Labour Organization, there has been an increase in the involvement of the population in the NEET youth group, with women more often in a vulnerable position than men. This feature is characteristic of most countries. Significant shares of young people who are not involved in labor and education are characteristic of countries in Africa and Middle East Asia (Figure 3).

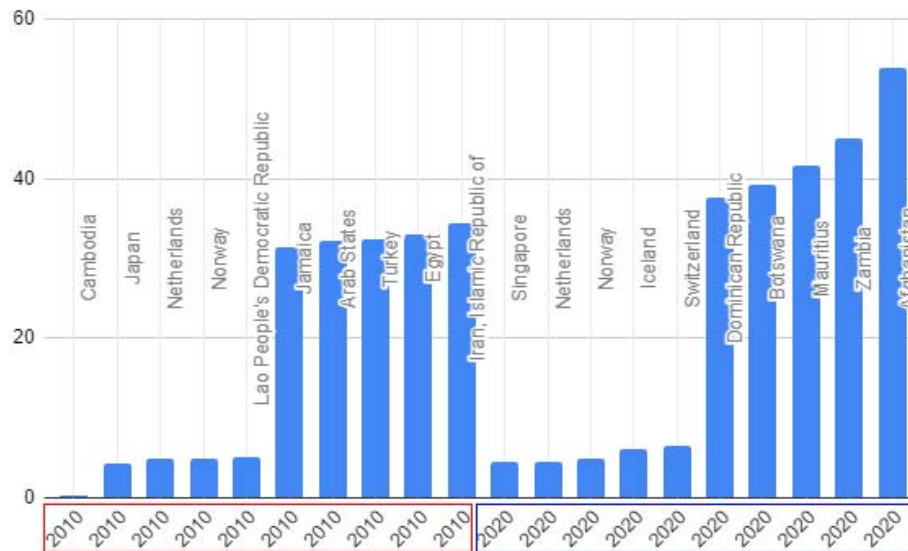


Figure 3. Top of the highest and lowest of youth (aged 15–24 years) not in education, employment or training indicators by country for 2010 and 2020, (%)

Note – Compiled by the authors on the basis of ILOSTAT, <https://ilostat.ilo.org/data/>

The ILO data made it possible to identify groups of countries with the highest and lowest proportions of youth (aged 15–24 years) not in education, employment or training in the world in 2010 and 2020. Thus, the top leaders of the countries, in terms of the highest indicators of NEET youth, have changed over the decade. So, if in 2010 the NEET youth people in the world were in Jamaica, Arab States, Turkey, Egypt, and Iran, then in 2020 these countries are the Dominican Republic, Botswana, Mauritius, Zambia, and Afghanistan. The lowest proportions of NEET youth in 2010 were in Cambodia, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, and the Lao People's Democratic Republic. In 2020, Norway and the Netherlands also remained among the top leaders. Singapore, Iceland, and Switzerland joined them.

It should be noted that in 10 years, Norway and the Netherlands have the lowest rates of NEET youth in the world. In this regard, the experience of these countries in working with young people will be interesting.

Norway has a comprehensive NEET youth support system. So, for example, there was a “Follow-up Service”, which is intended for those who need personal help to get or keep a suitable job, and need extensive employment and subsequent assistance (Follow-up, 2016). Also, for many years, it has been a priority in Norway to combat early school leaving. NAV, or the Norwegian Department of Labour and Social Security, acts as a “one-stop-shop” for employment and social support and works closely with schools and follow-up services. NAV has special online platforms for young people that provide information and recommendations for young job seekers (European Commission, n.d.).

The Norwegian Youth Guarantee, which was introduced in the early 1980s, gave young applicants the right to additional targeted employment support (OECD, 2018). Since 2017, a new “Youth Effort” has been in operation, replacing the three previous guarantee schemes for NEET youth. Youth Effort provides job-oriented offers to people under the age of 30 looking for work who, after eight weeks of unemployment, do not work, study, or engage in other activities. Efforts are aimed at motivating young people to find work, improving their job search skills, and quickly attracting unemployed young people to work, study, or other activities.

The problem of youth unemployment in the Netherlands is being solved comprehensively. The policy is based on the positive experience gained in the framework of the “Action Plan on Youth Unemployment” (2009) and is aimed at further reducing the number of people dropping out of school at an early age and strengthening the links between education and the labor market.

The National Plan for the Implementation of Youth Guarantees was presented in April 2014. The measures developed in response were aimed at improving the quality and accessibility of vocational training (both through vocational education and training and through internships), as well as encouraging employers to expand employment opportunities for young people (“Employment Agreements”).

The low percentage of NEET in the Netherlands can be explained by the fact that, in the Netherlands, school attendance is mandatory until the age of 18. A longer stay in the education system also increases the

likelihood of employment, which makes Dutch strategies also relevant for reducing the level of NEET (Bekker & Klosse, 2016).

In addition, Norway and the Netherlands show low data on NEET youth and among OECD countries.

According to the OECD definition, the youth NEET indicator is the share of young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET), as a percentage of the total number of young people in the corresponding age group, by gender. Young people in education include those attending part-time or full-time education but exclude those in non-formal education and educational activities of very short duration. The age range of the official statistical indicators of NEET youth varies from 15 to 29 years (OECD, 2022) (Figure 4).

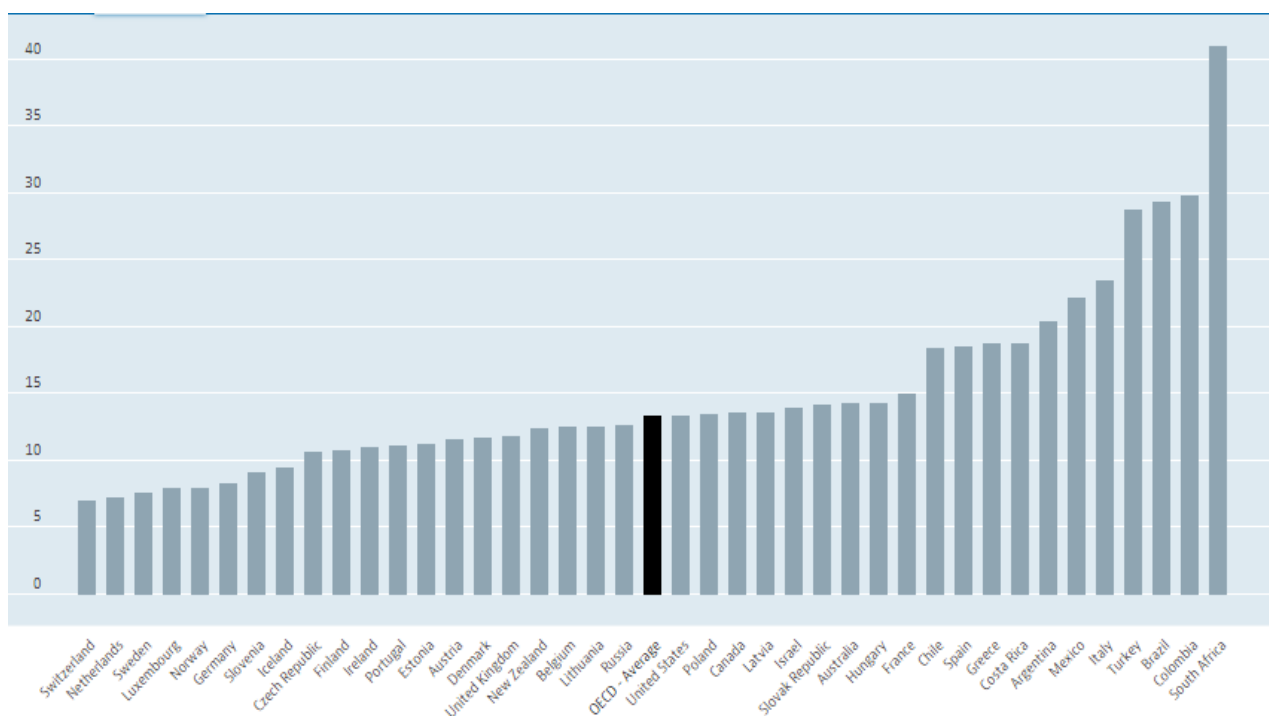


Figure 4. Share of NEET youth (15–29) in OECD countries in 2017–2020, %

Note – OECD Library

According to official OECD data, in 2020, the average NEET indicators were 13.4%, which is 0.5% higher than in 2019. The highest share of NEET youth among OECD countries belongs to South Africa (in 2020 – 40.9%). This is followed by Colombia (in 2020 – 29.3%) and Brazil (in 2020 – 29.8%). The smallest share of NEET youth belongs to Switzerland (7.0%), the Netherlands (7.2%), and Sweden (7.6%) for 2020.

As defined by Eurostat, the indicator of young people neither in employment nor in education and training, abbreviated as NEET, corresponds to the percentage of the population of a given age group and sex who is not employed and not involved in further education or training (Eurostat Statistics Explained, 2019). At the same time, it should be noted that currently the age range of NEET has been expanded from 15 to 34 years, so in the latest statistics of Eurostat, the age range for this group is indicated as 20–34 years (Figure 5).

In the European Union, 17.6% of 20–34-year-olds were neither in employment nor in education and training in 2020. Among EU member states, NEET indicators for 2020 vary greatly. Thus, the lowest rates (below 10%) for 2020 were specific for the Netherlands, Sweden, and Luxembourg. The highest rates were registered in Italy and Greece, where more than 25% of all young people aged 20–34 did not work and did not receive education and vocational training.

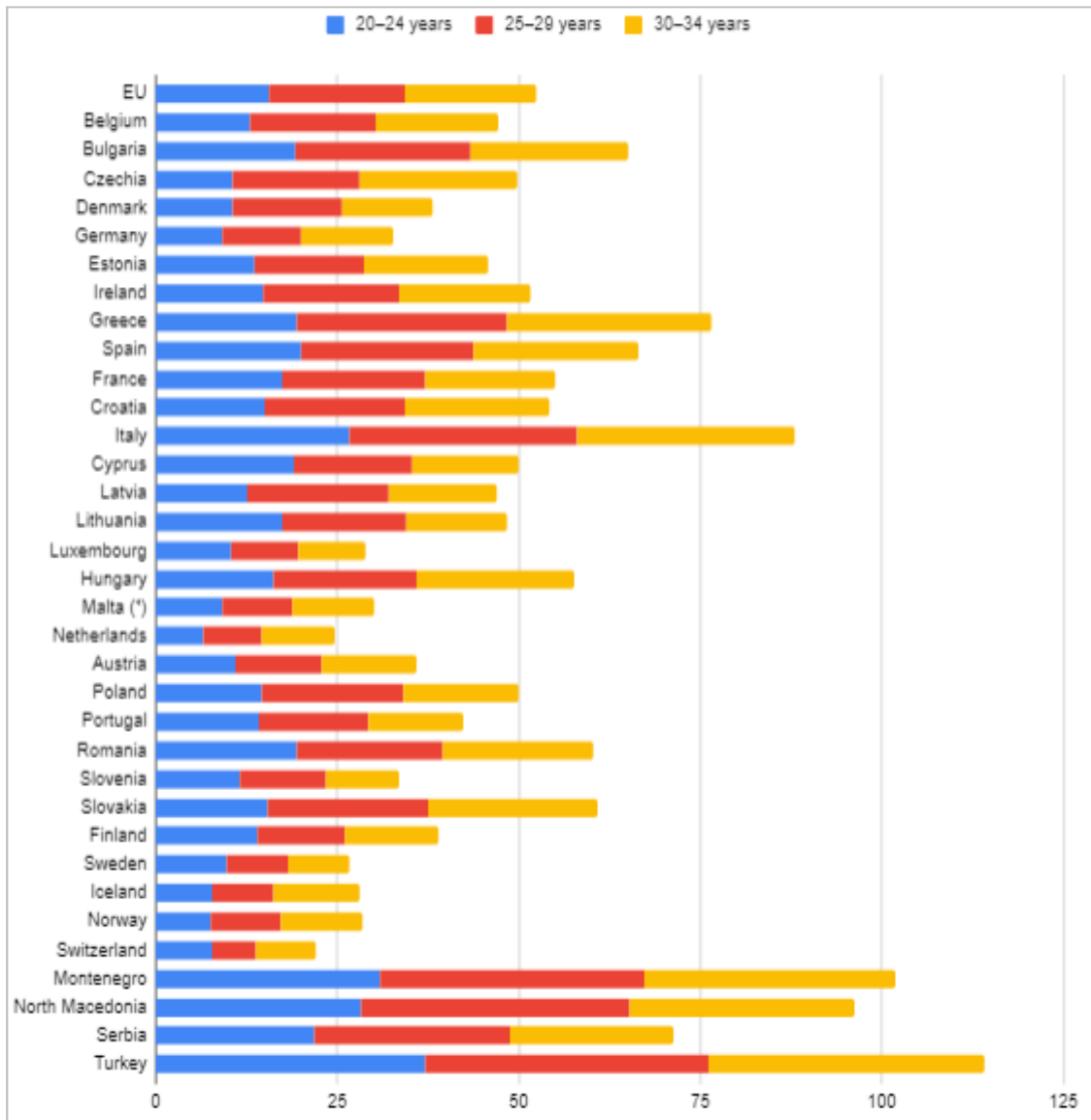


Figure 5. Young people neither in employment nor in education and training, by age, EU, 2008–2020, %

Note – Compiled by the authors on the basis of Eurostat (Eurostat Statistics Explained, 2019)

To determine the relationship between youth unemployment and unemployment of the older population, countries with high indicators of economic development were selected. One of such key indicators of economic development used worldwide for the most general characteristics of the results of a country’s economic activity is GDP. Thus, according to the World Bank, the ranking of countries for 2020 was headed by China. The next TOP 10 countries with high GDP comprise the USA, India, Japan, Germany, Russia, Indonesia, Brazil, France, and Great Britain. In addition, Kazakhstan was also included for comparative analysis. For the analysis, data from the ILOSTAT were used, where the age range of 15–24 was chosen as youth unemployment, and for the adult population it was defined as 25+. In addition, data for 2020 for some countries are not presented in the ILOSTAT database (Figure 6).

Thus, Figure 6 demonstrates that there is a strong correlation between youth unemployment rates and adult unemployment rates in the analyzed countries. In addition, Brazil has serious problems with youth and adult unemployment.

Moreover, a correlation analysis between the indicators of NEET youth and youth unemployment was carried out for countries that are next to Kazakhstan in the ranking of countries by the GDP compiled by the World Bank. Figure 7 illustrates the list of these countries.

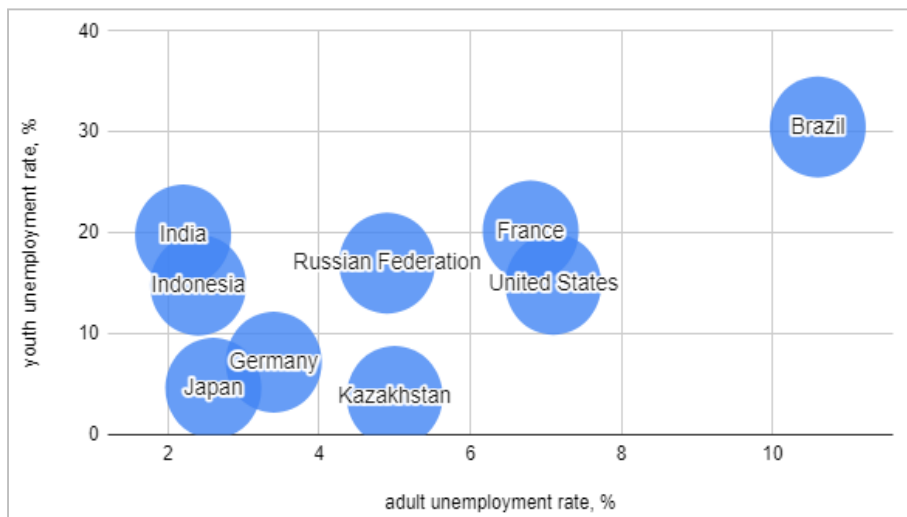


Figure 6. Correlation between unemployment rates among adults and youth by country, 2020, %

Note – Compiled by the authors on the basis of ILOSTAT, <https://ilostat.ilo.org/data/>

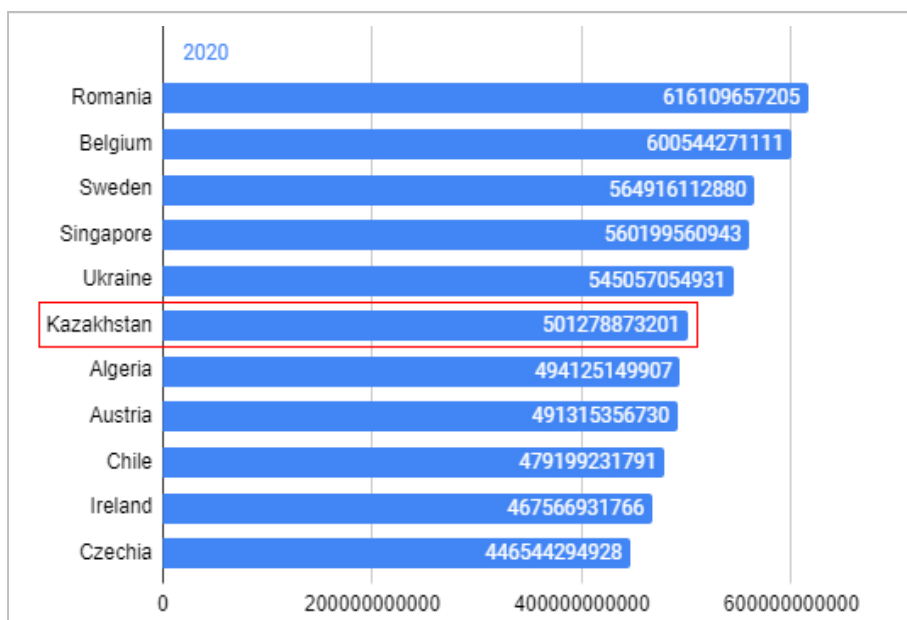


Figure 7. Ranking of countries by GDP, 2020, US dollar

Note – Compiled by the authors on the basis of World Bank, <https://data.worldbank.org/>

To determine the correlation between the NEET youth and youth unemployment indicators, countries with high GDP were also selected, except for India and China, since data on these countries are not fully presented in the ILOSTAT database for correlation analysis (Figure 8).

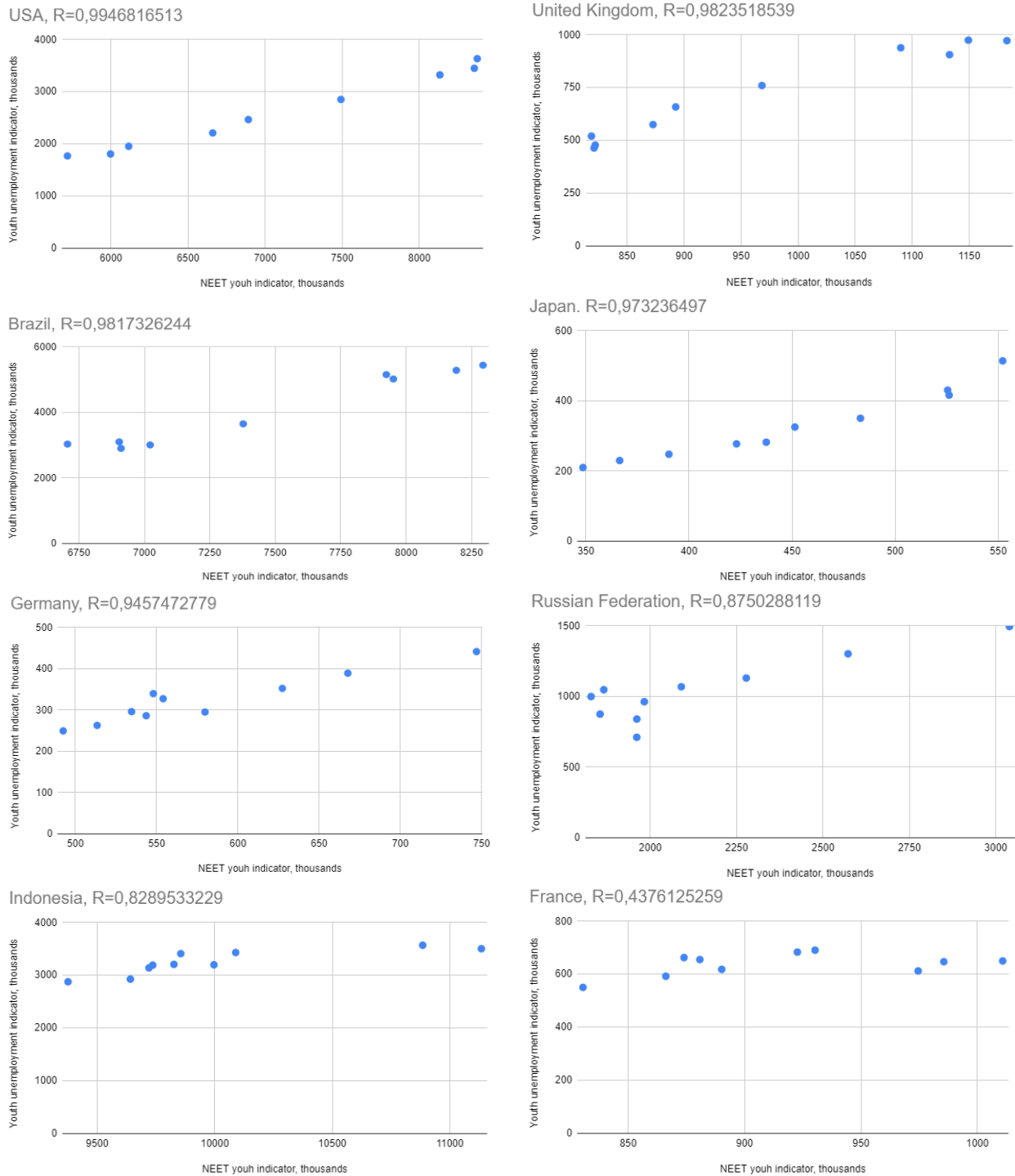


Figure 8. Correlation between youth unemployment among NEET youth by country

Note – Compiled by the authors on the basis of ILOSTAT, <https://ilostat.ilo.org/data/>

The results of the correlation analysis among the most developed countries by GDP show a close relationship between youth unemployment and the value of NEET youth since the countries under consideration are characterized by high correlation indicators, except for France. In this country, the coefficient was 0.437, which means an average relationship between the factors.

Figure 9 presents the results of the correlation analysis of the next group of countries.



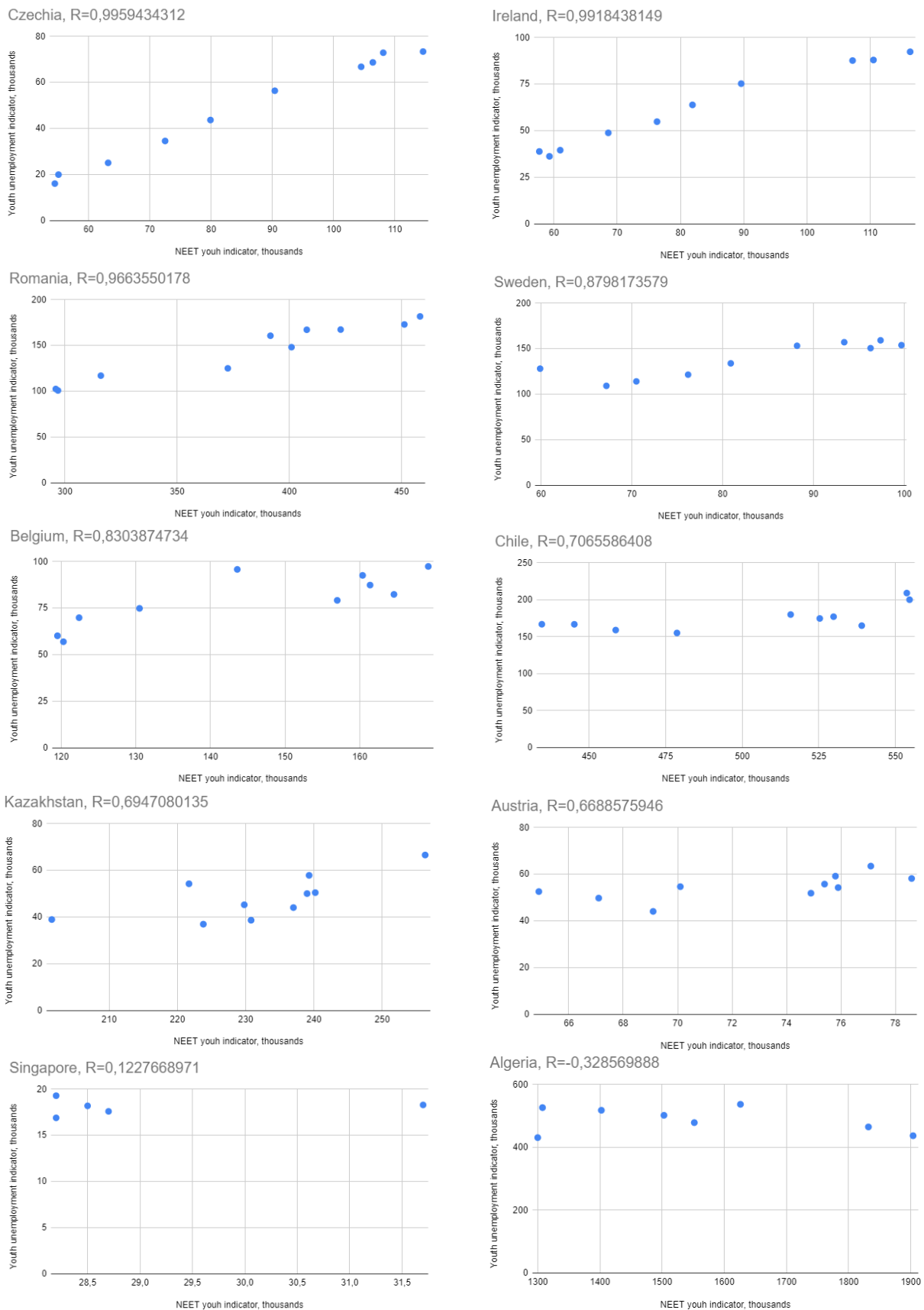


Figure 9. Correlation between youth unemployment among NEET youth by country

Note – Compiled by the authors on the basis of ILOSTAT, <https://ilostat.ilo.org/data/>

The analyzed countries are also characterized by a strong relationship between the indicators of youth unemployment and NEET youth. Particularly, this strong dependence is characteristic especially for the Czech Republic and Ireland. In Kazakhstan, the correlation coefficient was about 0.69, which shows an average relationship between the factors. It should be noted that Singapore is characterized by a weak relationship between the factors, which proves a low correlation coefficient. Algeria was distinguished by a negative correlation relationship, i.e., the coefficient was about -0.33.

Despite the potential available, young people have difficulty finding employment, resulting in a growing number of NEET young people without a permanent job or place of study. Due to the crisis against the background of the coronavirus pandemic, an increase in youth unemployment is expected. The youth segment of the labor market is part of the economic system that is experiencing the changes taking place in the economy, in particular in the conditions of the coronavirus pandemic. Because of COVID-19, the issues of employment among young people have complicated. The main problem is the employment of young people, which is currently relevant for the labor market, but in conditions of an increasing imbalance of supply and demand, they become particularly acute (Olenchenko & Gorchakova, 2021).

### **Discussions**

When analyzing the situation of young people in the labor market in recent years, more and more attention has been paid to the group that is outside of study and work (Razumova & Zolotina, 2019).

Overcoming the difficulties encountered by the younger generation when entering the labor market is also associated with the implementation of an effective youth employment policy aimed at realizing active programs in the labor market, creating new jobs, developing youth entrepreneurship and youth self-employment, etc. (Besfamilnaia, 2016).

The analysis of the world experience in minimizing the NEET of youth allows identifying the following areas:

- Wage subsidy programs are aimed at motivating employers to hire young workers;
- Public works programs are usually run exclusively by governments and are aimed at reducing unemployment and increasing the chances of employment for vulnerable populations at risk;
- Development of flexible forms of employment;
- Programs that promote the development of youth entrepreneurship, the purpose of which is to form and develop entrepreneurial skills in young people, namely the ability to create and manage businesses, create permanent jobs;
- Youth education programs. Training and education is the most popular measure for the employment and employment of young people (Tokaeva, 2019).

Considering the above, it should be noted that the solution to the problems of reducing the NEET of young people should be comprehensive.

### **Conclusions**

High youth unemployment is a serious political issue because of potentially long-term, devastating consequences, such as a higher likelihood of re-employment, lower future earnings, and a possible exit from the labor market (Bradley et al., 2020). Ignoring the phenomenon and condition of NEET youth can lead to the preservation and formation of sustainable stagnant unemployment in the future, which increases both social and macroeconomic problems. By systematically using modern tools of NEET youth compression, the analysis takes the convergence of productive employment, post-industrial education and an inclusive economy to a qualitatively new level. This expands the field of positive macroeconomic results, leading to the multiplication of the effects of productive employment based on human capital growth and inclusive growth (Khusainova et al., 2021).

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**М.Р. Газизова, Ж.С. Хусаинова, Е.А. Вечкинзова, Г.М. Абауова**

### **Елдік талдау контексіндегі NEET-жастардың сипаттамасы мен ерекшеліктері**

#### **Аңдатпа**

**Мақсаты:** Зерттеудің мақсаты халықаралық тәжірибені зерделеу негізінде NEET-жастарды қысқарту жөніндегі шараларды анықтау.

**Әдісі:** Жүйелік, динамикалық, құрылымдық және корреляциялық талдау әдістері пайдаланылды.

**Қорытынды:** Жастар — күрделі ішкі құрылымы бар ерекше әлеуметтік-демографиялық топ. Бүгінгі таңда еңбек және білім саласына тартылмаған жастар санының артуы (NEET - Not in Education, Employment, or Training) осы топты барынша азайту бойынша белгілі бір шараларды талап етеді.

**Тұжырымдама:** Зерттеу нәтижесінде қорытынды ақпарат алынды, оның талдауы NEET-жастар мен жастар жұмыссыздығының көрсеткіштері көптеген елдер үшін өзара тығыз байланысты деген қорытындыға келді. NEET-жастар құрылымын зерттеу негізінде елдік талдау контексінде NEET-жастар сегментін азайту шаралары айқындалды. NEET-жастарды азайту бойынша әлемдік тәжірибені талдау нәтижесінде мынадай бағыттарды бөлуге мүмкіндік берді: жалақыны субсидиялау бағдарламалары; қоғамдық жұмыстар бағдарламалары; жұмыспен қамтудың икемді нысандарын дамыту; жастар кәсіпкерлігін дамыту; жастарға арналған білім беру бағдарламалары.

**Кілт сөздер:** NEET-жастары, еңбек нарығы, жастар, жастардың жұмыспен қамтылуы, құрылымдық өзгерістер, экономикалық белсенді қызмет, жастардың жұмыссыздығы, NEET көрсеткіші.

**М.Р. Газизова, Ж.С. Хусаинова, Е.А. Вечкинзова, Г.М. Абауова**

### **Характеристика и особенности NEET-молодежи в контексте странового анализа**

#### **Аннотация**

**Цель:** Целью настоящего исследования является выявление мер по сокращению NEET-молодёжи на основе изучения международного опыта.

**Методы:** Методы системного, динамического, структурного и корреляционного анализа.

**Результаты:** Молодёжь является особой социально-демографической группой, которая имеет сложную внутреннюю структуру. Сегодня увеличение количества молодых людей, не вовлеченных в трудовую и образовательную сферы (NEET — Not in Education, Employment, or Training), требует определенных мер по минимизации данной группы.

**Выводы:** В результате исследования был получен материал, анализ которого позволил заключить, что показатели NEET-молодежи и молодежной безработицы имеют сильную взаимосвязь для многих стран. На основе исследования структуры NEET-молодежи в контексте странового анализа определены меры минимизации сегмента NEET-молодежь. В результате анализа зарубежного опыта по минимизации NEET-молодежи позволил выделить следующие направления: программы субсидирования заработной платы; программы общественных работ; развитие гибких форм занятости; развитие молодежного предпринимательства; образовательные программы для молодежи.

*Ключевые слова:* NEET-молодежь, рынок труда, молодежь, молодежная занятость, структурные изменения, экономическая активная деятельность, молодежная безработица, показатели NEET.

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