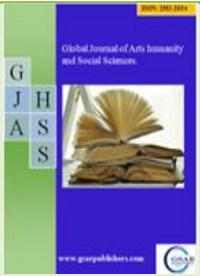
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## Geostrategic changes in the world economy: Global challenges and tendencies for young generations

*The influence of the socio-economic environment and personal socio-psychological factors on the risk behavior and health of young people in modern society*

By

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### Abstract

The development of youth policy plays an important role in shaping modern society. In recent years, researchers and experts in the field of social and health policy have focused their attention on the problem of risk factors for adolescent health and disorders in individual and social behavior.

A risk-based approach to public health analysis that relies on 'official' notions of health not only undermines the potentially diverse meanings that young people associate with the concept of health, but also tends to problematize and pathologize young people and their health. However, the evidence on young people's health around the world confirms the concern and the need for systemic change to improve the situation immediately.

The aim of this work was to provide an overview of modern publications on the risk behavior of young people and the state of mental health, to identify the most typical relevant problems of young people and to determine the influence of the socio-economic environment on certain negative manifestations in youth society.

In conclusion, we should focus on building positive social-emotional skills in the behavior of children and adolescents and them with psychosocial support in schools and other public institutions. These measures can help to strengthen mental health and reduce risk behaviors. Programs aimed at strengthening effective relationships between adolescents and their families and improving the quality of the home environment are also important. When negative problems arise, competent and caring social and medical workers, psychologists, teachers and educators, parents and relatives should recognize and eliminate them in time. An active youth policy in education and the labor market should also play an important role. It is necessary to take measures to ensure that all young people are prepared to successfully participate in active social life and develop their professional and social skills.

**Keywords:** health, mental health, risk behavior, youth policy

Influence of the socio-economic environment and personal socio-psychological factors on the risk behavior and health of young people in modern society

Concern about the risks associated with young people's health dominates the current public health discourse on young people's health. By relying on 'official' notions of health, a risk-based public health approach not only downplays the potentially different



meanings that young people attach to health, but also tends to problematize and pathologize young people and their health. However, the evidence on the health status of young people around the world confirms the concern and the need for systemic change to improve the situation immediately.

This paper aims to review recent publications on youth risk behavior and mental health to identify the most typical problems of young people and the impact of the socio-economic environment on certain negative phenomena in youth society.

According to the OECD<sup>(1)</sup>, for example, more than 1.8 million young people aged 15 to 24 died each year in 2008, mostly from causes other than alcohol,

<sup>1</sup> Fact sheet: Health of young people. Access: <https://social.un.org/youthyear/docs/who-youth-health.pdf>.

that can be prevented. Around 16 million girls between the ages of 15 and 19 give birth every year. Young people aged 15 to 24 accounted for 40% of all new HIV infections among adults in 2008. Most or at least 20% of young people have a mental health problem during the year, usually depression or anxiety. An estimated 150 million young people smoke tobacco. Every day, about 565 young people between the ages of 10 and 29 die due to interpersonal conflict and violence. Around 1,000 young people die every day as a result of injuries sustained in road traffic accidents.

But even in 2020, the situation has not fundamentally changed, although there have been some improvements. More than 1.5 million adolescents and young people aged 10 to 24 died in 2020 (almost 5,000 per day). As you can see, these are 300,000 fewer than in 2008, with adolescents aged 10-14 having the lowest risk of death of all age groups. Trauma (including injuries from road traffic accidents and drowning), violence, self-harm and maternal problems are the main causes of death in adolescents and young adults. Half of all mental disorders in adulthood begin before the age of 14, yet most cases go unrecognized and untreated. Early onset of substance use is associated with a higher risk of developing addiction and other problems in adulthood, and younger people are disproportionately affected by substance use compared to older people. In 2020, there were 41 births per 1,000 girls aged 15-19 worldwide.<sup>2</sup>

Particular attention should be paid to the state of young people's mental health. Depression is known to be one of the leading causes of illness and disability among young people, and suicide is the second leading cause of death among 15-19 year olds<sup>3</sup>. Mental illness accounts for 16% of the global burden of disease and injury in people aged 10-19 years. Half of all mental disorders in adulthood begin before the age of 14, but most cases go undiagnosed and untreated. Many factors influence the well-being and mental health of adolescents, including the socioeconomic environment, which affects individual personality and behavior. Violence, poverty, stigmatization, exclusion and living in humanitarian and unstable conditions can increase the risk of

developing mental health problems. The consequences of untreated mental health problems in adolescents extend into adulthood, worsening both physical and mental health and limiting the ability to lead a fulfilling life as an adult.

Other important topics are alcohol and drug consumption among young people. Alcohol consumption among young people is a serious problem in many countries. It can impair self-control and lead to risky behavior such as unprotected sex or dangerous driving. It is one of the main causes of injuries (including

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/adolescents-health-risks-and-solutions>

<sup>3</sup> Liu L, Villavicencio F, Yeung D et al. National, regional and global causes of mortality in 5-19 year olds from 2000 to 2019: a systematic analysis. *Lancet Glob Health* 2022;10:e337-47.

including road traffic accidents), violence and premature death. It can also lead to health problems later in life and affect life expectancy. Globally, more than a quarter of all 15-19 year olds drink alcohol, which equates to 155 million young people. The prevalence of episodic alcohol use among young people aged 15-19 was 13.6% in 2016, with males at the highest risk. Cannabis is the most commonly used psychoactive drug among young people: Around 4.7% of 15 to 16-year-olds used this drug at least once in 2018. Alcohol and drug use in children and adolescents is associated with neurocognitive changes that can lead to behavioral, emotional, social and academic problems later in life.

It should be noted that an unfavorable socio-economic environment has a significant influence on the increase in risky behavior among young people. Studies show, for example, that there is a link between young people who have been unemployed for more than a year and property crime. Most of these young people were involved in selling drugs such as heroin, marijuana and other dangerous drugs because they had the opportunity to make "quick money". According to a study published in *Econometrica* by Diogo Britto, Paolo Pinotti (CLEAN Bocconi Baffi-CAREFIN Centre) and Breno Sampaio (Federal University of Pernambuco), mass layoffs during a crisis can lead to an increase in crime<sup>4</sup>. Using individual data on the population of male workers and criminal proceedings in Brazil for the period 2009-2017, these authors found that job loss due to mass layoffs led to a 23% increase in the probability of criminal prosecution. The observed effect reflected an increase in both economically motivated crime (+43%) and violent crime (+17%), and it was significantly stronger for groups that were more likely to have little money after losing their job. This was particularly true for young workers and workers with low levels of employment, few years of employment and low levels of education. However, according to the study by these authors, the likelihood of committing a crime significantly for all groups, including workers with above-average incomes, albeit to a lesser extent. There was also a spillover effect of loss of parental care on children's behavior. In particular, the probability of committing a

crime increased by an average of 18% in the group of children of internally displaced persons and migrants. Although a connection between unemployment and crime has already been established in theory, empirical evidence has always been scarce due to a lack of individual data. However, the extensive data set used by these authors allowed them to compare the behavior of workers displaced by mass layoffs with workers with the same characteristics who were not displaced or migrated.

<sup>4</sup>Diogo G. C. Britto et al, *The Effect of Job Loss and Unemployment Insurance on Crime in Brazil*, *Econometrica* (2022). DOI: 10.3982/ECTA18984

The above-mentioned study found that the likelihood of criminal prosecution increased immediately after job loss and remained constant in the following years, unless the employee was covered by state unemployment insurance that provided 80% of wages for three to five months after dismissal. But even in this case, the mitigating effect disappears when the insurance expires. An active labor market policy aimed at speeding up employees' return to work is therefore an even more acute problem that needs to be tackled systematically.

In a modern welfare state, there is a growing need for support for people who are vulnerable and prone to risky behavior that is not in line with society's requirements. In addition, there has been a recent increase in disability and chronic illness associated with poverty and social exclusion. Many young people in low-income countries are unemployed, although work and employment are among the most important sources of income and social status. However, people with disabilities, chronic illnesses and mental health problems have disproportionately low employment rates in many developed economies. Short and long-term disabilities impose significant economic and social costs on individuals and society (OECD, 2010).

Neoliberal ideologies, which have been the dominant political ideologies of most Western countries in recent decades, have prioritized economic growth as the main goal (Cook, 2012; Kotz, 2017). It is clear that economic growth is important for public health, but in developed countries the distribution of money has a greater impact on public health than GDP (Piketty Wilkinson, 2015; Rosling et al., 2018). Neoliberalism sees competition as a defining feature of human relationships. Increased demands are placed on people who claim social benefits.

The historical background of social policy is linked to the measures taken by the state to protect workers and provide social security. On the one hand, the industrial revolution was an economic revolution; on the other, it exacerbated social problems. In the search for solutions to the poverty and social imbalances caused by industrialization, social policy attempted to strike a balance between the economy and social policy (Esping- Andersen, 2017). Each year, more than 3 million children are abused or neglected in the United States<sup>5</sup>. In Pennsylvania, for example, more than 40,000 cases of child abuse are reported to police, and about 1 in

1,000 children are abused or neglected.

<sup>5</sup>Rizvi MB, Connors GP, King KC, Lopez RA, Rabiner J. *Pennsylvania Child Abuse Recognition and Reporting*. 2022 Nov 26. In: *StatPearls [Internet]*. Treasure Island (FL): StatPearls Publishing; 2022 Jan-. AVAILABLE AT: 33351411.

Cases identified as Protective Services (CPS) require an investigation because the alleged acts or omissions are identified as one of 10 categories of abuse. Cases identified as GPS require an assessment of services and supports. In these cases, the act or omission is harmful to the child but does not fall into one of the 10 categories of abuse. These services can help parents recognize and address the circumstances that are harmful to their children. The main difference between CPS and GPS (General Protective Services) is that CPS provides services and interventions for cases of child maltreatment, while GPS provides services for cases that require protective services.

Let's look at the most common examples of child abuse<sup>6</sup>: 1) Causing bodily harm to a child through a recent act or omission; 2) Contriving, simulating, or intentionally exaggerating or inducing medical symptoms or illness resulting in potentially harmful medical examination or treatment of a child by any recent act; 3) Causing or substantially contributing to serious emotional harm to a child by any act or omission or any serious act or omission; 4) Causing sexual abuse or exploitation of a child by any recent act or omission; 5) Causing a reasonable likelihood of bodily injury to a child by any recent act or omission; 6) Causing a likelihood of sexual abuse or exploitation of a child by any recent act or omission; 7) Causing serious neglect of a child; 8) Contributing to the harm of a child by any recent act or omission; 9) Causing the death of a child by any recent act or omission; 10) Involving a child in a severe form of human or sex trafficking.

Suicidality (SI), often referred to as suicidal thoughts or ideation, is a broad term that describes a range of thoughts, wishes and concerns related to death and suicide. There is no universally accepted, standardized definition of suicidal ideation, which presents clinicians, researchers and educators with ever-changing challenges. For example, different definitions of suicidal ideation are often used in different studies. This makes it difficult to compare the results of different studies and is often cited as a limitation in meta-analyses of suicidality. Some definitions of suicidal ideation include discussion of suicide planning, while others consider planning to be a separate stage.

A systematic review of numerous interprofessional clinical guidelines on suicide has revealed no consensus on a clinical gold standard for the assessment and treatment of people at risk of suicide or suicidal behavior. Although there are scales to measure depression, SUDs, and suicide risk, none of them provide a score that

<sup>6</sup>Rizvi MB, Connors GP, King KC, Lopez RA, Rabiner J. *Pennsylvania Child Abuse Recognition and Reporting*. 2022 Nov 26. In: *StatPearls [Internet]*. Treasure Island (FL): StatPearls Publishing; 2022 Jan-.

AVAILABLE AT: 33351411.

is sufficiently reliable or clinically useful to predict the very small subset of suicidal individuals whose death by suicide is imminent or who are at high risk of attempting suicide. It is clear that suicidal ideation "waxes and wanes", so the extent and characteristics of SU vary greatly. It is crucial for healthcare professionals to recognize that SU is a heterogeneous phenomenon. It varies in intensity, duration and type. Just as there is no "typical" suicide victim, there are no "typical" suicidal thoughts and ideations. Unfortunately, SU is often documented in binary form in medical records Yes/No", although it can include anything from a fleeting desire to fall asleep and never wake up, to extremely distressing self-destructive worries fueled by delusions. It is therefore important for all healthcare professionals to carefully assess and monitor the pattern, intensity, nature and impact of a person's SUD and to document this appropriately. It is also important to reassess SU frequently due to its fluctuating nature.

A group of American scientists (Harmer et al., 2022) investigated the extent of fluctuations in SU using the momentary environmental assessment method<sup>7</sup>. Individuals who had attempted suicide and a sample of patients with suicidal thoughts recorded the intensity of their suicidal thoughts every hour for four weeks. Analysis of this data showed wide fluctuations in the intensity of SU in all participants. All participants had SU that fluctuated up or down by one standard deviation on most days. For many, the range of fluctuation within a few hours on the same day was one standard deviation. This finding is important for all health professionals and psychologists as it emphasizes the need to monitor fluctuations and does not rule out the possibility of a sudden increase in suicidal ideation, even if the current level is moderate and the person is currently in control. In addition, SUDs are considered a more meaningful indicator of lifetime suicide risk than immediate risk, so assessments should include a description of the characteristics and impact of previous SUDs as well as current SUDs.

The Center for Behavioural Health Statistics in the United States has published the results of the US National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH)<sup>8</sup>. Piscopo's 2017 publication summarizes the results of surveys from 2009 to 2014, which show that 6 % of 18 to 25-year-olds answered the question: "Have you seriously thought about killing yourself in the last 12 months?"

<sup>7</sup>Harmer B, Lee S, Duong TVH, Saadabadi A. Suicidal ideation. 2022 May 18. In: StatPearls [Internet]. Treasure Island (FL): StatPearls Publishing; 2022 Jan. AVAILABLE AT: 33351435.

<sup>8</sup>Harmer B, Lee S, Duong TVH, Saadabadi A. Suicidal ideation. 2022 May 18. In: StatPearls [Internet]. Treasure Island (FL): StatPearls Publishing; 2022 Jan. AVAILABLE AT: 33351435.

Suicide. Out of 31 Americans with SUD, only one person attempts suicide. As the authors note, the suicide mortality rate also depends on gender, age, ethnicity and other demographic variables. Further evidence of the weak link between reported SUD and fatal suicide

becomes clear when comparing the NSDUH results with mortality data. The suicide rate of young people attempting suicide in the 18-25 age group is around 17.5 per 100,000 for males and 4 per 100,000 for females.

Spencer analyzed the health problems of young people and the potential risks of their behavior (Spencer, 2013)<sup>9</sup>. A study was conducted involving young people aged 15-16 years in England (sample size n = 55) and the survey results were used to determine young people's understanding of health and associated risks. The author utilized group discussions, individual interviews, and observations in the school and surrounding communities to collect the data on which the study's findings are based. This article shows how the adolescents in this study attached meaning to the concepts of 'being happy' and 'having fun' and how the dominant constructions of adolescence as a time of risk were perceived and reproduced by the adolescents themselves to create and maintain their differentiation from other adolescents.

The impact of these differences on young people's health and opportunities to strengthen their health was highlighted, and it became clear that young people prefer a more positive approach to their health and understand the importance of their shared social position in promoting health in society.

Another study by Zimmermann (2010) examined the frequency of risk-taking behavior in Swiss adolescents and its relationship to risk perception, impulsivity and emotion regulation

<sup>10</sup>The study involved 144 subjects (aged 14 to 20 years) who completed the Risk Perception Scale (RIPS-R), the Impulsive Behavior Scale (UPPS), the 20-item Toronto Alexithymia Scale (TAS-20) and the 20-item Measure of Openness to Emotional Experiences (DOE-20). Results showed that greater perceived usefulness and higher levels of sensation-seeking were associated with greater engagement in risk-taking behavior, which is essentially a socially learned behavior.

The results of the study contributed to the psychological understanding of the factors associated with risky behavior in adolescence.

<sup>9</sup>Grace Spencer (2013) *The 'healthy self' and the 'risky' young Other: young people's interpretations of health and health-related risks. Health, Risk & Society* 5:6-38, 449-462.  
 In contrast, the lowest SU rate was 1.6% among people aged 65 and over.

<sup>10</sup>Grégoire Zimmermann (2010) *Risk perception, emotion regulation and impulsivity as predictors of risk behavior among adolescents in Switzerland. Journal of Youth Studies* 13:1, pp. 83-99.

The limitations and implications of these findings for developmental theories, research and prevention are outlined.

Another interesting study by a group of researchers (Bell et al., 2008) aimed to create a conceptual model of adolescent risk behavior based on a sufficiently large amount of empirical data that could then be used for public health services across the country<sup>11</sup>.

This paper aims to explore the challenges and opportunities of





using quantitative big data analysis to create complex constructs to support the development of holistic youth policy. The paper describes a translational research model developed using data from a survey of 5122 students in Tasmania in 8th and 10th grades. This model provides three levels of translation of data analysis to meet the requirements of holistic youth policy: broad directions on how services can be linked and/or disconnected; cross-service directions targeting specific risk behaviors; and a range of interventions for specific areas of risk. The implementation model is described with reference to the specific policy challenges of considering which services should be separate and which can be combined, in what way and for what purpose.

The authors note that the model simplifies a complex process and is incomplete; however, it raises deeper questions about twenty-first century research practice in the study of youth policy and the characteristics of contemporary youth. The model provides a framework for examining why other diagnostic models commonly used in research practice to address complex issues such as youth risk taking may be inadequate to meet the needs of policy makers. The safety of children during their learning and development is a major concern for parents, teachers and legislators. Legislation governing the provision of early childhood services includes guidelines and procedures to reduce the likelihood of injury to children and unsafe environments. However, these strategies only address aspects of the physical environment that can be influenced to protect children, not aspects of individual child behavior that may contribute to unintentional injuries. One such factor is children's risky behavior. An article by Little (2006)<sup>12</sup> provides a critical review of the current literature on risk-taking in the context of assessing safe learning environments for children. Components of risk-taking, including sensemaking and optimism, and contributing factors such as gender are discussed,

<sup>11</sup> Erica Bell, Reg Allen, David Hogan, Carissa Martinez (2008) Why risk irrelevance? A translational research model for youth risk-taking data, *Journal of Youth Studies* 11:4, pp. 461-471.

<sup>12</sup> Helen Little (2006) Children's risk-taking behavior: implications for early childhood policy and practice, *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 14:2, 141-154, DOI: 10.1080/09669760600661427

temperament and parental socialization practices, are examined in light of current legislation and reporting documents relating to early childhood services in the Australian state of New South Wales. The aim is to examine the role that these factors play in reducing risk to children and to identify areas for future research. The following study investigated whether it is possible to adapt different indicators and measure them in relation to different aspects of adolescent behavior<sup>13</sup>. The authors evaluated the indicator by testing the hypothesis that the importance of the indicator in adolescents is largely related to positive achievement outcomes and motivational orientations and behavioral tendencies. A sample of 206 high school students was analyzed and used to develop a modified version of the importance index and to create a

template for adaptive learning scales and a utility function measure. School risk behaviors and social risk behaviors were also assessed. The study asked survey participants to define measures of hope and loneliness based on their own experiences. Psychometric analysis led to the development of two short additional four-point importance scales. These scales measured the overall importance of one indicator and the importance of another indicator by the value placed on the other indicators. Correlation and regression analyses revealed that both importance factors were associated with a positive academic orientation and better grades. Importance was also associated with lower risk-taking behavior, lower levels of loneliness, and higher levels of hope. Gender differences were found in levels of importance and correlates of importance. Results were discussed in terms of the impact of focusing on promoting an adaptive academic orientation on improving students' self-regulation and ability to be adaptive and resilient.

A study by an Australian research group (Finch et al., 2020) investigated psychological capital (PsyCap)<sup>(14)</sup>, which comprises the positive psychological resources of hope, efficacy, resilience and optimism (HERO) and is empirically strongly associated with improved well-being and a reduction in mental health symptoms in adult samples. Recent research on the PsyCap in students has also shown a preliminary positive relationship between the PsyCap and student well-being. The present study examined the role of the PsyCap-HERO construct and its relationship to mental health symptoms and subjective well-being in school-aged children and adolescents (9-14 years). Objective.

<sup>13</sup> Somers, C. L., Gill-Scalcucci, S., Flett, G. L., & Nepon, T. (2022). The usefulness of short Mattering subscales for adolescents: Associations with learning motivations, achievement, executive function, hope, loneliness, and risk behaviors. *Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment*, 40(1), 108-124.

<sup>14</sup> Finch J, Farrell LJ, Waters AM. Searching for the HERO in Youth: Does Psychological Capital (PsyCap) Predict Mental Health Symptoms and Subjective Wellbeing in Australian School-Aged Children and Adolescents? *Child Psychiatry Hum Dev*. 2020 Dec;51(6):1025-1036.

A sample of Australian school children (N = 456, mean age = 11.54, SD = 1.20, 47% female respondents) was used to assess measures of hope, efficacy, resilience, optimism, well-being, anxiety and depression that had previously been well validated in school samples. Significant associations were found between each HERO construct and developmental and well-being factors or, conversely, anxiety and depression symptoms in the expected direction, and, importantly, the combination of HERO constructs proved to be a stronger predictor of higher student achievement and lower anxiety and depression symptoms. The results suggest that the Student PsyCap may be an important area of research for schools, policy makers, clinicians, and researchers seeking to identify positive psychological resources in young people that can prevent poor mental health and promote future well-being.

In another important study, a group of researchers investigated the relationship between risk behaviors and academic self-efficacy, specifically problematic Internet use among adolescent university

students, and whether problematic Internet use varies according to variables such as gender, computer ownership, and living with family<sup>15</sup>. The study was conducted with 556 students from the Faculty of Education at Karadeniz Fatih Technical University in Turkey. Data were collected using the Problematic Internet Use Scale, the Adolescent Risk Taking Questionnaire, the Academic Self-Efficacy Scale and the Personal Information Collection Form. Pearson's correlation analysis revealed a significant positive correlation between problematic internet use and risk-taking behavior ( $r=0.37$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) and a significant negative correlation between problematic internet use and academic self-efficacy ( $r=-0.12$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Multiple regression analysis showed that risk behaviors and academic self-efficacy accounted for 14% of the total variance in problematic Internet use ( $F(2, 553)=46.11$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). The individual contributions to the model of risk taking ( $\text{Beta}=0.37$ ) and academic self-efficacy ( $\text{Beta}=-0.09$ ) are significant. Risk-taking and academic self-efficacy thus proved to be important predictors of problematic Internet use.

Prilleltensky (2020) conducted an interesting study on young people's definition of 'value' as an ideal state consisting of two complementary psychological experiences: feeling valued and adding value<sup>16</sup>. People can feel valued and they can add value to themselves, others, work and the community. To satisfy the need for meaning, one must strike a balance between feeling valued and adding value. one must strike a balance between adding value to oneself and adding value to

ideology of recent decades and its impact on the behavior and values of different age groups<sup>17</sup>. According to the author, neoliberalism and the associated neoliberal policies have led to a decline in the sense of meaningfulness for several groups in society, at least for people outside the labor market. This has also affected vocational rehabilitation programs in welfare states such as Norway. Stricter requirements are imposed on benefit recipients and forced labor is increasingly used. The problem with this policy is that it assumes that welfare recipients must make amends and are to blame for their unemployment. However, most people who need vocational rehabilitation have lived in poor conditions since childhood and are unable to complete training and find a job for reasons beyond their control. They often feel unappreciated and have experienced that they cannot contribute. The problem with victim blaming is that it reinforces feelings of worthlessness and therefore reduces their ability to believe that they can contribute anything of value. So the author shows that such a policy is counterproductive. As a result, some even respond to this humiliating pressure by becoming even more depressed or aggressive. To make vocational rehabilitation programs effective, we need to ensure that everyone who needs them feels valued, and we need to harmonize the political, scientific and professional basis of social policy. We need to strike a balance between adding value to oneself and the opportunity to add value to others, work and the community. The value of the individual in

<sup>15</sup> Odacı H. (2013). Risk behaviors and academic self-efficacy as variables for problematic Internet use among adolescent university students. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 35(1), 183-187.

<sup>16</sup> Prilleltensky I. *Mattering at the intersection of psychology, philosophy and politics*. *Am J Community Psychol*. 2020 Mar;65(1- 2):16-34. doi: 10.1002/ajcp.12368. Epub 2019 Aug 13. PMID: 31407358.

Value for others. Unfortunately, the prevailing neoliberal philosophy does not support the values necessary to ensure experiences of meaningfulness. While a healthy and just society would require a balance between values for personal, familial and collective well-being, the prevailing philosophy in many parts of the world favors personal values at the expense of familial and collective values. As the author points out, neoliberal economic and social policies have caused millions people to lose their sense of purpose. Some people react to the cultural pressure to achieve a higher status by becoming depressed or aggressive. Some marginalized groups, in turn, support xenophobic, nationalist and populist policies in an attempt to restore a sense of meaning. To ensure that everyone matters, the psychology, philosophy and politics of meaning must be reconciled. Political struggles for fair and equitable distribution take place in social movements and in the political arena. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the possible risks and perspectives of socio-economic and cultural-political efforts related to young people, the formation of their values, moral behaviors, etc.

Another study by S. Krokstad analyzed the prevailing political

<sup>17</sup> Krokstad S. *Mattering as a political, scientific and professional basis for welfare services*. *Front Psychol*. 2021 Sep 22;12:734630.

The value of social services in society is proposed as a value that is significantly influenced by various socio-economic factors, which is why the political, scientific and professional dimensions of the social services in question should be taken into account.

In response to this difficult situation, the WHO emphasized the need to implement systematic measures and continuous monitoring to improve the health of young people.

The following measures were mentioned:

- Strengthening epidemiology: Identifying the number of young people who die, become ill or are injured and the number who engage in risk behaviors that could lead to future illness or injury. This includes assessing factors in the community that hinder or promote the health and development of young people.
- Gain insights for program actions: Identify the most effective ways to promote young people's health, prevent health problems and respond to them when they occur.
- Developing methods and tools: creating the means by which the findings can be applied in the countries.
- Capacity building: It must be ensured that there are people and institutions that can apply these instruments in the countries.

- Advocacy: Raising awareness of problems among the general public and specific groups.
- Consensus building: Creating a common understanding between the partners and a shared sense of what needs to be done.
- Supporting countries in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of strategies and programs.

Promoting the social and emotional skills of children and young people and providing psychosocial support in schools and other community settings can help to promote mental health. Programs aimed at strengthening the bonds between adolescents and their families and improving the quality of the home environment are also important. When problems arise, they should be identified and addressed in a timely manner by competent and caring social and health workers, psychologists, teachers and caregivers, parents and relatives.

The OECD has drawn attention to the need to take action to ensure that all young people are prepared for successful participation in active society, and experts from this organization have developed the following recommendations for strategies to improve youth policies<sup>18</sup>:

- Ensure equal access to high-quality formal, non-formal and informal learning to equip young people with the key skills for lifelong learning and active participation in society,

<sup>18</sup><https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-0474>

These include basic skills (reading, writing, arithmetic and problem solving) as well as social, civic, emotional, entrepreneurial, financial, communication, creative and language skills;

- Promote wellbeing in education and training settings, including by teaching young people social and emotional skills and coping strategies to protect themselves from stress and the impact of adversity on wellbeing;
- Eliminate all barriers, systemic discrimination, stereotypes and prejudices and their intersections so that all young people can enjoy the same opportunities and aspirations regardless of their background;
- Developing flexible and modular learning pathways to equip young people and future generations with the skills they need to achieve their personal goals and make the transition into education and the changing world of work.

Therefore, the recommendations are also relevant to the situation in Ukraine, where a number of issues to improve young people's health should be systematically addressed, including psychological support and preservation of young people's mental health, measures to combat drug trafficking and preventive programs to

reduce drug use among young people, promotion of healthy lifestyles, opportunities for education and acquisition of promising professions in the labor market.

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