Responses to the mental health needs of young people

What measures do you recommend ?

Follow-up to the recommendations
of the Future Council U24 and the EKKJ
as part of a mandate from the FOPH

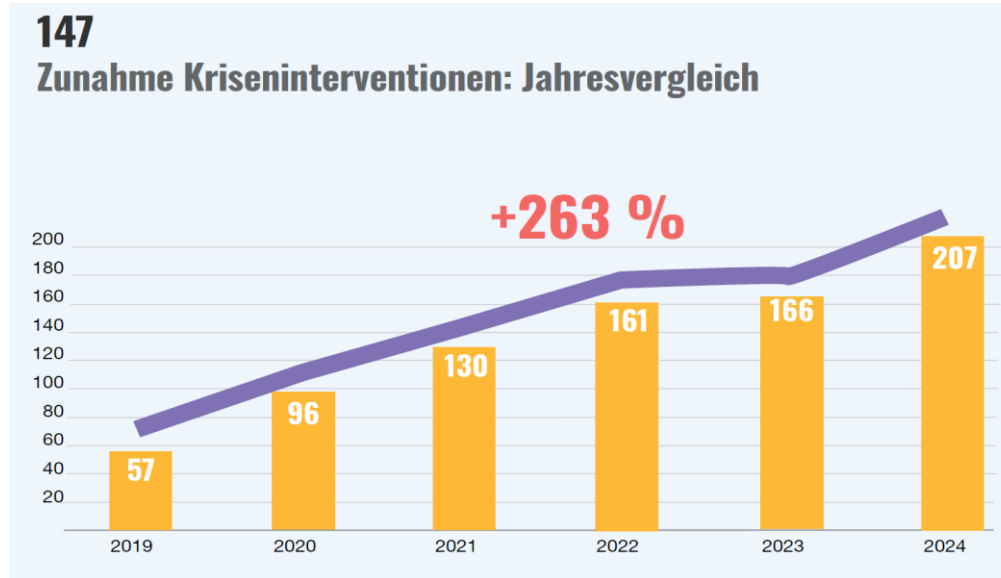*Author: Daniel Frey, The Swiss Society for Public Health*

Der Zukunftsrat U24 am 5. November 2023 in Locarno.

« *Être membre du Conseil du futur U24 est une expérience exceptionnelle et enrichissante qui me permet de contribuer à la société sur un sujet essentiel! Je considère que la santé mentale a un impact très important sur tous les aspects de la vie, et qu'il faut absolument la valoriser et la renforcer.* »

Irma Neelima Khan, Zukunftsrätin

What about the mental health of young people and what is special about this development phase?

- Negative development for 10 - 15 years
- Indications that the problem is continuing (147 emergencies in Lausanne and Zurich)

147
Zunahme Kriseninterventionen: Jahresvergleich

+263 %

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
	57	96	130	161	166	207

Source: Pro Juventute media release
11.04.2025

What about the mental health of young people and what is special about this development phase?

PUBLIC HEALTH SCHWEIZ
SANTE PUBLIQUE SUISSE
SALUTE PUBBLICA SVIZZERA

The Swiss Society for Public Health

- Negative development for 10 - 15 years
- Indications that the problem persists (147 emergencies in Lausanne and Zurich)

- Increased psychological vulnerability in adolescence
  - ➢ 50 % of mental disorders begin by the age of 15
  - ➢ 75 % by the age of 25

- Often delayed diagnosis and treatment
  - ➢ Importance of early detection and early intervention
  - ➢ Avoidance of high costs through early detection and prevention

Mandate of the FOPH

Recommendations U24 and EKKJ: 35

List of existing services: 200+

Survey of experts: gaps in services?
Prioritisation of recommendations

150 answers: 110 from German-speaking Switzerland,
40 from French-speaking Switzerland

Round table

Report:
- Overview of recommendations and services
- Systemic deficiencies and gaps in provision
- Prioritised fields of action and responsibilities

6 areas
- Research, data monitoring
- Care and support systems
- Framework conditions
- Prevention, R+D
- School & education
- Working environment

What is special about this report?

- The analysis and **recommendations of young people take centre stage**
- **Future Council U24** → the first citizens' council of young people in Switzerland: 80 young people (16 - 24 years) selected on a representative basis
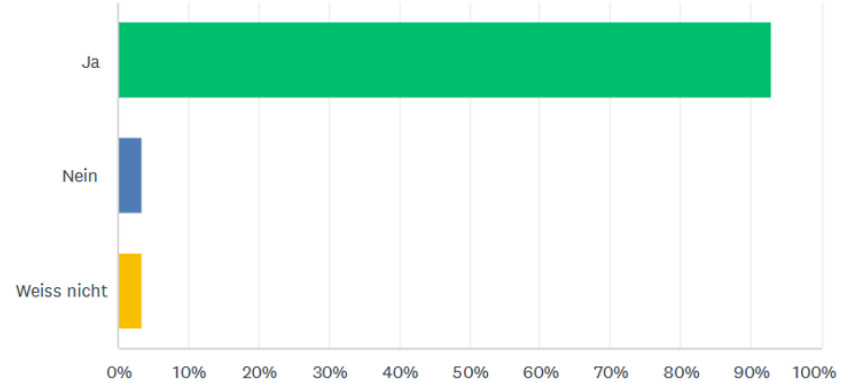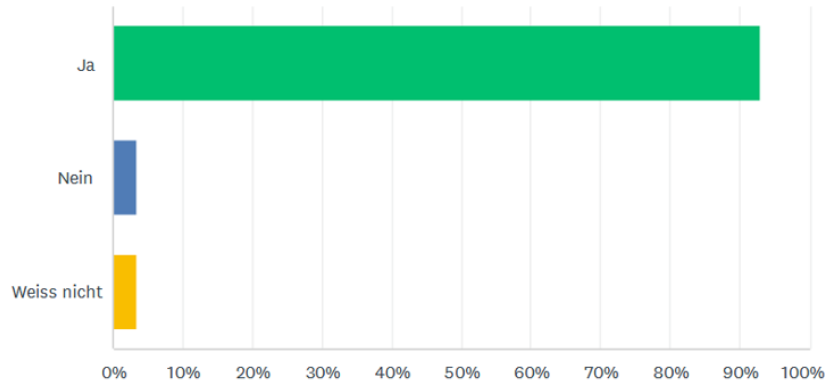-

Themenwahl Zukunftsrat U24

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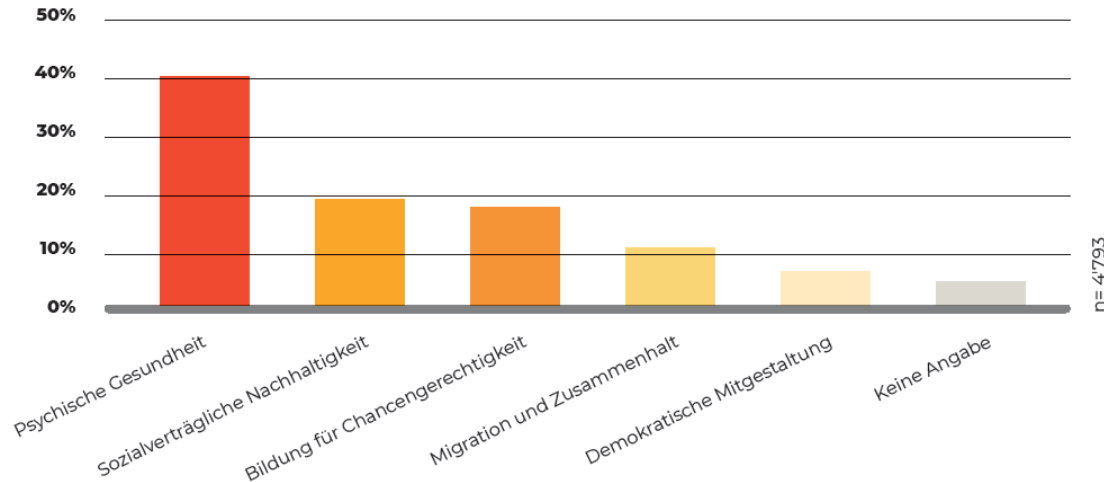
Prioritisation of individual recommendations

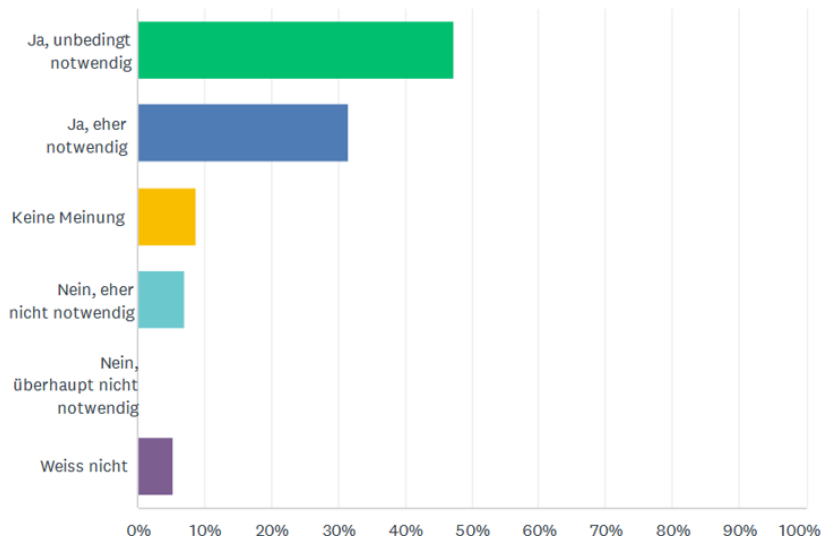**High level of agreement between the recommendations of the Youth and EKKJ and the professional world (3 examples)**
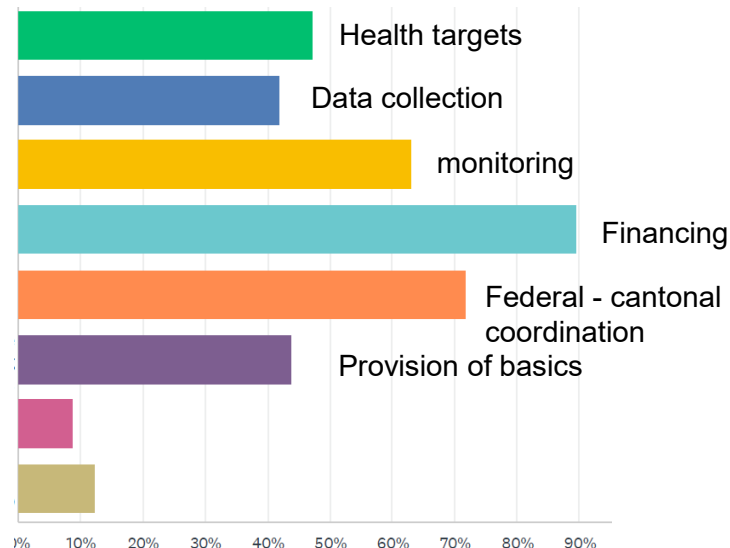
Awareness-raising, R+D participation

Prevention Act

80 % yes

Need for regulation where?

Conclusion

- The young people clearly recognised and named the weak points in the system and made good suggestions for improvements

- The problem is not primarily a lack of services, but a lack of overview, systematisation and evaluation of services

- Better inter-federal, inter-sectoral and inter-professional coordination would create synergies, increase efficiency and save costs

- **The recommendations for action are based on 2 different levels**

    1) Structural, systemic and strategic: Relational prevention
    - Prevention Act with regulation of coordination, funding, objectives...
    - Overcoming the very heterogeneous healthcare landscape, *more equal opportunities*
    - Legal regulation of social media
    - *Strengthening the school environment*: promoting a resilient school culture, strengthening and supporting school management
    - Expansion of leisure activities
    - Measures to *improve accessibility and support* for families and young people at risk
   - *More participation* of young people in research, development of services, co-design of their living spaces

2) At the behavioural level: raising awareness, early detection, early intervention

- In the school setting: improving (mental) health literacy among pupils and teachers, improving media literacy

- In the family setting: improving parents' parenting skills and media literacy

- In non-family settings: leisure time, peers

Challenge:

- The greatest leverage lies in the structural measures - at the same time, this is also where the greatest implementation problems lie

- In the absence of an overarching framework, there is a risk that the number of measures, projects, etc. will continue to grow in an uncoordinated manner without the desired effect

Increase in services - decrease in mental health Why?

Number of services and measures

Mental health
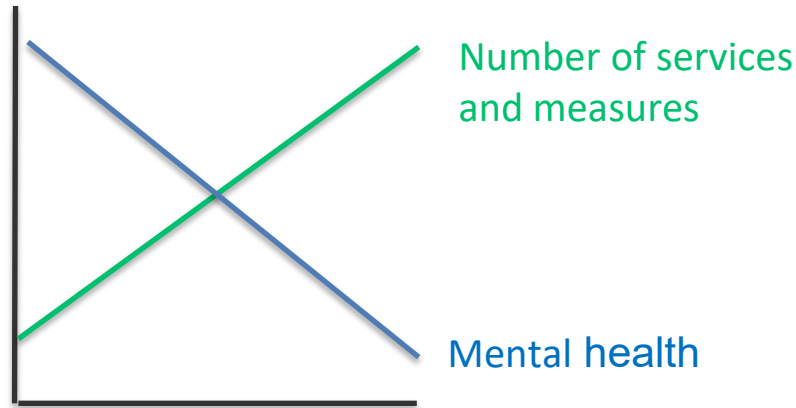
Threats, insecurities, crises

➢ **Loss of control, self-efficacy** ↓
➢ Meaningfulness ↓
➢ Understandability and manageability ↓
➢ **Sense of coherence** ↓

➢ Anxiety, depression, psychosomatic disorders
➢ Loss of trust in decision-makers
➢ Polarisation, populism

Social trends

➢ Pressure to optimise performance, stress
➢ Acceleration
➢ Fragmentation, individualisation
➢ Lack of solidarity, polarisation

Final thoughts

➢ Fundamental considerations on social developments are just as important as concrete offers

➢ Young people are making us an offer to get involved - let's take it seriously

➢ PHCH is building an **alliance** in cooperation with other stakeholders including youth (this is not part of the FOPH mandate)

« 80 Leute, 80 Meinungen und trotzdem ein gemeinsames Ziel. Ich hoffe, dass wir am Schluss konkrete Empfehlungen haben, die auch beachtet werden. »

Nico Hert, Zukunftsrat