

## **Getting to Know About the NEET Phenomenon in Indonesia (Youth Who are Not in Employment, Not in Education, and Not in Training)**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study aims to analyze the concepts and profiles of NEET (Not in Employment Education and Training) youth in Indonesia and explain the impact of NEET status by using descriptive analysis methods from publications sourced from the Central Bureau of Statistics, ILO, and Global Employment Trends for Youth and empirical studies relating to youth and employment. The number of NEETs in Indonesia is quite high and exceeds the average in the Southeast Asia and Pacific region. Dominated by women and SMK graduates. However, if analyzing the number of NEETs by removing those who are unemployed and only counting youth who are outside the labor force or inactivity, different results are obtained. In the long term, NEET has a negative impact not only on NEET youth themselves but also on the social and community environment such as difficult transitions, scarring effects, depreciation of human capital and social capital, the impact on mental and physical health, and crime.

**Keywords:** NEET, youth, inactive, human capital, employment

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The phenomenon of lack of decent work opportunities for young people has become a concern throughout the world. Based on ILO (2017) estimates in Global Employment Trends for Youth 2017, there were 70.9 million unemployed youth worldwide in 2017 and this is expected to increase to 71.1 million in 2018 (ILO, 2017). In developing countries the youth unemployment rate is expected to remain stable at 9.5 percent in 2017 and 2018. However, considering the large group of young people entering the workforce each year, the number of youth unemployed in developing countries is projected to increase half a million between 2016 and 2018. Unemployment indicators, however, do not fully capture the problems facing youth. In addition to the unemployed, among young people some have left education and are also not included in labor market statistics. In many countries, there are several young people who are not in the workforce and are not in education or training. Youth with this condition are often referred to as NEET (Not in Employment Education and Training).

The acronym NEET first appeared in England in the late 1980s (Coles et al. 2002). Recently, NEET has become an important concern, especially because it is one of the goals

of SDGs (sustainable development goals) goal 8, namely Promoting Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Growth, Productive and Comprehensive Employment Opportunities, and Decent Work for All. Included in target (8.5) is that by 2030, full and productive decent work for all women and men, including young people and people with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value. (8.6) By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of young people who are not in work, in education or training (NEET).

Several literatures have researched the determinants and consequences of NEET status, especially in developed and high-income countries, especially in European countries. The global financial crisis in 2008-2013 has had a significant impact on youth unemployment and increasing NEET status in most countries in Europe. However, little is known about the situation of NEET youth in developing countries. For this reason, this article aims to fill this gap by looking at the situation in developing countries or middle-income countries such as Indonesia.

Another problem is that there is still no international standard regarding the definition of NEET (ILO, 2015). This often leads to misinterpretation and unclear measurements in capturing youth who are outside the labor force (not in the labor force). It tends to overlap with the concept of youth unemployment which is already included in the unemployment indicator. This article aims to find out and explain the picture of the condition of NEET in Indonesia and the consequences of youth who have NEET status. This article is structured as follows. Section 2 will discuss the theoretical framework and empirical studies related to NEET youth. Part 3 explains the trends and description of NEET youth in Indonesia as well as an analysis of the NEET concept. Section 4 will summarize the impact of NEET. Finally, section 5 concludes and issues that may arise for future research. As mentioned earlier there is no international standard regarding the definition of NEET. Interpretations of NEET concepts vary greatly depending on the organization or country. However, according to the ILO (2015), the concept of NEET is important to be able to address vulnerable youth which includes issues of unemployment, leaving school and hopelessness in the labor market. The NEET indicator is often misunderstood, resulting in misinterpretation. The NEET indicator is ambiguous because it does not really measure what it wants to measure, therefore you need to be careful in interpreting the indicator.

Before examining the concept of NEET, we will first explain the definition of youth. Youth is someone aged between 15 and 24 years, without prejudice to other definitions in member countries (United Nations, 2007). The operational definition of youth varies for each country depending on socio-cultural, institutional, economic and political factors. In Indonesia, based on Law no. 40 of 2009, youth are Indonesian citizens aged 16 to 30 years who are entering an important period of growth and development. In this article, we will use the UN definition, namely youth are those aged 15-24 years. According to Understanding Children's Work (2013) NEET are young people who are not involved in education, work or training which is used as a measure of marginalized and segregated youth in developed countries. According to UCW (2013) NEET includes unemployed youth and those outside the workforce who are not in school. This includes young people who have given up looking for work or are unwilling to join the job market. AFDB (2012) defines NEET as a group consisting of the unemployed, people who are hopeless, and those who are inactive or not in the labor force. OECD (2013) states that having a small number of individuals with NEET status is a sign of a good or healthy transition from school to work. According to Quintini & Martin (2014) the NEET figure is a better measure that reflects economic reality by capturing the risk of unemployment and inactivity. Many young people's inactivity is the result of hopelessness and marginalization, reflecting the accumulation of several disadvantages such as lack of qualifications, health issues, poverty and other forms of social exclusion. Likewise, Eurofound (2012b) states that NEETs are people aged between 15-24 years, regardless of their level of education, are not involved in work or education so are at high risk of being excluded from the labor and social markets. Based on ILO (2015) NEET rate is the percentage of the population of a given age group and sex who is not employed

and not involved in further education or training. High NEET figures when compared with unemployment figures can mean that many young people are discouraged workers or do not have access to education or training. Youth do not increase their future employability through investment in skills nor through experience gained in the workforce, NEETs risk both labor market and social exclusion.

Based on the ILO (2015), the numerator in the NEET indicator includes 2 conditions: (i) those who are not working (i.e. unemployed or inactive), and (ii) those who have not received education or training in the 4 weeks before the survey. Meanwhile, the denominator in the NEET indicator is the total population of the same age and gender group. If written in formula form it is as follows:

$$\text{NEET rate (\%)} = \frac{(\text{Number of youth} - \text{number of youth in employment} + \text{number of youth not in employment who are in education or training})}{\text{Total number of youth}} \times 100$$

A simpler version of the definition used in the ILO analysis of the School To Work Transition Survey is unemployed non-students + inactive non-students/ youth population. Nonrespondents are not excluded from the denominator. Studies regarding NEET have been widely researched in European countries, such as research by Quintano, Mazzocchi, & Rocca (2018) entitled *The Determinants of Italian NEETs and The Effect of Economic Crisis*. This research is motivated by the increasing proportion of NEET youth in most European countries due to the crisis. global economy and finance. Italy experienced the highest increase in Europe. Data for 2005-2015 shows an increase of 6 percent from 21 percent to 26.8 percent. This study aims to investigate the determinants of NEET status in Italy before and after the economic crisis.

By using descriptive analysis and probit models, the research results show that the share of NEET is higher among women, residents of the South and Isles and immigrants by controlling for the variables of education level and field of study. The economic crisis worsened the conditions of young people and increased social inequality. The share of NEET increased especially among young people with low education and parents who also had low education. In analyses that aim to reduce the share of NEET, it is necessary to differentiate between unemployed and inactive. When NEETs are looking for work, the focus must be on the job market and the educational process, whereas for inactive ones, apart from the educational process, other social factors also play an important role. Programs promoted by the EU such as youth guarantee schemes, consisting of apprenticeship and training programs or supporting young people to start businesses, have not achieved sufficient results.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Neet" stands for "not in education, employment, or training." it's a term commonly used in discussions about youth unemployment or in social welfare contexts to describe individuals who are not engaged in any formal education, employment, or vocational training programs.. The "not in education, employment, or training" (neet) phenomenon is more of a sociological and economic observation than a formal theory. It refers to a situation where individuals, typically young people, are not actively involved in education, employment, or vocational training. The neet category encompasses a diverse range of circumstances, including unemployment, underemployment, and disengagement from educational pursuits. While not a theory in itself, the neet concept is often discussed within broader theoretical frameworks related to labor markets, education systems, and social policy. Sociologists, economists, and policymakers may analyze neet trends to understand factors such as youth transitions from school to work, economic opportunities, educational attainment, social inclusion, and labor market dynamics. The neet phenomenon can be influenced by various factors, including economic conditions, educational opportunities, social norms, government policies, and individual characteristics. Understanding and addressing neet trends can be crucial for designing

effective interventions to promote youth employment, education, and social inclusion.

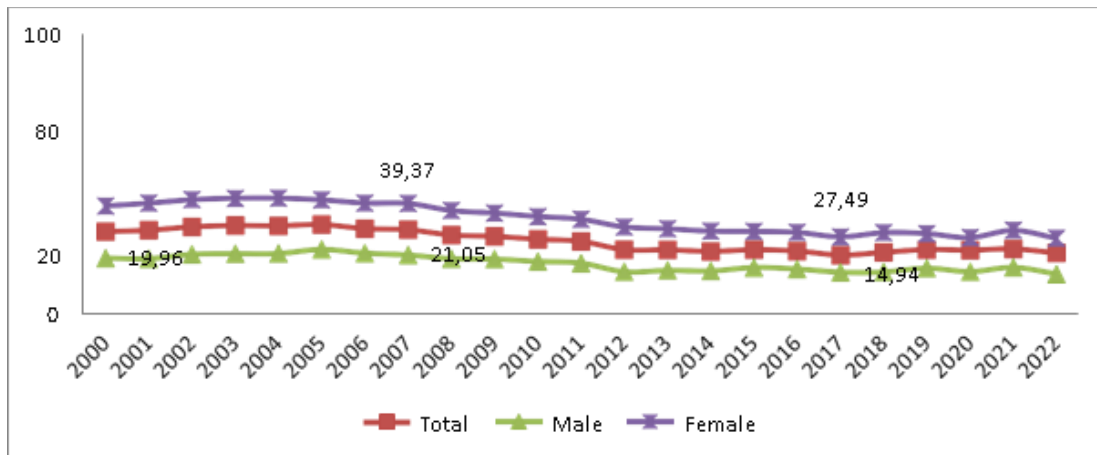
## METHODS

This study uses descriptive analysis methods from secondary data and existing publications. The secondary data used comes from the Central Statistics Agency, ILO, and Global Employment Trends for Youth. This study also uses sources from books, journals, scientific articles, newspapers, and websites related to youth and employment.

## RESULTS

Based on several definitions of NEET that have been previously stated, NEET includes those who are young unemployed, meaning those who are part of the labor force. The global youth unemployment rate has remained at 13.1 percent over the past few years. However, trends vary between regions. The increase from 2016 to 2022 is mainly driven by the youth unemployment situation in regions such as Latin America and the Caribbean, Central Asia and West Asia, and Southeast Asia and the Pacific. The Southeast Asia and Pacific region is expected to show the second largest increase in youth unemployment rates, from 11.7 percent in 2016 to 12.0 percent in 2021 and reaching 12.2 percent in 2022. Apart from some progress in 2021, the figures Youth unemployment will remain high in Indonesia, and is projected to increase also in Malaysia and the Philippines. Youth unemployment in Indonesia has decreased since 2005, although it rose in 2011 and 2015. Youth unemployment has decreased both in terms of number and level. In 2017 there was an increase of 72,009 young people. If we look at the percentage of young unemployed people in total open unemployment from 2005 to 2022, almost half of them are unemployed young people aged 15-24 years or always above 50 percent. This is quite worrying because some of them are still at school age, meaning they stop and do not continue their studies to a higher level and choose to look for work and enter the job market. For this reason, the indicator for those who are not in school or not in education or participating in training can be measured in the NEET category. In other words, this indicator can capture inactivity. Based on ILO data for 2022, the proportion of NEET in Indonesia has decreased by 8.36 percent compared to 2000 (Figure 1). Both men and women also experienced a decline. NEET is dominated by women compared to men, but there has been a greater decline in women, namely 10.98 percent, compared to a decline in NEET for men of only 5.02 percent in a period of 17 years. This condition shows that women have better access to work and education. In addition, women tend to be willing to work part time compared to men. However, the proportion of NEET in Indonesia is still relatively high (21.02 percent), almost close to the global average, namely 21.8 percent, and still higher than the average for the Southeast Asia and Pacific region, namely 18.0 percent (ILO, 2022).

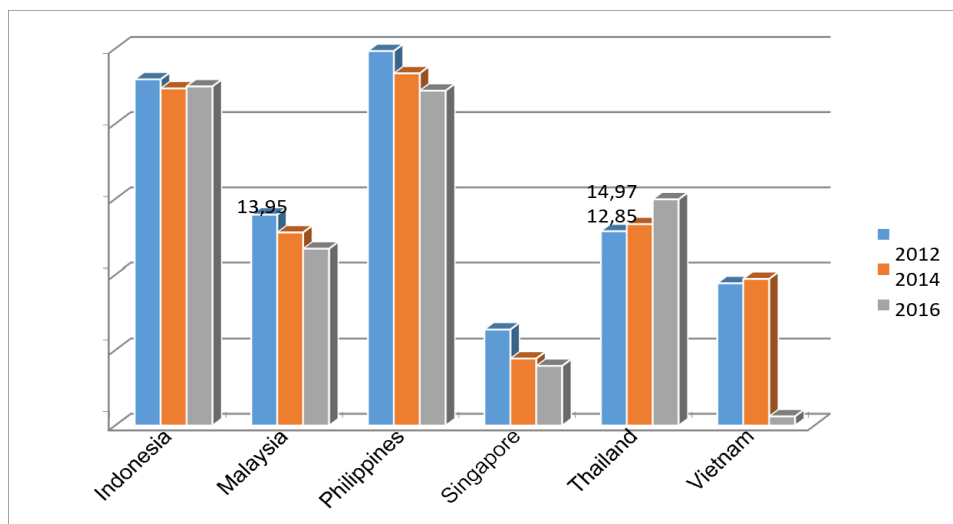
Figure 1. **Total NEET Youth Share Based on Gender, Indonesia 2000-2022**



Source: ILOSTAT Database, 2023

When compared with several countries in the Southeast Asia region, Indonesia's NEET share was the second highest after the Philippines (Figure 2) in 2012 and 2014. Among the selected countries in Figure 2, in 2016 Indonesia had the highest proportion of NEET. high, namely 22.48 percent. A difference of 0.28 percent from the Philippines. Meanwhile, when compared to Thailand, Vietnam and Malaysia, their NEET figure is almost half that of Indonesia. Even Vietnam experienced a very significant decline in 2016. This can be caused by technological and industrial progress in Indonesia but is not accompanied by an increase in the skills of the workforce, especially young workers. As a result, they do not pass the required qualifications and generally employers require that they have work experience, so that job opportunities are limited for young people.

Figure 2. NEET in Indonesia and Several Asean Countries

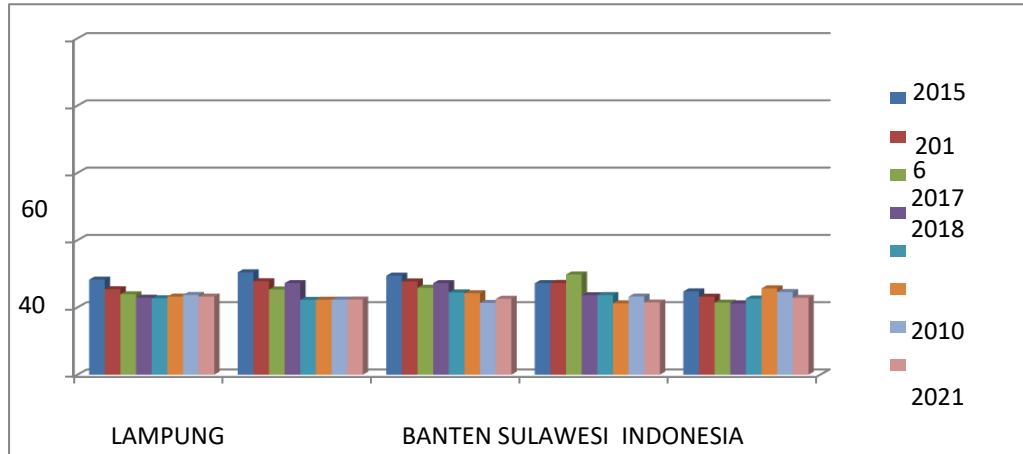


Source: ILOSTAT Database, 2023

At the provincial level, based on BPS data from Sakernas 2015-2017, there are 4 provinces with the highest percentage of NEET, namely West Java, Banten, Lampung and North Sulawesi. All four have a higher percentage of NEET than the national average (Figure 3). West Java and Banten are adjacent provinces and in the past Banten was even

part of West Java. Decentralization and regional expansion is one of the attractions for job seekers, especially as these provinces have industrial areas and factories for large-scale manufacturing companies, including multinational companies. However, limited job opportunities, especially for young people who are considered to have low qualifications, have resulted in the excess supply of labor not being accommodated. So there are many unemployed young people, and also those who are not active in education or training (NEET). Including those who are desperate to find work so they don't do anything or are not economically active. Meanwhile, Lampung Province is known for its superior plantation sector and commodities. The high number of NEETs is possible because of the plantation cycle and human resources who work seasonally and also cause a lot of seasonal unemployment. What is interesting is North Sulawesi Province, where the other three provinces have experienced a decline in the NEET percentage in the last 3 years, North Sulawesi's NEET rate has increased although the increase is not very significant, namely 2.57 percent. One of the causes of the increase in NEET numbers in North Sulawesi is the moratorium policy on transshipment of fishing vessels, which has forced the fish processing industry to reduce the number of workers.

**Figure 3. Provinces with the Highest Percentage of NEET in Indonesia 2015-2022**



Source: ILOSTAT Database, 2023

In terms of education, most NEET youth had elementary school education or below in 2016 and vocational school education in 2017 (Table 1). NEET from elementary school level down to those with vocational school education experienced a decline in 2017 while those with tertiary education experienced an increase of 2.03 percent. When compared with economic status based on 2017 Susenas data, the percentage of population aged 15 years and over according to the highest level of education completed (Table 2). From those who have not/never been to school to those with secondary school education or equivalent, the higher the quintile of wealth or economic status, the lower the percentage. Meanwhile, for those with a tertiary education, the higher the wealth quintile, the percentage of those aged over 15 years at that level of education is increasing. This shows

that the higher the wealth quintile, the higher the level of education that can be completed. At the tertiary level there is huge inequality. The percentage of residents aged 15 years and over who have completed PT from households with the highest economic status (quintile 5) is 17 times greater than households with the lowest economic status.

From Table 1 and Table 2 it can be seen that in 2022 the largest percentage of NEETs were those with vocational school education. Based on household economic status, those with secondary school/equivalent education are mostly in the top quintile (quintile 5) which indicates high household economic status. This shows that it is likely that the NEETs in 2017 will mostly be those from middle to high economic households so they are unemployed and do not try to find work or engage in education or training.

**Table 1. Neet By Education And Gender (Percent), 2021-2022**

Year	Education Level	Male	Female	Total
2021	< Elementary School	20,09	44,74	30,63
	Junior High School	9,04	21,98	15,56
	Senior High School	20,49	31,19	26,17
	Vocational school	26,65	33,66	29,56
	University	20,80	25,20	23,79
2022	< Elementary School	17,41	42,28	27,37
	Junior High School	8,50	20,77	14,46
	Senior High School	19,79	29,91	25,14
	Vocational school	25,53	33,59	28,91
	University	24,3	26,71	25,82

Source: BPS, Sakernas

**Table 2. Percentage of Population Aged 15 Years And Over According To Highest Level of Education Completed and Household Economic Status, 2022**

Highest Level of Education Completed	Household Economic Status				
	Quintile 1	Quintile 2	Quintile 3	Quintile 4	Quintile 5
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)

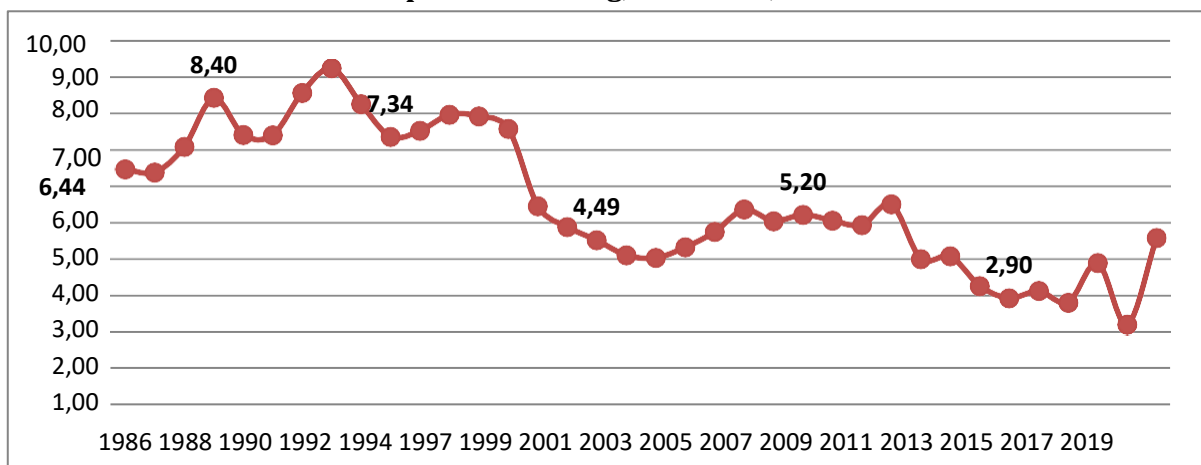
No/never been to school	9,20	5,66	4,28	3,47	1,58
Not completed in primary school	16,92	14,18	12,96	11,45	7,87
Elementary school/equivalent	37,31	34,40	30,60	25,85	15,72
Middle school/equivalent	21,55	24,09	23,88	22,61	17,41
SM/equivalent	13,76	19,25	24,21	29,23	35,55
College	1,27	2,43	4,08	7,40	21,87

Source: BPS, Susenas

The NEET figures used in the data above use ILO Indicators which also include young unemployed people or those in the labor force. Therefore, to better capture those who are

truly 'idle' or inactive and not doing anything, not looking for work, not taking part in education or training, it can be seen from the BPS Sakernas data on the population aged 15- 24 years according to type of activity. over the past week in other categories. Namely those in the non-labor force category who do not go to school or take care of the household.

**Figure 4. Percentage of Youth (15-24) Who Do Not Work, Do Not Go To School Or Do Not Participate in Training, Indonesia, 1986-2021**



Source: BPS, Sakernas

The percentage of youth who are not working, not attending school or not participating in training (NEET) or who are not active at all is shown in Figure 4. Since 1986 the percentage of youth who are not working, not attending school and taking part in training or whose type of activity during the week is other continues to be decrease. Although it increased in 1989 and 1993 (BPS,2017). In 2017, the NEET percentage was 2.90 percent, down 3.54 percent compared to 1986. There was a slow and not very significant decline. Even though in percentage terms this figure is relatively small compared to the previous NEET figure of 21.02 percent, in absolute terms the number is quite large, namely there are 1,259,274 people out of the total youth in Indonesia who do nothing. Those who fall into this group are actually more worrying and need attention because compared to unemployed young people, they still have the desire and are trying to find work, while the NEETs in this number are those who have given up hope and are not trying to improve their skills or increase their human capital by going to school or attending school. training. Therefore they are very vulnerable to social problems. The potential of young people which should be utilized for development is hampered and not utilized optimally.

## Reporting Research Results

### Impact of NEET

Youth who do not work, go to school or participate in training will have an impact not only on themselves but also on society. Some of the impacts of NEET are as follows:

1. Difficult Transition

The NEET condition is a problem because many people believe that if young people do nothing, their next life transition or adulthood will be more difficult (Chen, 2009). The transition period from school to the world of work is an important stage to provide provision for obtaining decent, satisfying work and obtaining social protection

and adequate wages. The condition of NEET in youth is considered an unsuccessful or unhealthy transition. Therefore, this important transition will determine the success of your next life.

## 2. Scarring Effect

Scarring effect is the long-term negative impact of unemployment where the unemployed will survive more negative labor market experiences in the future than those who have never been unemployed (Nilsen & Reiso, 2011). The scarring effect is caused by several things, including depreciation of human capital, despair and habituation effects, unemployed people accepting. Besides that, poor quality jobs, social work norms that influence individual preferences for work and employers using individual unemployment status as a sign of low productivity.

## 3. Depreciation of Human Capital and Social Capital

NEET conditions can have an impact on the depreciation of human capital and social capital. When individuals do not work and are not involved in education or training, the abilities and skills obtained through formal, informal and non-formal learning will be eroded because they are not utilized, resulting in depreciation of human capital. Likewise, when individuals do not work, social networks or social capital in work also stops and causes a reduction in social capital to get opportunities to enter the job market.

## 4. Impact on Mental and Physical Health

In the long term, NEET can cause various social losses, such as dissatisfaction, insecurity, less satisfying future work, and even affect mental and physical health (Eurofound, 2012). The longer individuals do not work and do not improve their skills, the more difficult it will be to get a new job. This can trigger mental pressure, low self-concept, stress which can affect mental and physical health. In the long term, the risk of suicide also increases as the young workforce is not absorbed into the labor market (Platt, 1984).

## 5. Crime

Increasing youth unemployment will increase crime and anti-social behavior in society (Thornberry & Christenson, 1984). As a result of negative transitions, social exclusion, shrinking human capital and social capital, unhealthy mental conditions can ultimately trigger crime. Youth are very vulnerable to crimes such as vandalism, drug abuse, free sex, theft and another negative side.

## **DISCUSSION**

The number of NEETs in Indonesia is quite high and exceeds the average in the Southeast Asia and Pacific region. Dominated by women and SMK graduates. But if analyzing the number of NEET by removing those who are unemployed and only counting youth who are outside the labor force or inactivity, different results are obtained. In the long term, NEET has a negative impact not only for NEET youth themselves but also on the social and community environment such as difficult transitions, scarring effects, depreciation of human capital and social capital, the impact on mental and physical health, and crime.

## **CONCLUSION**

The NEET concept is an important concept in capturing indications of inactivity and unsuccessful transitions that hinder access to decent work, especially among the young population. However, in the definition and concept there is still confusion and overlap with the concept of youth unemployment. In the discussion in this article, several

descriptions or profiles of NEET in Indonesia use the NEET concept from the ILO which is generally used, namely NEET includes those who are unemployed and those who are not in the labor force or not in the labor force. The results show that the number of NEETs in Indonesia is quite high when compared to other ASEAN countries. Indonesia's NEET figure in 2017 reached 21.02, higher than the average in the Southeast Asia and Pacific region. Dominated by women and vocational school graduates. For further research regarding NEET in Indonesia, we can analyze it more deeply and relate it to the economic status of NEET youth because a very vulnerable group is if they are not economically active and also come from a low economic status and analyze how NEET status can lead to poverty. Apart from that, it analyzes the role of vocational training centers in facilitating training for the young population.

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