

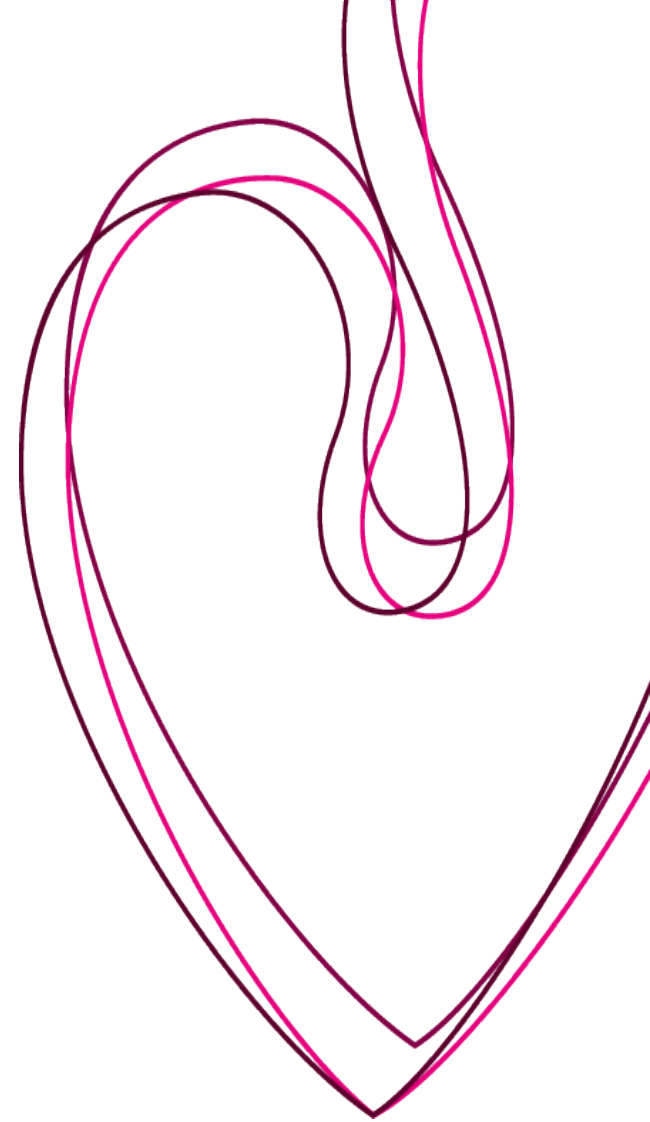
Paris, November 14 2017

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# Does mentoring and bridging youth on welfare improve educational attainments and labour market attachment?

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# Outline

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- What is TrygFondens Center for child research?
  - What do the NEETs look like?
  - Example of two interventions
  - Discussion
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# Active labour market policy (ALMP) in Denmark

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- Close collaboration btw Ministry of Employment, researchers and practioners
- Many policy changes are based on empirical evidence – often collected from RCTs or register-based evaluations
- 2005: First RCT on ALMP – early interventions for short-term unemployment benefit recipients.
  - Found large positive effects – positive cost-benefit outcome
  - Influenced policy
  - Started a series of RCTs (12 since 2005 – more in the pipeline)
  - Evaluations are published in top-field economic journals (Public Economics, Journal of Labour Economics, Labour Economics, and Scandinavian Journal of Economics among others)



# TrygFondens Center for Child Research

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- Interdisciplinary
  - Pedagogical and educational resources, sociologists, psychologists, political scientists, child language researchers, criminologists, nurses, health work researchers, and economists
- Close cooperation btw. researchers, practioners and civil servants
  - Spread knowledge on effectiveness of interventions to politicians and practioners
  - Be inspired by politicians and practioners on which interventions should be evaluated
  - Partnership is essential to dissiminate research findings to the real world

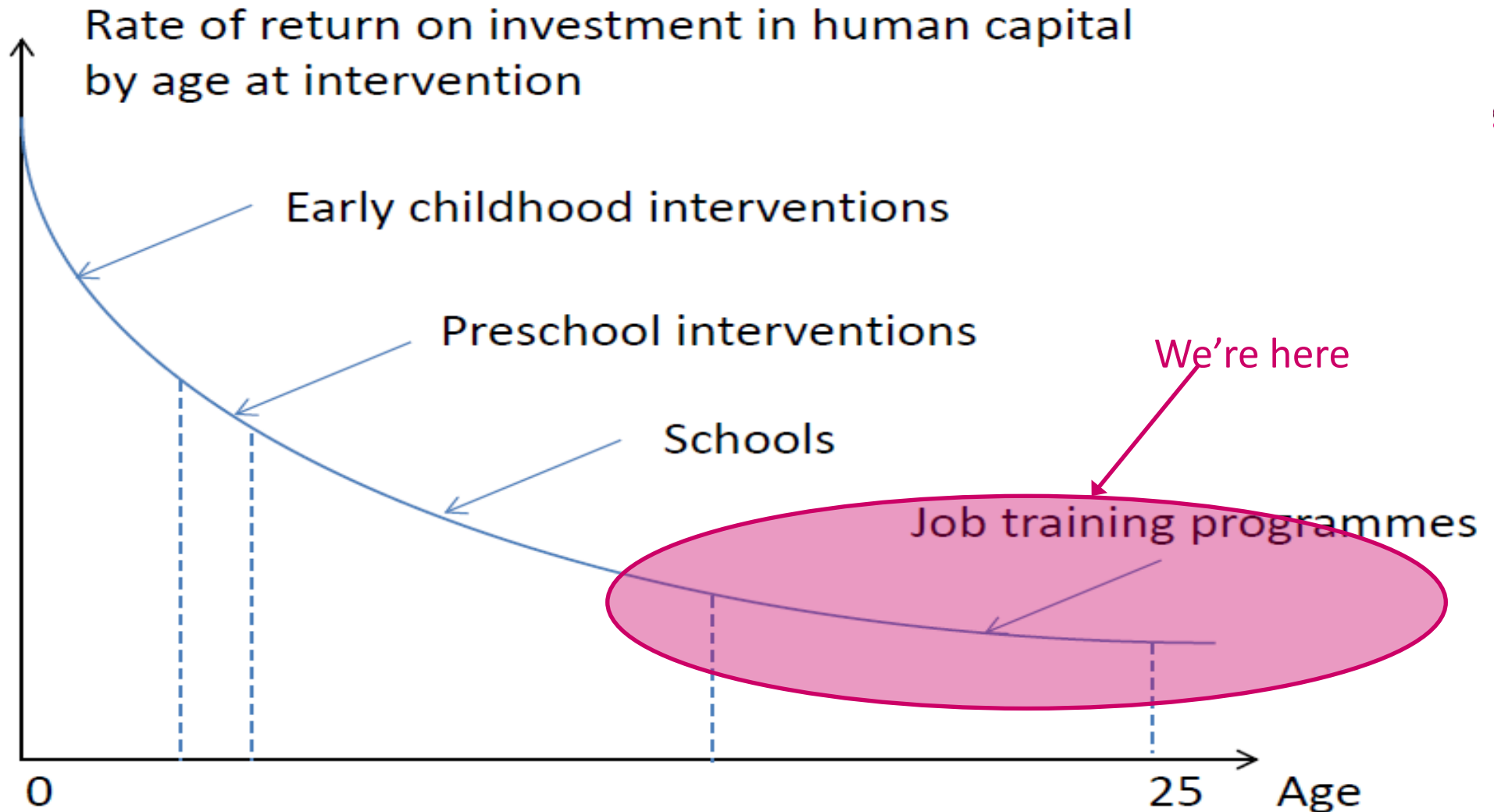
# Focus

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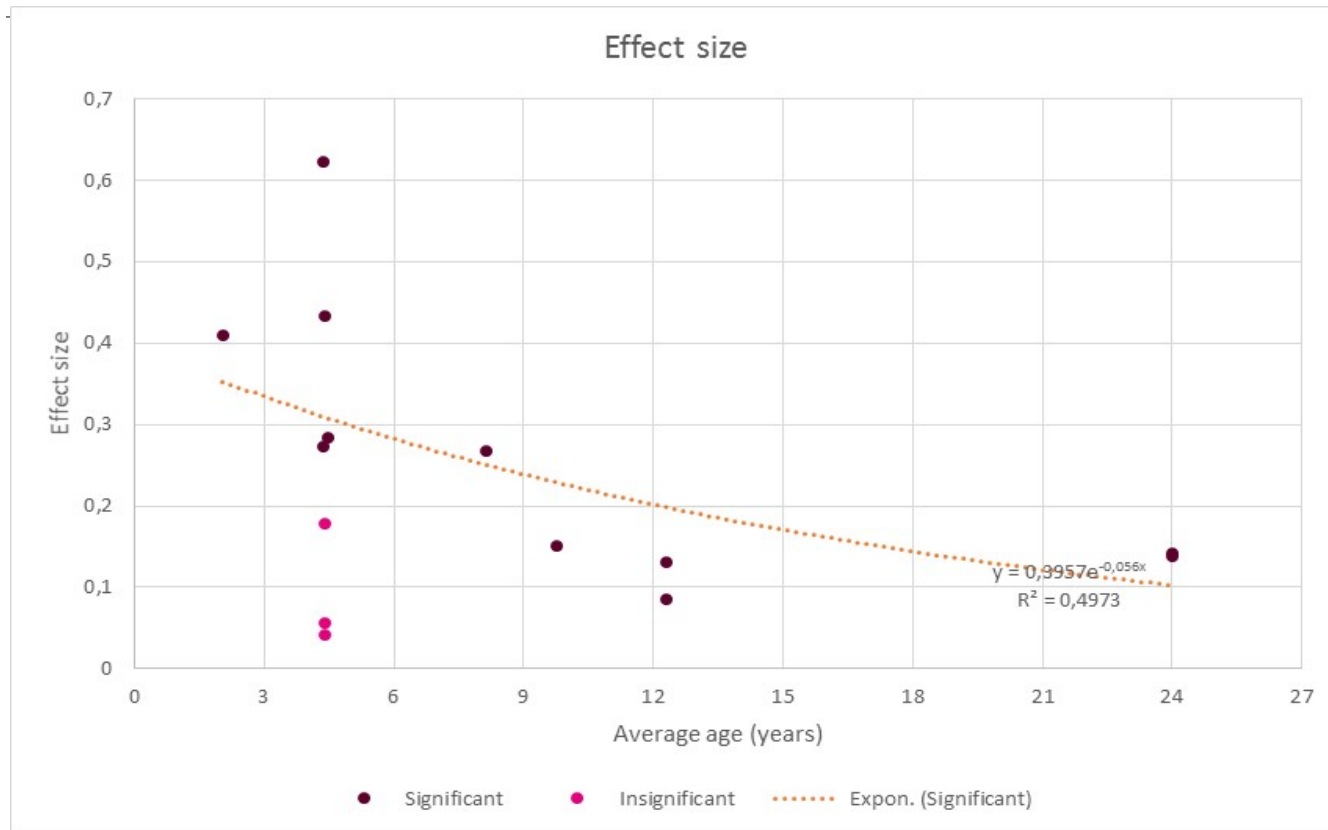
- Hard and soft objects; ‘from well-being to test-scores’
- Solid evaluation techniques
  - Random controlled trials
- Comparability across studies
  - Cost-benefit analysis



# The Heckman curve (dynamic complementarity)



# Danish evidence (based on 8 studies with 13 interventions)



# Interventions aimed at NEETs

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## **Aim:**

To design & test an intervention to help these NEET's into the ordinary educational system (or employment)





# What types of interventions do NEETs need?

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# What types of interventions do NEETs need?

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Heckman & Kautz (2013) summarize the evidence:

- **Short term impacts** can be generated by intensive interventions, but **effects tend to disappear** or decline in the longer term

Heckman & Mosso (2014) are slightly more optimistic:

- *“... **workplace-based adolescent intervention programs and apprenticeship programs with mentoring, surrogate parenting, and guidance show promising results.** They appear to foster **character skills** such as increasing self-confidence, teamwork ability, autonomy, and discipline which are often lacking in **disadvantaged youth.**”*

# What types of interventions do NEETs need?

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## Existing evidence:

**Mentoring has potential**, especially when aimed at disadvantaged youth, but **effects are small** and not always **cost-effective** (Matz, 2014; DuBois *et al.*, 2011; Rodriguez-Planas, 2012; 2014; Rosholm & Svarer 2017)

**Boot camps/summer schools/intensive learning camps** tend to improve character but have no measurable impacts on **cognitive outcomes on average** (Wilson *et al.*, 2008; Meade & Steiner, 2010; Dyssegaard *et al.*, 2016; Slottved *et al.*, 2016)



# Mentor RCT (2012) – main results

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- **Positive but small absolute effects on education and employment**
- Consistently positive effects for women, no effects for men
- Positive education effects for those with no recent prior education attempts
- Positive employment effects for those with low grades



# Mentor RCT – where to go?

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Mentors during welfare spells are not enough

- Small effects on enrolment suggest that all issues have not been addressed – cognitive deficits & mental health issues in particular?
- Small completion effects: No follow-up in education => drop out
  - Bridging – also mentor after enrolment in education



# The Bridging Intervention

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# The Bridging Intervention

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- **Target group:** 18-29 years of age, on welfare, no qualifying education,
  1. Social skills deficit, no cognitive deficits, OR
  2. Cognitive skill deficit, no social skills deficits
- **Intake period:** March 2013-Dec 2014
- **Selection:** Meeting w. case worker during period, if eligible then assignment (**no randomisation**)



# The Bridging Intervention

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Three elements:

- Cognitive and non-cognitive skills training
- Work and education practice
- Mentors





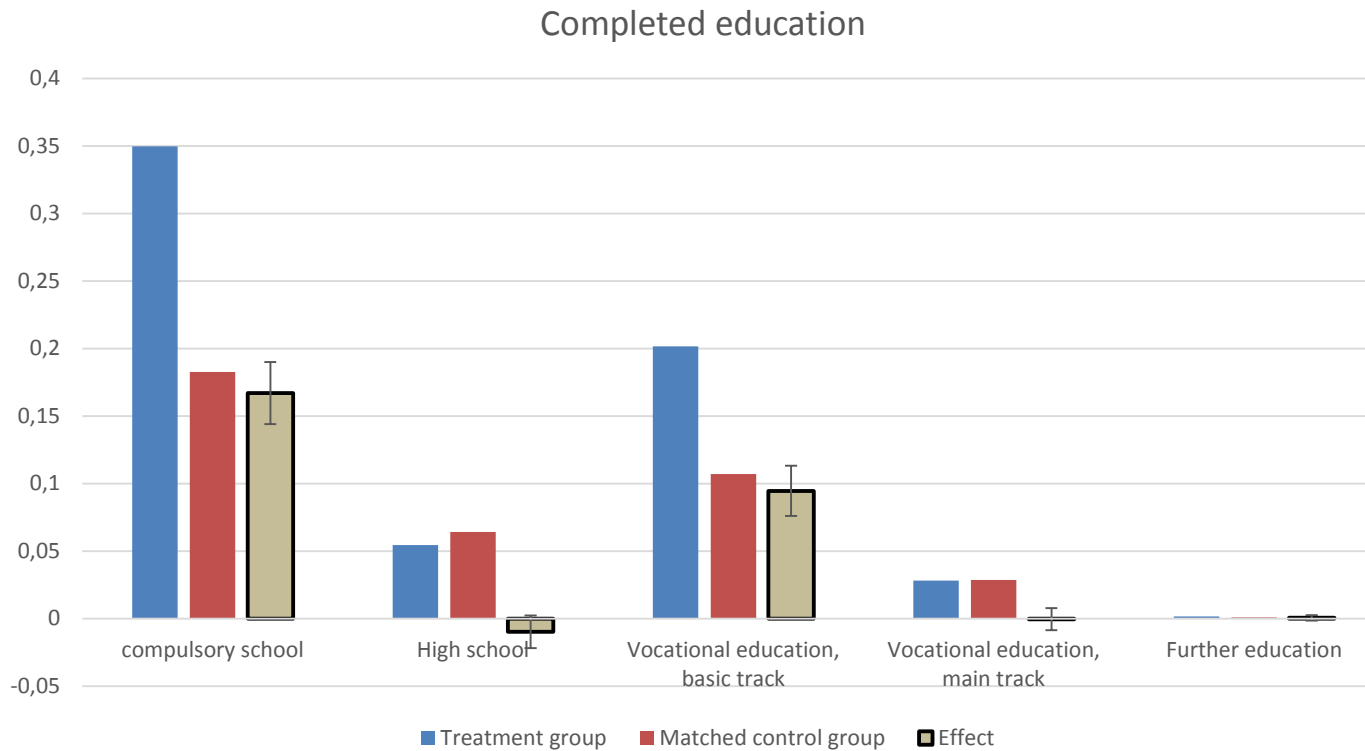
# Data & Descriptives

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- **Resulting sample of participants: 2415** young individuals
- An average bridging period lasted **14 weeks** in a vocational school
- Characteristics of participants (highlights):
  - 23 years old, 60% males, 12% immigrants, 40% of last three years on public support, 20 percent in foster care during childhood, 40% have not completed basic schooling, 22% have been convicted for property crime.

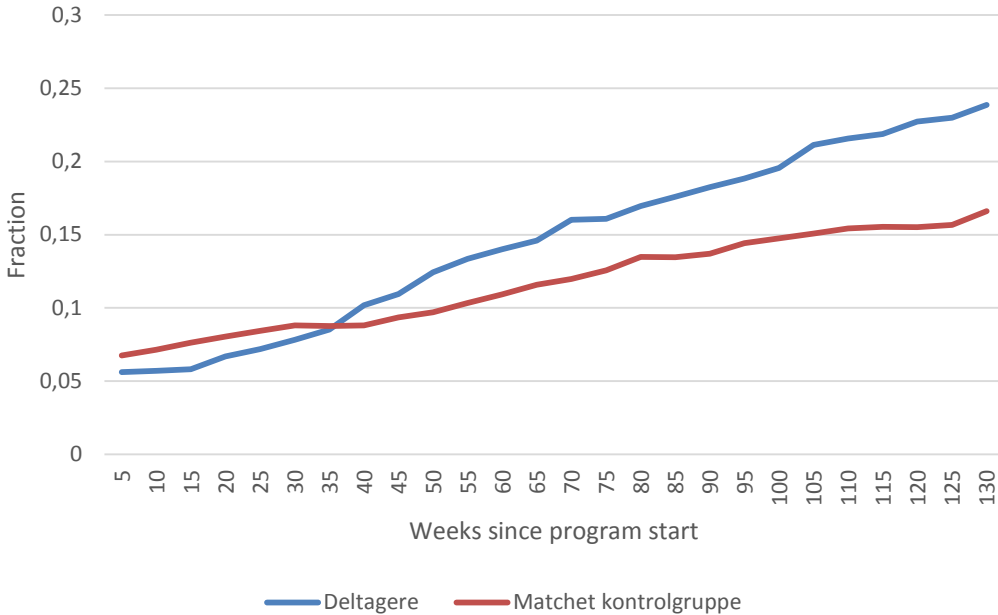


# Results, primary outcome

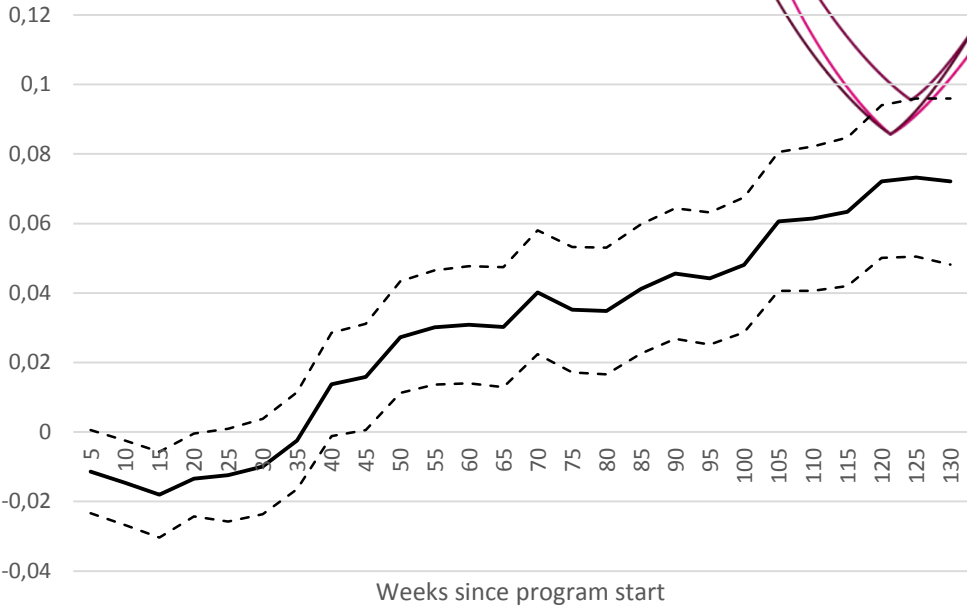


# Results, secondary outcomes

Ongoing vocational main track



Impact on ongoing vocational main track



# Discussion & conclusion

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Bridging has **large effects**, absolute and relative.

- **Effect size (cohen's  $d$ )**, basic vocational track = 0.40
- Works very well for more **disadvantaged** groups
- Also positive impacts on **employment**

Extra costs of bridging compared to TAU: \$2200 per participant

- CBA awaits analysis of completed (full) education

**As of spring 2016, bridging is recommended treatment for NEETs by Ministry of Employment**

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# Discussion & conclusion

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- New bridging intervention – JobBridge - designed by Ministry of Employment and 'expert team'
  - Targets the ~50% most disadvantaged in NEETs group
    - Not ready for education or
    - More than 1 year on welfare
- Tested in RCT, to be launched late 2017

