



Role of Youth in the Rural Development in the Western Balkans – Case of Bosnia and Herzegovina

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Country overview – Bosnia and Herzegovina



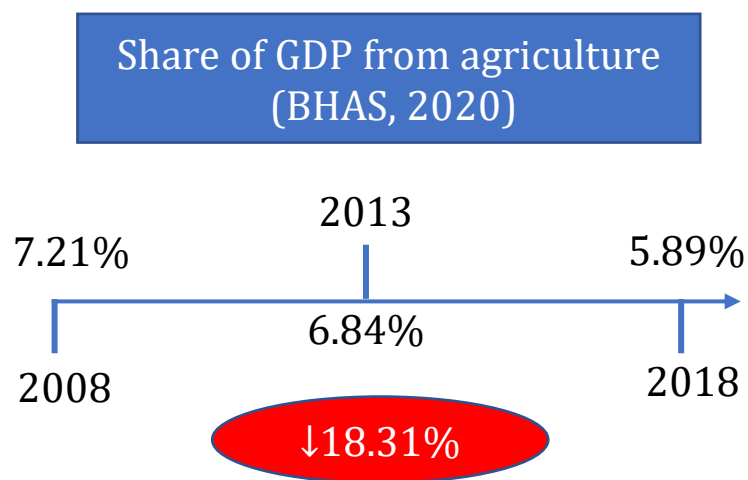
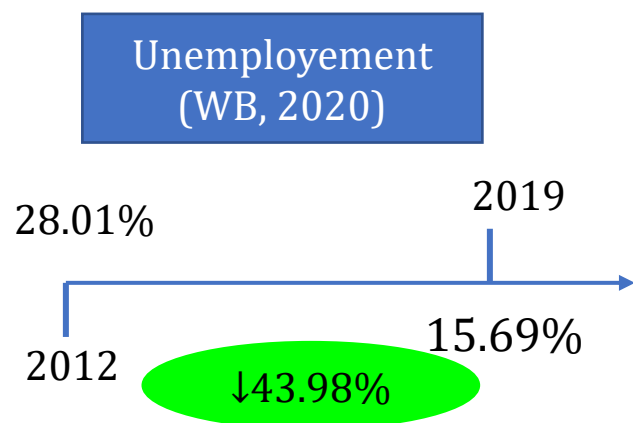
Position: western Balkan Peninsula of Europe
 Size: 51.129 km²
 GDP: 20.048 Billion (2021) ↑ 3.6% growth from 2018 (1.7% 10-year average annual GDP growth)
 GDP per capita: 6.073 US\$ (2021)
 Global Competitiveness Index – 92nd out of 140



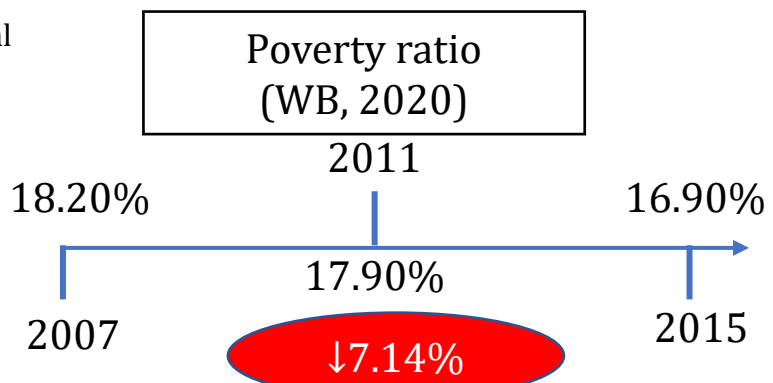
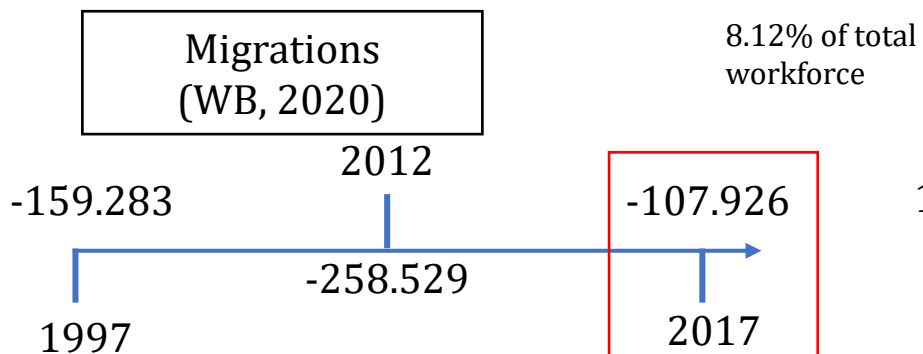
Contextualization

Fig. 1. Socio-economic context of Bosnia and Herzegovina

OFTEN IDENTIFIED ON
POLITICAL AGENDAS



OFTEN UNNOTICED IN
POLITICAL AGENDAS

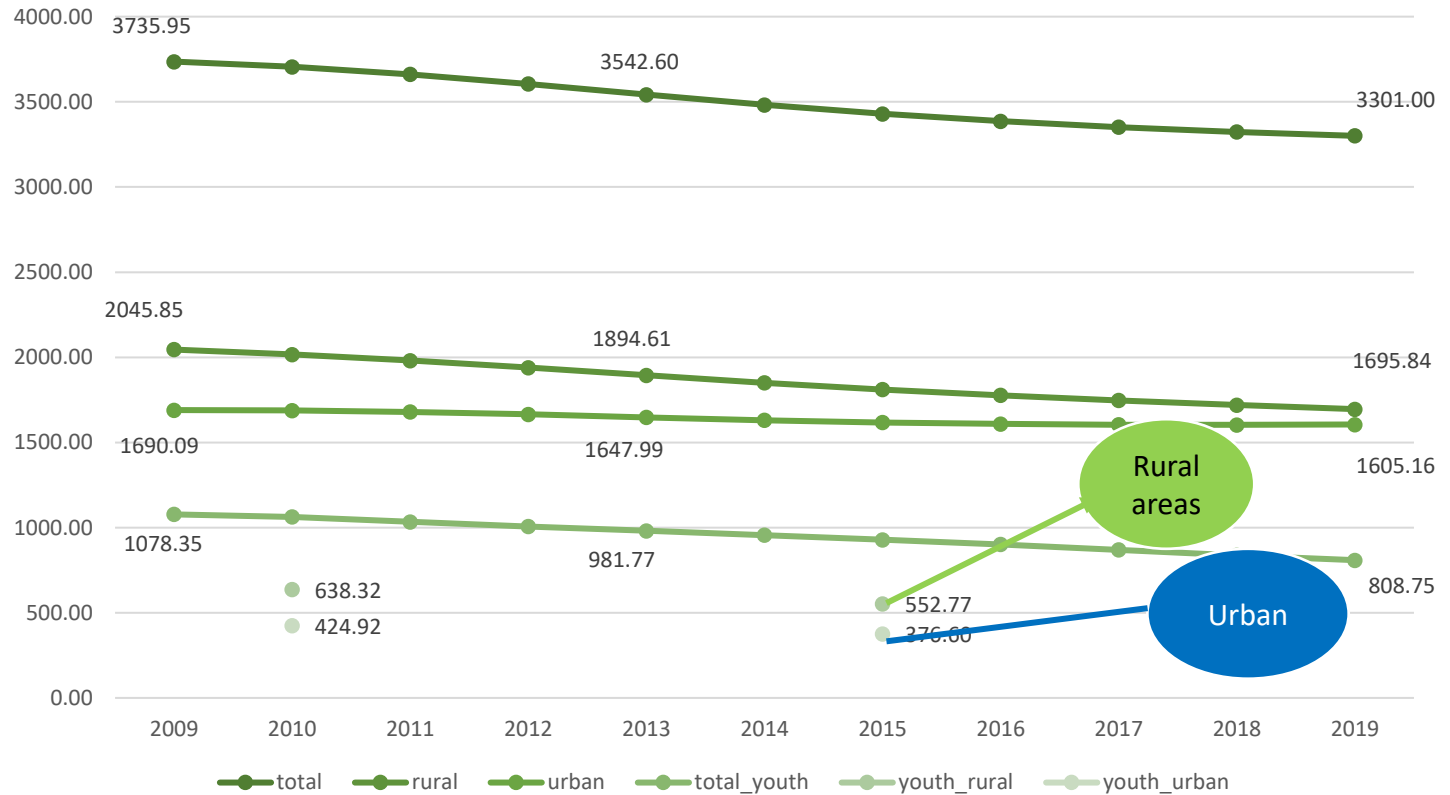


- Poverty rate will increase by 4% due to the COVID 19 pandemic (IBRD/WB, 2020);
- There are advances, but they are insufficient and do not ensure the improvement of the quality of life, that is, the generation of new jobs, more significant employment of women and young people, as well as the reduction of poverty, especially in rural areas (IBRD/WB, 2020)

Population and youth population

A strong decline in the youth population is evident in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the most prominent decline is observed in rural areas.

Fig. 2. Total population and youth population 2009-2019 by degree of urbanization (in thousands)



Source: calculation is done using data from ILO modeled estimates (Population by sex and age -- UN estimates and projections, July 2019 (thousands) – Annual, POP_2POP_SEX_AGE_NB_A; Population by sex, age and rural/urban areas -- UN estimates, July 2019 (thousands) – Annual, POP_2POP_SEX_AGE_GEO_NB_A), data extracted on 12.06.2020

Population and youth population

Fig. 3. Youth population in rural areas for 2009-2019

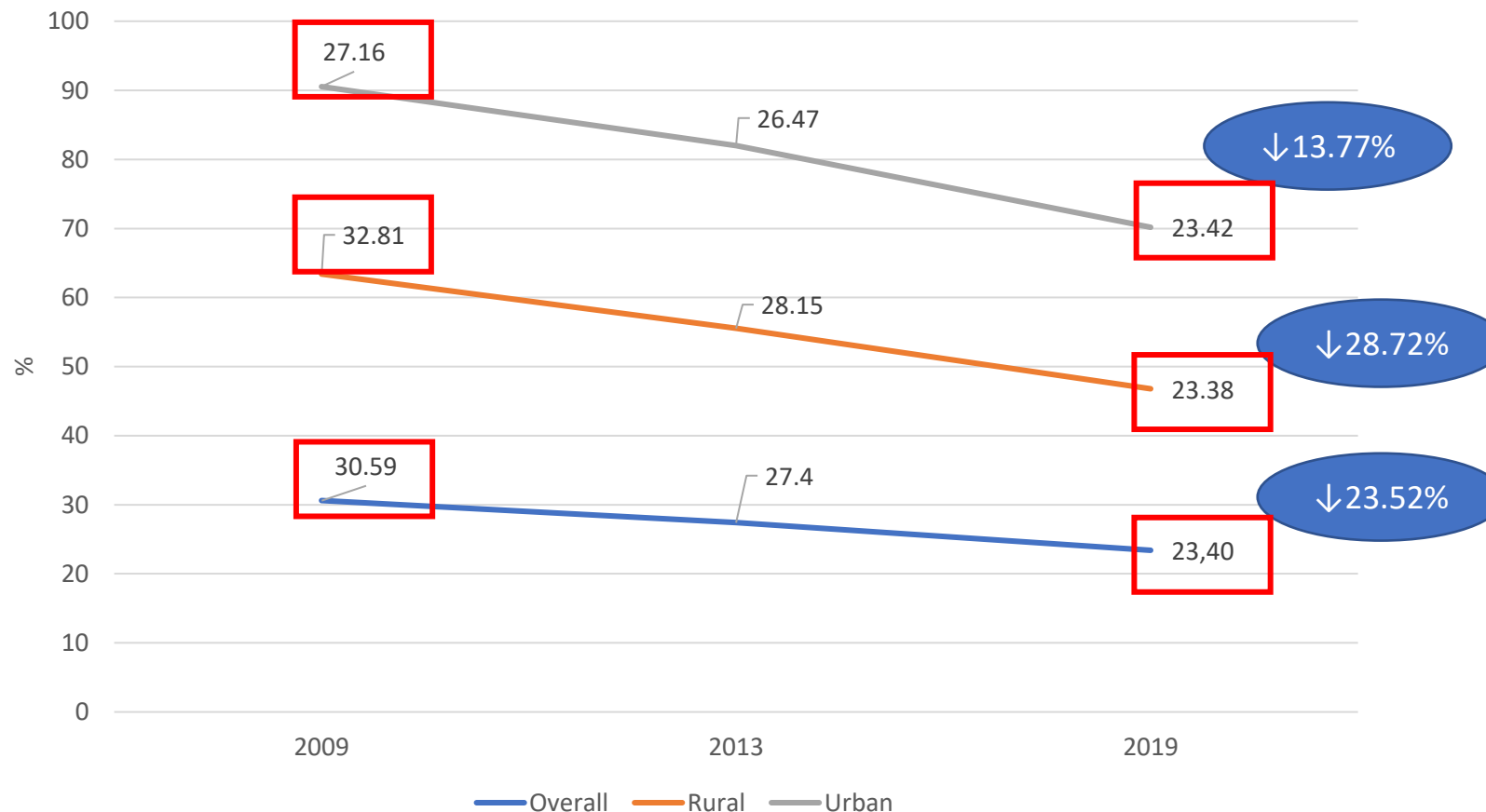


Strongest decline is evident within the 25-29 age group (21.57%) and 15-19 age group (20.35%).

Youth employment

At the state level, there has been a strong decline in youth employment between 2009 and 2019 (23.52%). A similar trend is evident in rural and urban regions, where a stronger decline in total youth employment is evident within rural regions (28.72%), comparing to the urban regions (13.77%).

Fig. 4. Employment age group 15-34 years old (%) by the degree of urbanization (2009-2019)

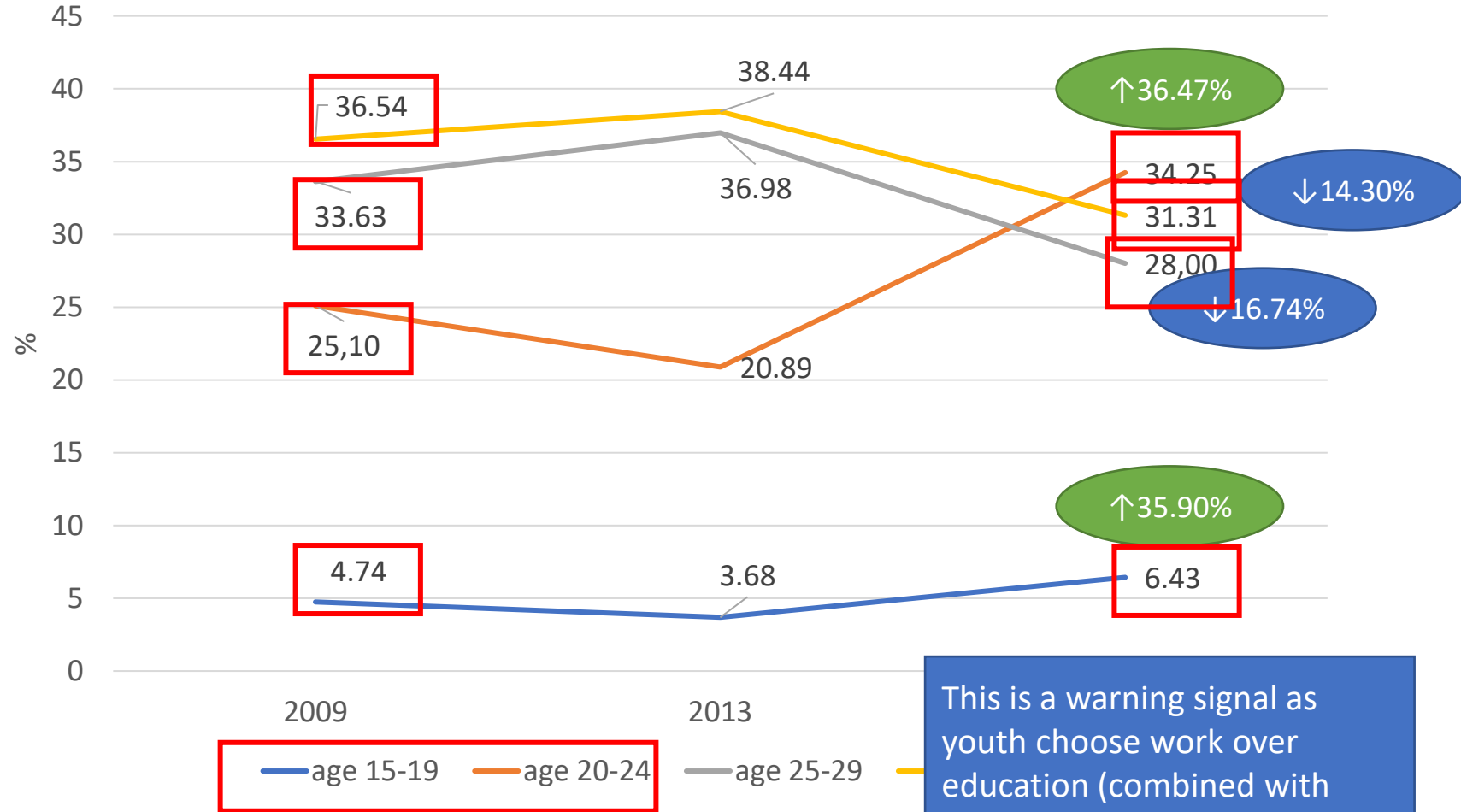


BiH at national level does not have a national youth strategy.
Republika Srpska adopted Youth Policy for 2016-2020.

Youth employment

A strong decline in youth employment in Bosnia and Herzegovina is evident, while there are some positive signs of an increase in employment of youth within the age groups 15-19 and 20-24. In both rural and urban regions the aforementioned age groups show an increase in employment and an especially high increase is evident within the age group 15-19 in urban areas.

Fig. 5. Youth employment in rural areas by age group 15-34 years old (%) (2009-2019)

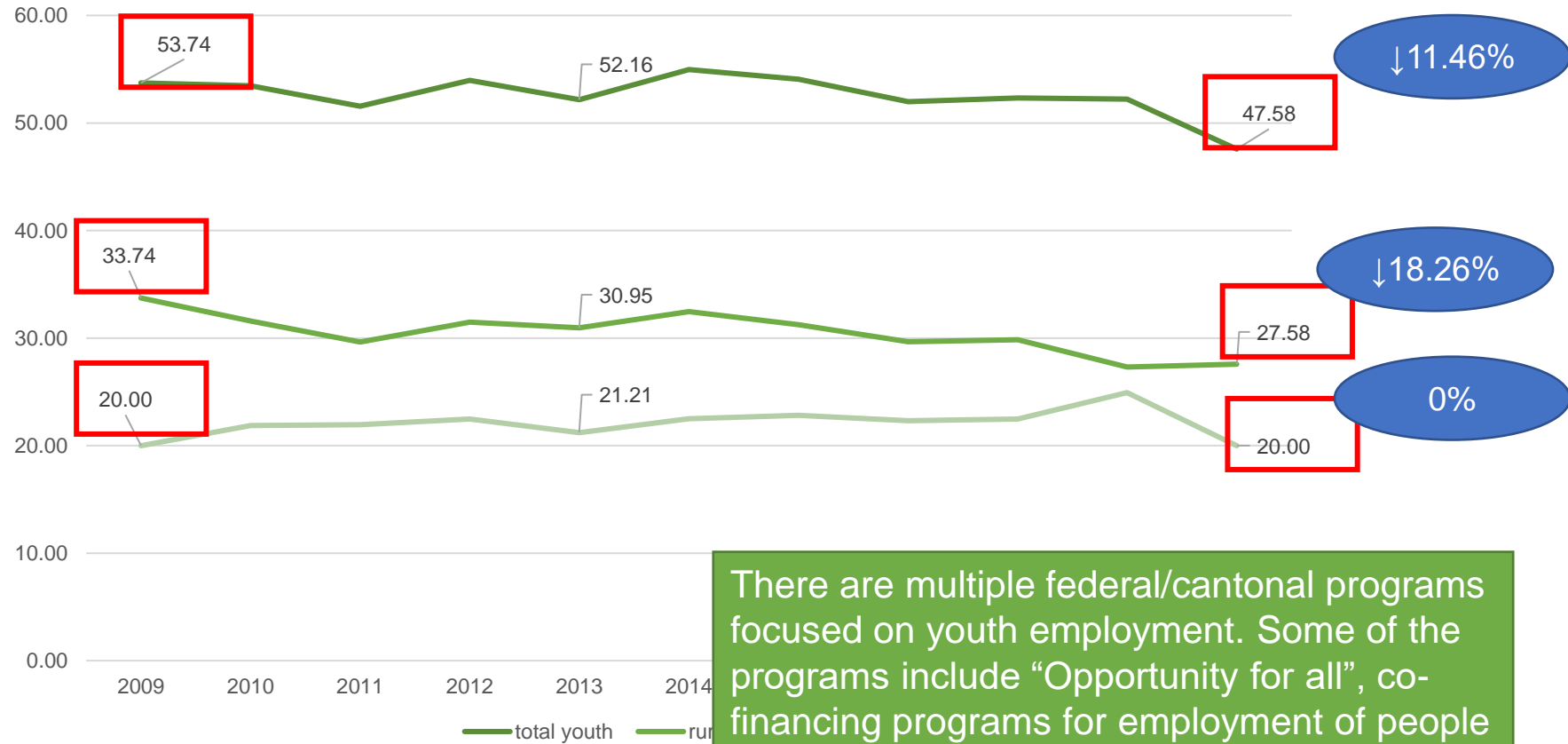


This is a warning signal as youth choose work over education (combined with other negative indicators such as a high percentage of poverty level)

Youth unemployment

The youth unemployment rate in Bosnia and Herzegovina is decreasing over the observed period, while overall, a higher percentage of the youth population from rural regions is unemployed.

Fig. 6. Unemployment age group 15-34 years old (%) by the degree of urbanization (2009-2019)



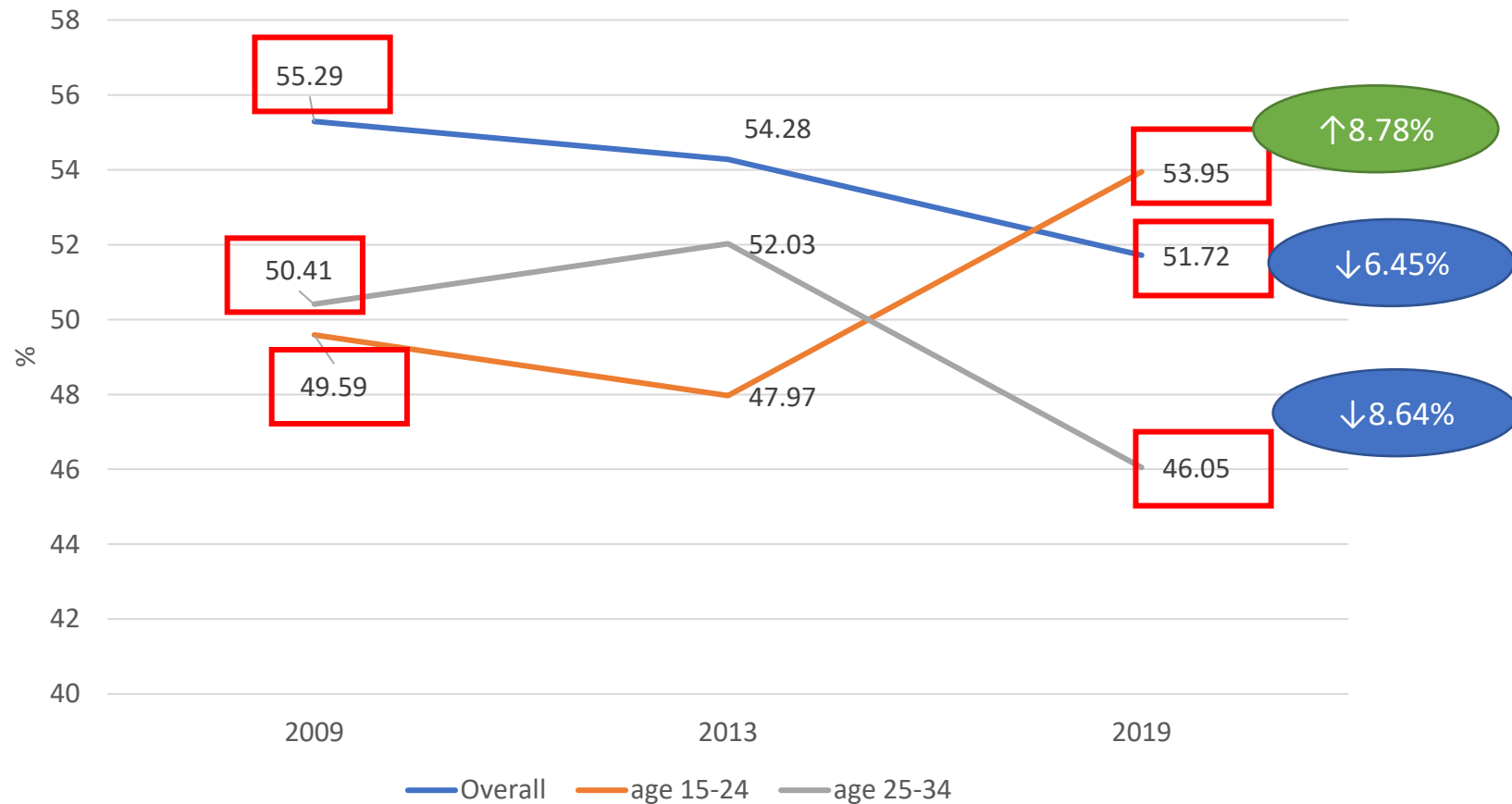
Source: calculation is done using data from ILO modeled estimates and UN estimates, Nov. 2019 (thousands) – Annual, UNE_2UNE_SEX_AGE_GEO_NB_A (thousands) – Annual, UNE_TUNE_SEX_AGE_GEO_NB_A), data extracted from the ILO database.

There are multiple federal/cantonal programs focused on youth employment. Some of the programs include “Opportunity for all”, co-financing programs for employment of people under 35 years old, programs for interns, programs for additional training and obtaining different qualifications, but consistency and transparency of funds remain a big issue.

Youth unemployment

When considering the unemployment rate within rural and urban regions it is evident that the unemployment rate within the age group 15-24 decreases in rural regions, while increases in urban regions. And have opposite values for age group 25-34 (in rural areas decrease, while in urban increase).

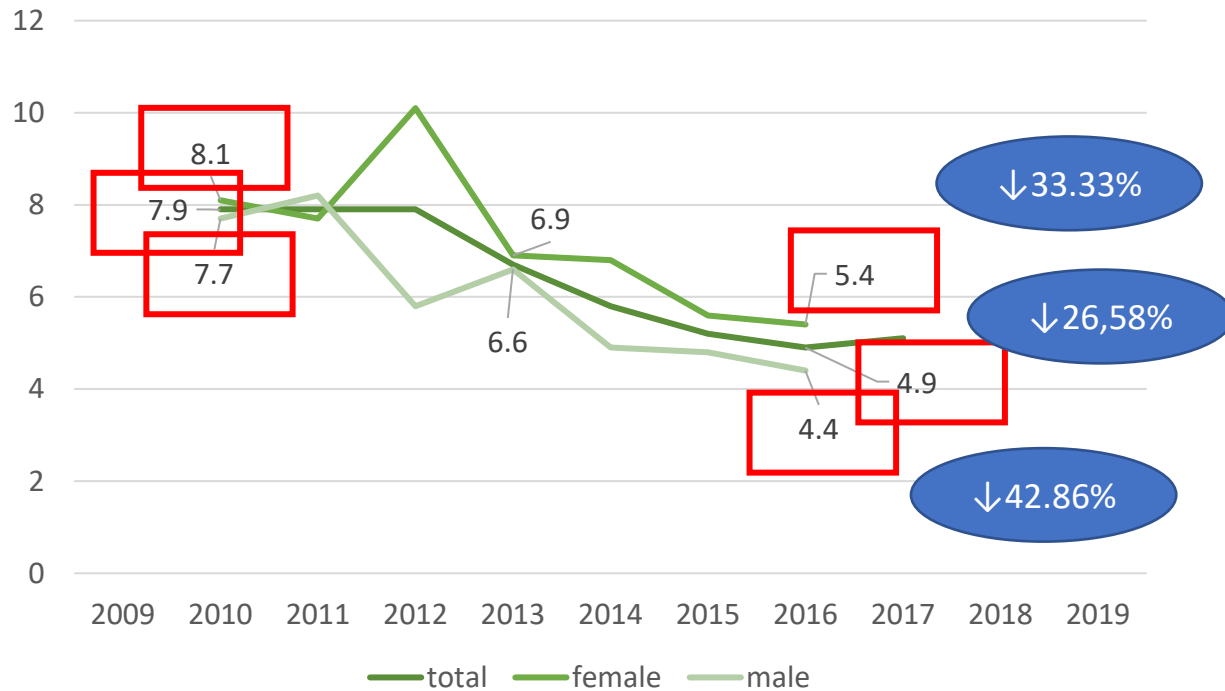
Fig. 7. Unemployment age group 15-34 years old (%) by the degree of urbanization (2009-2019)



Education

ESLET rate decrease for both female and male population in Bosnia and Herzegovina. EU Member States goal to reduce ESLET rate below 10% by 2020.

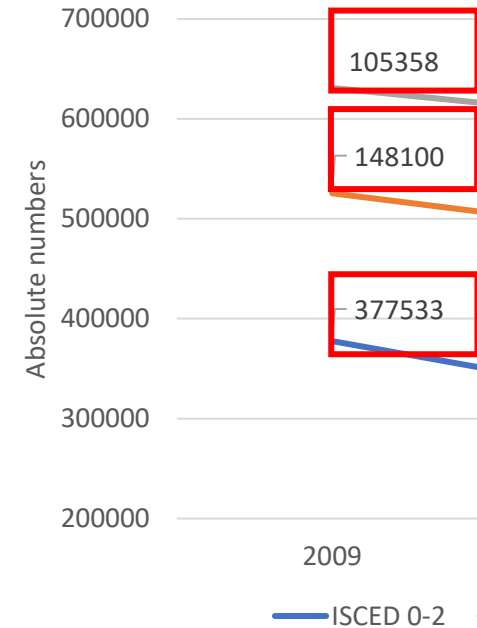
Fig. 8. Early school leavers (%) 2010-2017



Source: EC (2019), BHAS (2017)

The number of students and pupils by education level significantly decreased during the observed period for all education levels in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Fig. 9. Number of students and pupils



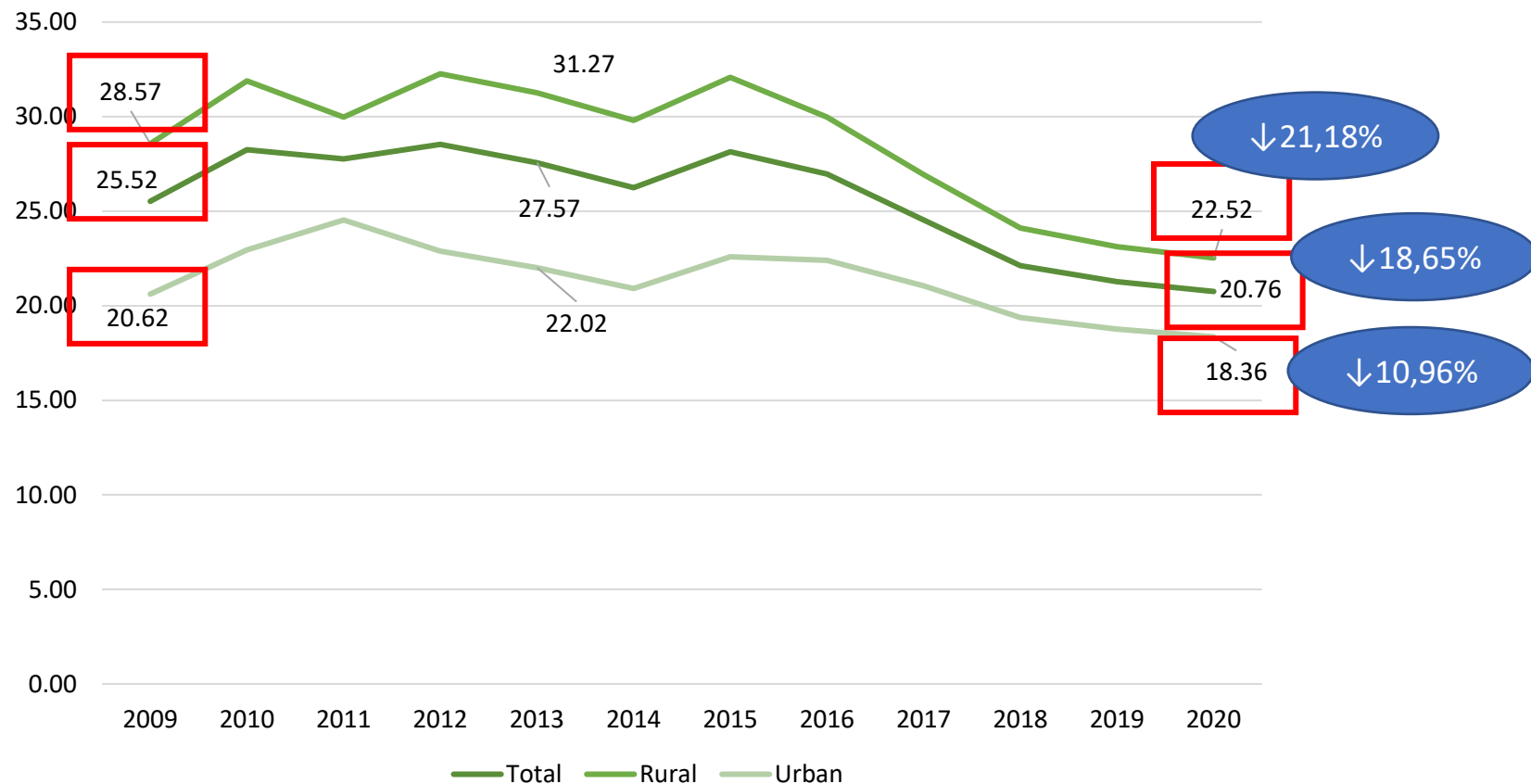
Source: BHAS (2010; 2011; 2012)

Youth mobility case of University of Sarajevo
 In 2016 - 50 mobility agreements, 300 exchange students
 In 2020 – 160+ agreements, 1300+ students and staff

Mobility (ISCED 5-8) is granted through Erasmus+, Erasmus Mundus, CEEPUS, MEVLANA, DAAD, FULBRIGHT, VISEGRAD FUND, MARIE SKLODOWSKA-CURIE and numerous other opportunities as a result of multiple bilateral agreements.

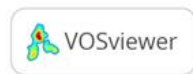
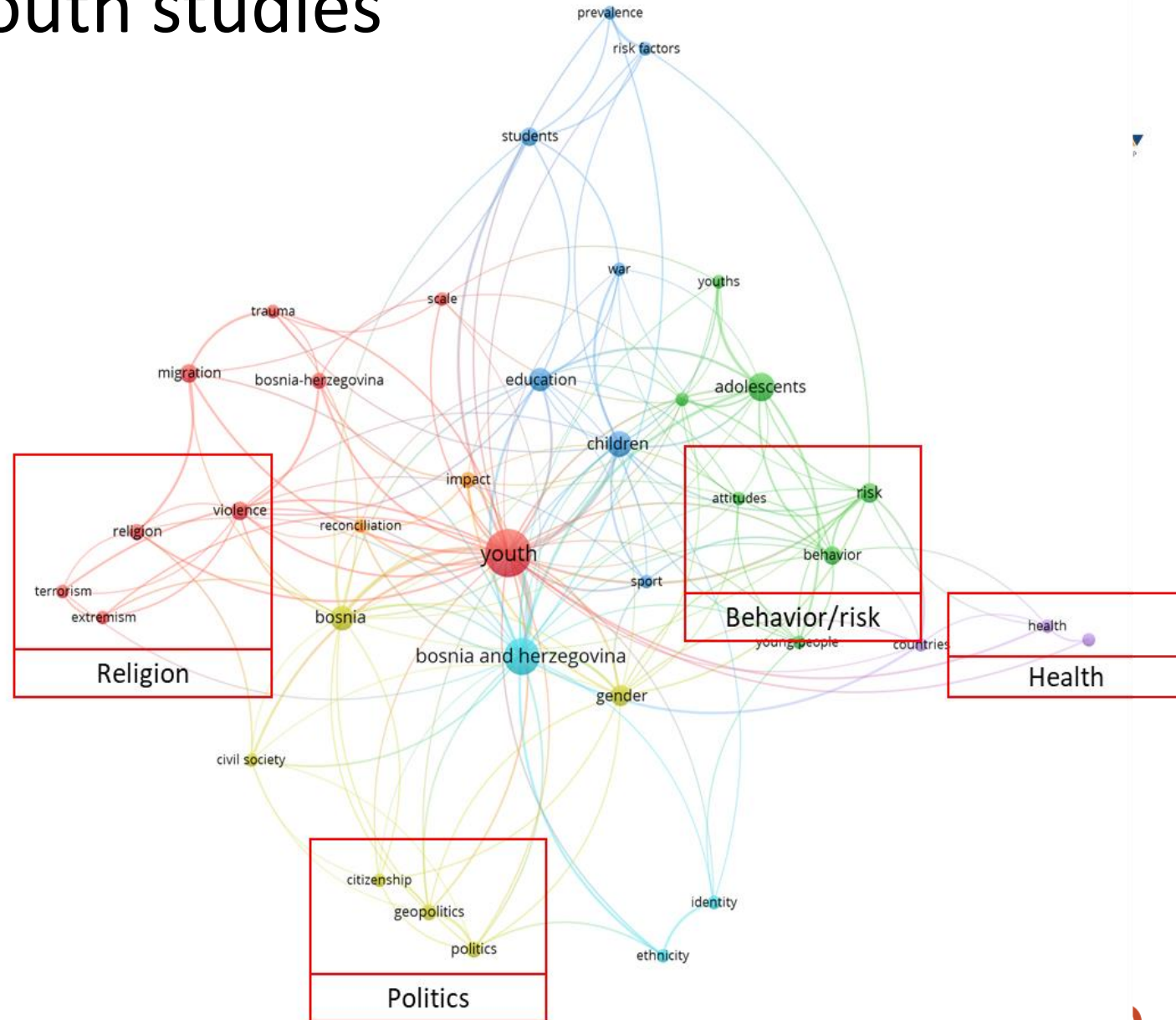
NEET rate

Fig. 10. NEET rate in Bosnia and Herzegovina (2009-2019)



NEET rate decreased overall in Bosnia and Herzegovina, while the NEET rate is **higher within the rural youth population**. An almost identical decrease of NEET rate is evident between females (16.26% for the 2009-2019 period) and male (16.04% for 2009-2019 period) groups. Data were not available for different age groups.

Bibliometric review on youth studies in BiH



Contextualization - agriculture

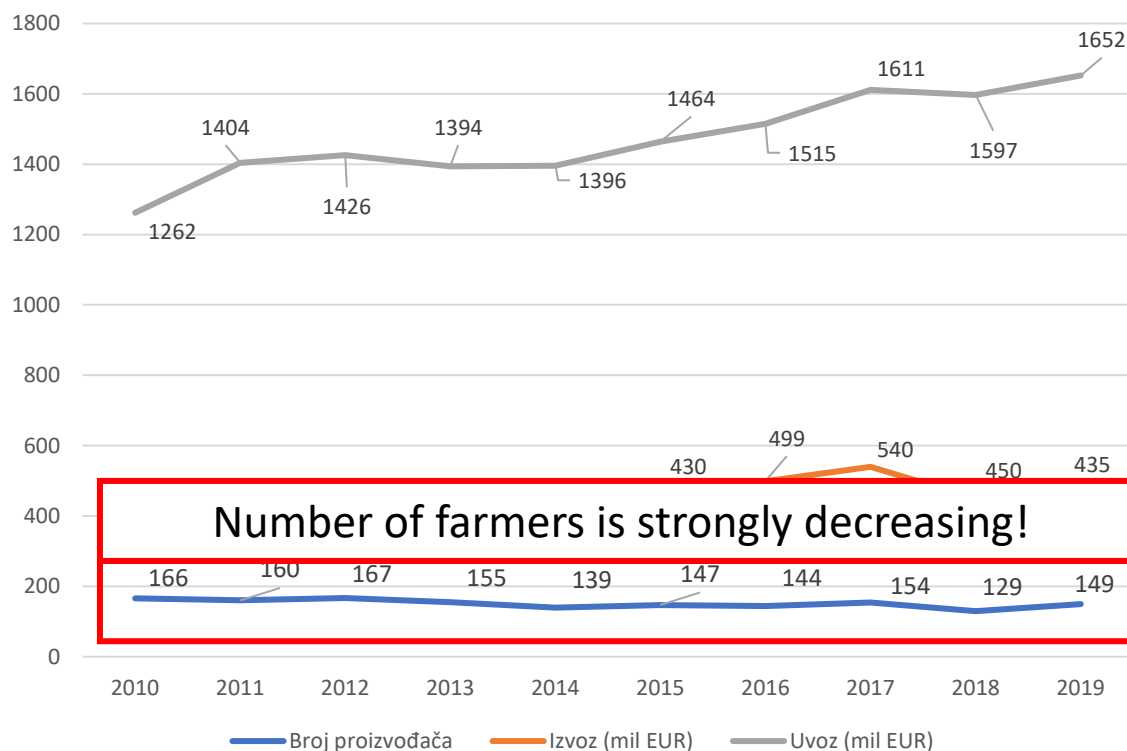


Fig. 12. Current situation in agricultural sector in BiH (BHAS, 2020)

	BIH
14. Agriculture policy dimension average	2.0
14.1: Agro-food system capacity	1.5
Rural infrastructure policy	1.0
Irrigation policy framework	2.0
Agricultural education system	1.5
14.2: Agro-food system regulation	2.3
Regulations on natural resources	2.5
Regulations on products	2.0
14.3: Agricultural support system	2.1
Agricultural policy framework	3.0
Domestic producer support instruments	2.0
Agricultural trade policy	2.0
Agricultural tax regime	1.5
Sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures	2.0
14.4: Agricultural innovation system	2.0
Agricultural research and development framework	2.0
Agricultural extension services framework	2.0

Poor performances of the sector are reflected in many people leaving agricultural activities (and rural areas).



Political (legal) environment

- Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy
- Ministry of Family, Youth and Sports
- Youth Council of Republika Srpska
- Local youth councils
- Local self – government units (cities and municipalities)
- Student organizations and representatives of student councils
- Network of student councils of Republika Srpska (mRESURS)
- Association of citizens / civil society organizations (CSOs)
- e.g. Ministry of Labour or social policy
- Ministry of Labour, War Veterans, and Disabled Persons' Protection
- Public Employment Services
- Ministry of Education and Culture
- Chamber of Commerce

- Law on Youth in FBiH (Zakon o mladima FBiH)
- Law on Organization of the Youth in Republika Srpska (Zakon o omladinskom organizovanju)
- Youth Policy of the Republika Srpska for 2016-2020
- Law on agriculture and rural development ("Sl. glasnik BiH", br. 50/2008)
- National Strategy for Rural Development 2018-2021
 - e.g. IPARD 2021-2027
 - National youth policy/strategy
 - Local self-government strategies
- Other country specific documents that include (rural) youth
 - Volunteering Act
 - Higher Education Act
 - Student Standard Act
 - Student Union Act
 - Local Self-Government Act
- Starategy for the promotion and development of volunteering in Republika Srpska (2014-2018)

Political (legal) environment



- Most of the strategic documents have common goals (MPVŠ, 2013) such as:
 - developing agriculture and complementary sectors with the improvements of the technical and technological level of farms,
 - efficient resource use and adaptation towards new market requirements;
 - improving conditions for stronger income in the agricultural sector and quality of life in rural areas;
 - sustainable use of natural resources and adaptation to climate change;
 - harmonization of laws towards Common Agriculture Policy.
- Strategy for agricultural and rural development in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period 2021-2027 (draft version) (MPVŠ, 2022) has similar goals:
 - support for the smart, resilient and diversified agri-food sector aiming to improve food self-sufficiency;
 - supporting eco-friendly practices that mitigate climate change;
 - supporting socio-economic structure of rural areas;
 - modernization of agri-food sector by knowledge transfer, innovativeness,
 - digitalization in agriculture and rural areas.

Weak monitoring and evaluation systems lead to “irregular, unsystematic and superficial” analysis of the policies implemented and with initial stages of establishment of the strategic policy framework (Martinovska Stojcheska et al., 2021).

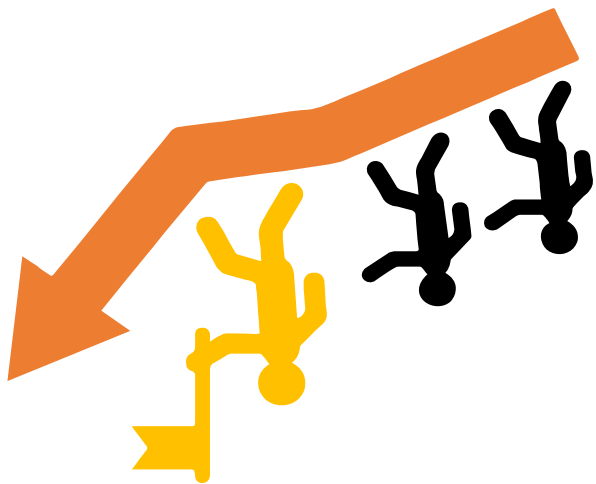
Policy area	Measures targeted at youth		Non-targeted measures available to youth	
	FBiH	RS	FBiH	RS
Joined-up policymaking and implementation involving multiagency work	Policy making is fragmented between the Entities and Cantons			
Wage subsidies, social insurance relief, and tax incentives for employers who take on young people	“First Work Experience”	YEP, Employment Strategy of Republika Srpska 2016-2020	Employment Support Project	Employment Support Project,
Vocational training programs for inactive and unskilled youth, including developing digital skills	Bosnian-Podrinje Canton Goražde			
Work-based learning and training	YEP	YEP, Employment Strategy of the Republika Srpska 2016-2020; Republika Srpska Youth Policy 2016-2020	Most of the policies are „passive“ employment policies aiming to foster employment in short term i.e. for one year – lack of planned and coordinated activities among the many institutions dealing with youth situation in BiH.	
Unpaid internships and work experience placements		YEP, Employment Strategy of Republika Srpska 2016-2020		
Apprenticeships				
Youth entrepreneurship programs	YEP, “Entrepreneurship for Youth”	YEP, Employment Strategy of Republika Srpska 2016-2020	Employment Support Project	Employment Support Project
Assistance to self-employed youth	Sarajevo Canton, YEP	YEP, Employment Strategy of Republika Srpska 2016-2020	Employment Support Project	Employment Support Project
Career guidance and counseling	YEP	YEP	Employment Support Project	Employment Support Project

Focus group summary



	Female	Male
GENERAL ATTITUDES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban areas offer more opportunities for employment, more education programs, and higher living standards; • There is a strong (negative) influence of the information (media)/society about the rural areas, support should be provided (subsidies); price of agricultural products are fluctuating strongly – to ensure stable income; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staying in rural areas because of a healthier lifestyle, better relationship with child, peaceful and freedom environment, „being a producer and not consumer“; • To stay in rural areas, the purchase of agricultural products should be guaranteed, to ensure a stable income for producers;
EDUCATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problems with capacities of schools, one teacher for all grades; • If parents are working in cities, their children are enrolled in schools in cities; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs lack of flexibility, not allowing students to choose what they want to study;
EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase from small-scale producers is not organized, also there are lack of cooling and storage facilities to keep the products until the price increases; • Parents motivate children to move to urban areas and to stay away from agriculture; • Self-employment is not promoted and initiated; • Entrepreneurship programs are not visible, not known; not sure about it – lack of knowledge, networking; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents are not willing to move away from the traditional way of production, not willing to give up on land – land ownership issues; • Traditional professions in villages (i.e. blacksmith) are missing, disappearing, making life/work more difficult (and expensive);
SOCIAL LIFE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong social pressure from media and environment; strong pressure from parents not to work in agricultural business; • To stay in rural areas but not engage in agricultural work; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of post offices, kindergartens, schools, facilities, poor internet (or without internet), poor road infrastructure, electricity breakdowns, water supply;
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of trust in the work of associations and especially political associations; work only for sole interests; • Lack of willingness to get engaged; • Lack of political incentives (i.e. government to facilitate the usage of unused land); • Not aware of support for young farmers; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some positive examples of scouting associations; • Heard about support for young farmers, but do not have more information about, not willing to use it because of strong influence and opinion that is a highly corrupted policy mechanism;

Instead of conclusion



Political context

The complex political situation along with very complicated institutional set-up continues to be a major burden for a more progressive/intensive economic growth of the country.

Migration

The negative trend of “brain drain” still remain bigg issue. The rural-to-urban movements (deruralization) within the country continue as well, which threatens the biological sustainability of the countryside.

Unemployment rate

Total unemployment rate is 15,7%, among youth 34% in 2019 according to the ILO report (ILO, 2020).

Employment rate

Youth employment increase for age group 15-19 that can be seen as a warning signal as youth may choose work over education.

Education

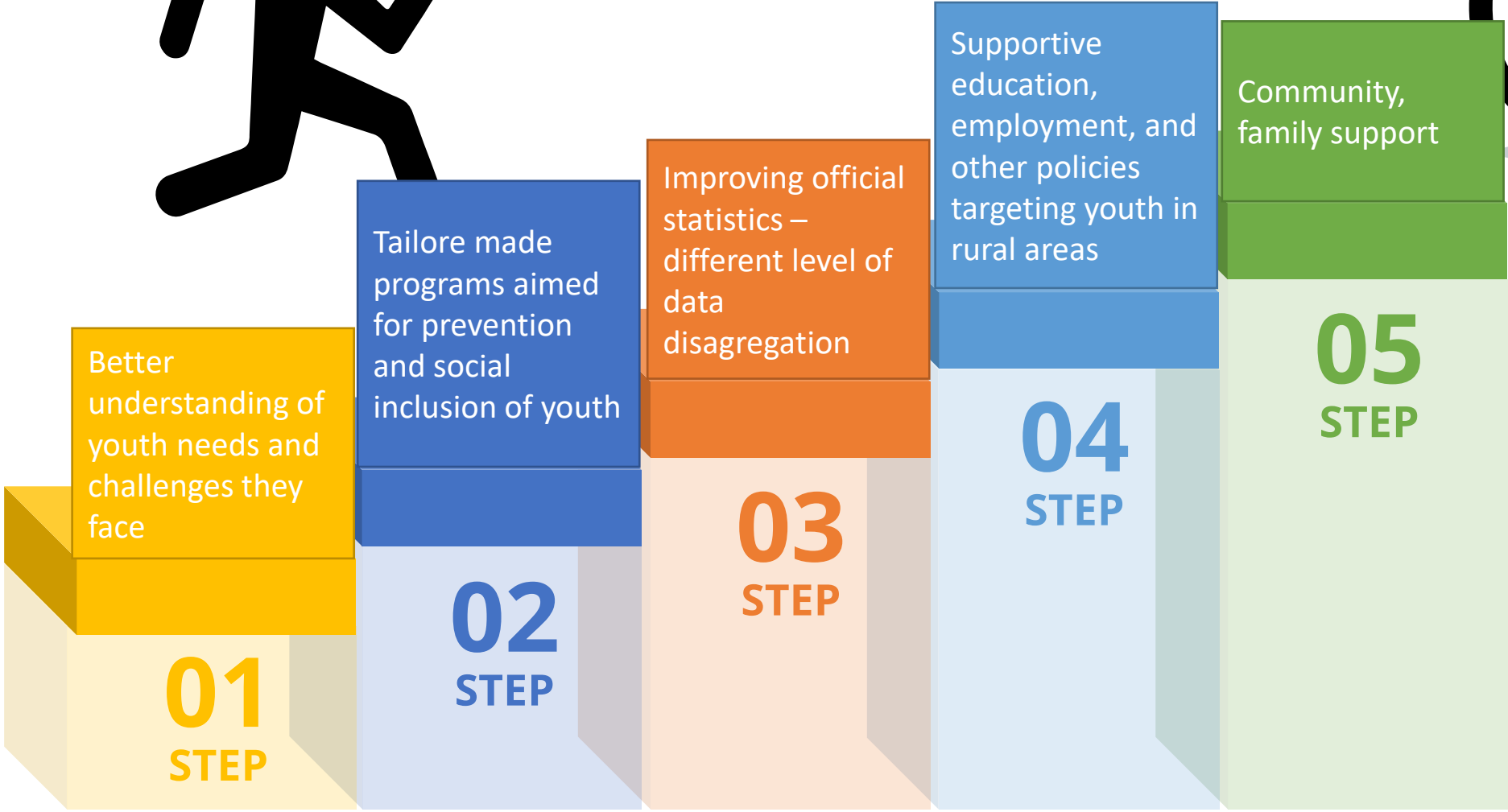
The number of students and pupils by education level significantly decreased during the observed period for all education levels in Bosnia and Herzegovina

NEET

NEET rate tend to decrease but percentage of youth within this category is still high.

Instead of conclusion

How to prevent youth social exclusion?





Q&A

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Thank you for your attention!