

Review of the *Youth 2024 Rapid Report*

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The *Youth 2024 Rapid Report* was published by Századvég Konjunktúrakutató Zrt. in April 2026 and is based on the findings of the 2024 Hungarian large sample youth survey. Data collection was conducted between September and November 2024 and involved 5,000 young people aged 15 to 34—those born between 1990 and 2009—from 355 municipalities across Hungary.

Launched in 2000, the large sample youth survey is one of the most important and longest-running research programs in the history of Hungarian sociology. Over the past two decades, it has become a key source of information for age-group research in Hungary. A defining methodological feature of the program is its nationally representative data collection, conducted every four years, which enables the continuous monitoring of the living conditions, attitudes, and social integration of Hungarian youth time-series analysis. This stable and cyclical research framework provides a strong foundation for scientific rigour, as few other initiatives within the Hungarian research landscape offer the opportunity to examine generational change and broader social transformations through such a long-term and methodically comparable database.

The new report is unique in that it is the first in a series of studies aimed at developing a comprehensive understanding of young people since 2020. Four years have passed, during which the social environment has changed significantly—including the digital landscape, the development of artificial intelligence, the labour market, and the housing market. During this period, the COVID-19 pandemic has occurred and wars have broken out, including in our neighbouring country, Ukraine. The world has therefore changed substantially since 2020, creating an urgent need for research and a publication that examines the fundamental issues facing young people in this new context.

This report presents a coherent and logically structured analysis, offering a comprehensive overview of the life circumstances of people aged 15–34. It guides the reader from the methodological foundations of the research to young people's subjective perceptions of their lives, with each chapter building naturally on the previous one.

The report establishes its credibility by outlining the methodological framework in the introduction before presenting a summary of the study's key findings. The analysis then proceeds to educational issues, including language proficiency and plans for further study, before turning to labour market conditions, such as young people's working environments and perceptions of workplace safety. The chapter on demographics and lifestyle focuses on plans related to family formation

and childbearing, while the section on living conditions examines housing, material assets⁶, and financial attitudes.

This is followed by an examination of lifestyle and digital habits, in which the influence of modern technology on everyday life, screen time, and media consumption patterns take center stage, providing a nuanced picture of young people's leisure activities. The report devotes a separate chapter to mental health, while the longest, tenth chapter is titled "Community and Politics" explores a wide range of topics, including social well-being, ideological orientation, political interest, the influence of parental models, Hungarian identity, as well as volunteering and religiosity. The report also addresses the maintenance of ties with Hungarians living beyond Hungary's borders. It concludes with a summary problem map identifying three principal challenges facing young people in 2024: financial hardship and poverty, uncertainty about the future, and a lack of purpose. The publication is rounded out by a detailed account of the methodological background provided by the authors.

According to the key findings of the 2024 Youth Survey, the 15 – 34 age group in Hungary have, over the past two decades, become increasingly integrated into the labour market (67% employed), improved their language skills (78%), and developed greater financial awareness (60% save money), while the proportion of those living in severe deprivation has declined to a negligible 1%. In their private lives, close social ties and traditional values dominate, as the vast majority of young people consider having children (79%) and getting married (58%) important, while they cultivate a strong sense of Hungarian identity. At the same time, their daily lives and leisure activities are characterised by a high degree of digital integration (96% internet, 62% streaming), widespread engagement with social media (primarily Facebook and TikTok), and lighter forms of entertainment. Alongside a steadily growing interest in politics, however, members of this generation also express serious existential concerns.

To better understand young people, it is worth examining the challenges they perceive as the most significant in their lives. Although these perceptions have changed a great deal over the past four years, certain patterns remain consistent. Existential concerns continue to dominate the list of problems. Financial difficulties (40%), uncertainty about the future (33%), and a lack of purpose (29%) form the core set of issues shaping young people's sense of well-being. Access to housing ranks fourth (21%), closely linked to financial hardship and illustrating one of the most significant physical practical barriers to this generation's transition to adulthood. This is followed by drug and alcohol use (19%) and labour market difficulties (16%), suggesting that, alongside concerns about livelihood, social deviance and the challenges of entering the workforce also play an important role in young people's lives. The findings of the 2020 survey reveal a broadly similar pattern. Uncertainty and the unpredictability of the future ranked first among the most pressing concerns of people aged 15–29, closely followed by financial difficulties and the risk of poverty. A lack of purpose and career direction also emerged as major challenges, while the absence of strong community ties and stable social networks proved to be a significant issue. The list of concerns was rounded out by the prevalence of alcohol and drug use and the negative consequences associated with these behaviours.

In summary, the report is more than a collection of snapshots of contemporary social conditions, it is an indispensable analysis of the situation of young people in Hungary. Drawing on two decades of continuous data collection, it highlights the structural and value-based transformations that shape the daily lives and future prospects of today's 15–34-year-olds. Through its methodological rigour and comprehensive scope—ranging from labour market integration to mental well-being and technological challenges—the study provides a credible and multifaceted reference framework for policymakers, academic researchers, and education professionals alike. The report was edited by Miklós Gyorgyovich, Georgina Kiss-Kozma, Krisztina Kolozsvári, Péter Pillók, Levente Székely, and Éva Vas. Levente Székely, one of the leaders of the large sample youth survey, recently published an article on the history and background of the project in the journal *Review of Sociology*.

As a rapid report, however, the volume necessarily presents its analyses in a concise form. Consequently, some of the deeper relationships and underlying dynamics identified in the findings may warrant further exploration in a full-length monograph.

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