



The Corona Crisis | March – May 2020



This report examines the harsh consequences the coronavirus crisis had on at-risk youth and young men and women in Israel. It describes the nature of ELEM’s extraordinary work to help them during this time.

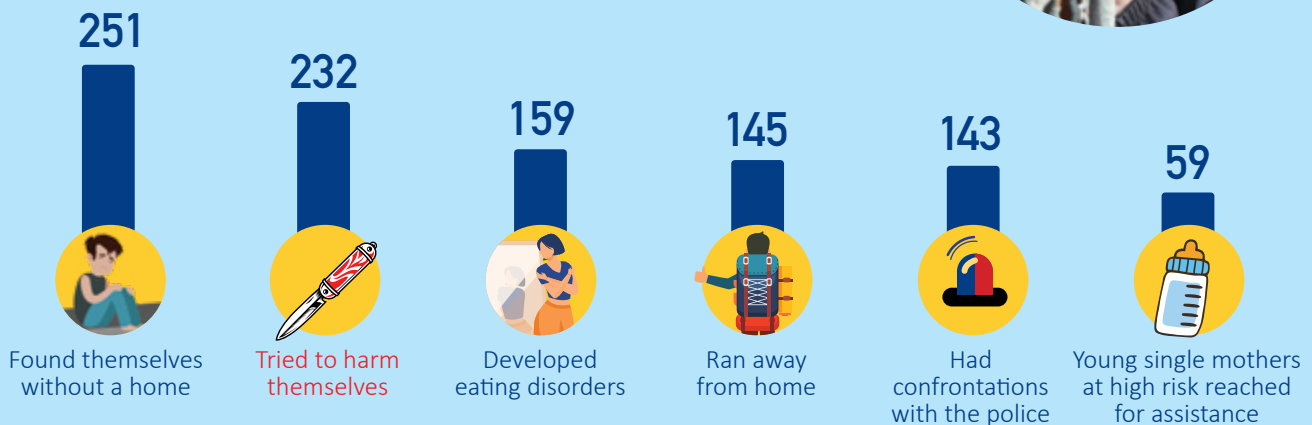
4,800 youth and young men and women were assisted by ELEM during the corona crisis.

COVID19 has shaken the entire world. Within all of the hardship, chaos and adjusting to a new reality, weakened demographics that are already invisible to most people during normal times, became even more so. Many at-risk youth and young adults throughout Israel who face many hardships on a daily basis, suffered during the coronavirus pandemic more than ever, with growing distress that sometimes manifested into extreme emergencies.

ELEM/ Youth in Distress in Israel, found itself facing new challenges. There was more extreme distress as a result of corona restrictions and more youth and young people needed assistance. ELEM increased its operations in order to support, assist and be there for those who needed us. We kept meeting youth and young people everywhere we could, on the streets, at our emergency centers, on social media and Zoom. We didn’t give up on any of them.

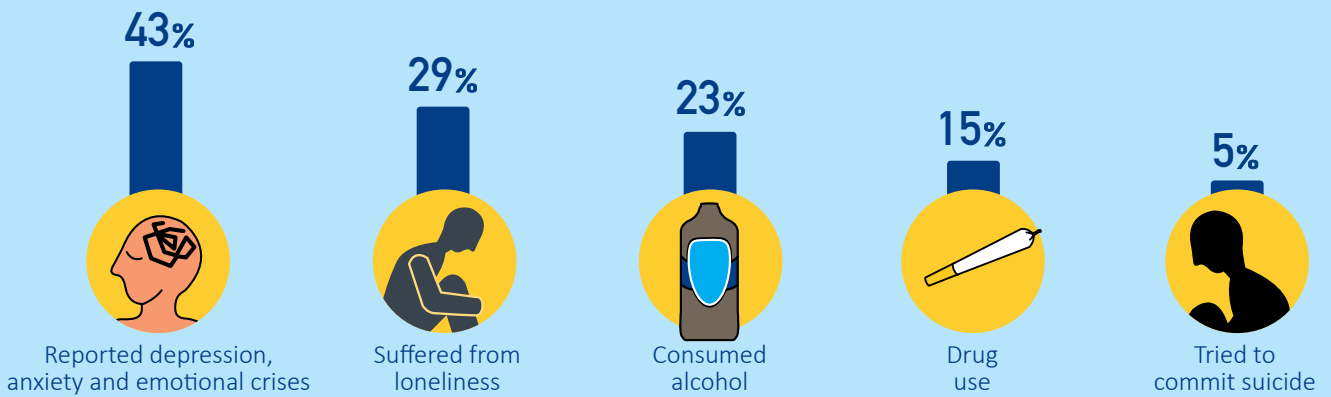
The Consequences of COVID on Youth and Young People were Severe

Many youth and young men and women sought refuge from the pandemic in drugs, alcohol, running to the streets, eating disorders and self-harm. Some were left without a family or a home. Some were left with nothing. Among the youth we met:

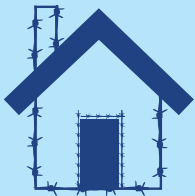


“I’m not gonna wait for the Corona to kill me, I’m gonna do it myself”
(S., 17 years old, an ELEM Outreach Van youth)

The most common phenomena reported by youth and young people supported by ELEM were:

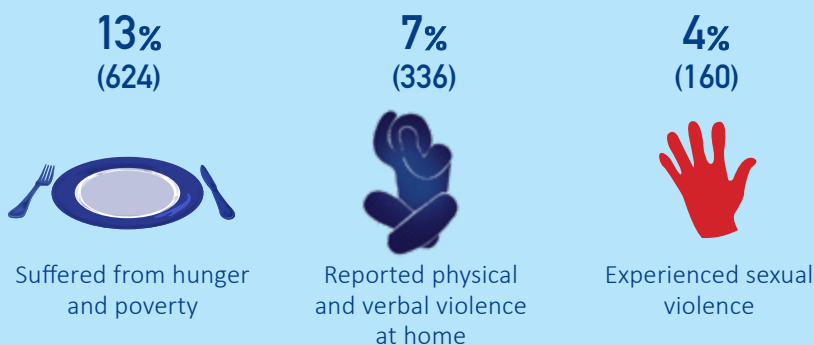


"I don't know what to do. I spend all my time at home, and being home was already hard on me before, so now that everyone's at home at all times, and there are fights and arguments, I think even more about hurting myself."
 (M., 16 year old, youth from the ELEM Digital platform)

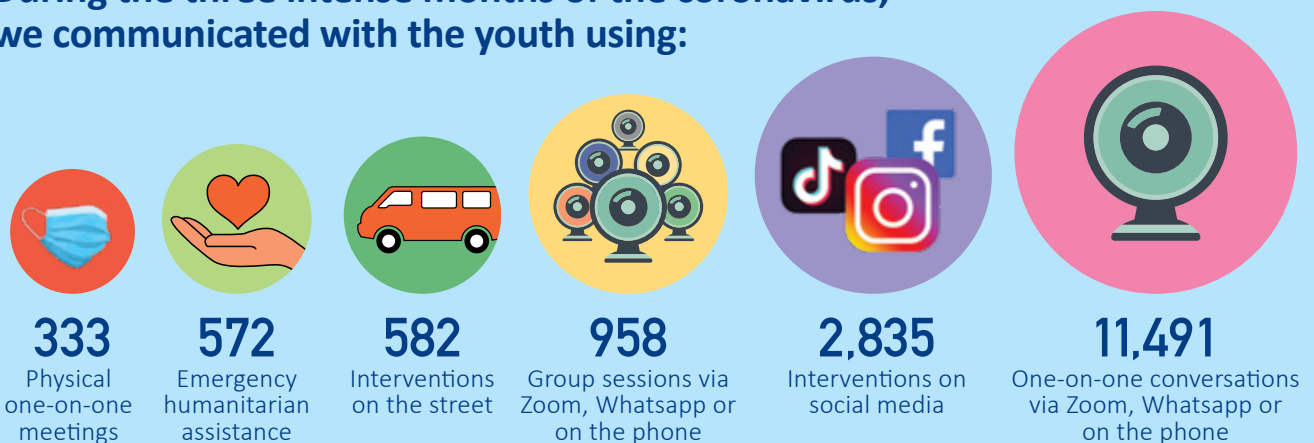


What home means to at-risk youth and young people:

During the Corona Crisis, home became a powder keg for many of the youth and young people and their distress has increased.



During the three intense months of the coronavirus, we communicated with the youth using:



"It's heartwarming to see you haven't abandoned us like other programs did during COVID."
 (A., 16 years old, an Hafuch youth from central Israel)

*Many youth experienced multiple phenomena at once

From North to South: ELEM's Response to the Corona Crisis

Even with a variety of extreme hardships and despite the unusual challenges created by this era, continued to seek youth out and provide assistance without losing any youth.



1012 youth and young people were located and assisted by workers from the Street Work Field on the streets and on social media platforms.



6 extreme risk centers that ELEM operates during normal times, remained fully operational and helped **530** young people who are homeless or at extreme risk.



996 youth who attend ELEM's youth centers received guidance and assistance online, through Zoom, on social media platforms, in groups and one-on-one. When it was an emergency, our teams didn't hesitate to go out in the field when possible.



485 youth and young people received personal, practical and emotional assistance from ELEM's staff as part of the "Mentorship for Independent Life" program. Many lost their jobs during the corona crisis and found themselves once again in poverty, and facing the hardships of survival during trying circumstances. We managed to collect and provide food and basic supplies for them.



290 youth who were victims of, or initiated sexual violence, were treated at ELEM's centers for sexual violence - through Zoon, on the phone, or in person, in case of emergencies.



A 40% increase in online reach: ELEM's Digital platform, www.yelem.com, has extended and increased its operations during that time, by adding additional operation days and hours and expanding the amount of staff volunteers.



59 single mothers at high risk, ages 18-22, who suddenly found themselves with no means or support for themselves or their children, were assisted by ELEM.

COVID19 Initiatives: A Unique, Diverse Response

The corona crisis led ELEM to develop emergency responses that sometimes served as the only solutions on the field. The teams found themselves alone on the deserted streets more than once, assisting in areas that weren't a part of ELEM's operations before the crisis. These initiatives put an emphasis on the importance of understanding the field, applying innovation, efficiency and sensitivity.

Expansion of intervention with families and the Welfare Community Services:

ELEM became an almost exclusive source of assistance in the community. families across Israel.

Distribution of food and supplies:

1051 food baskets, hygiene products, clothes, laptops, and cellular phones were distributed to youth and their families across Israel.

Quarantine for homeless youth:

ELEM opened an "isolation apartment" in central Israel for young at-risk women who needed to quarantine, and provided them with food and supplies.

Innovation and unique response during COVID19

Transportation:

In areas where transportation was restricted, ELEM helped by transporting and accompanying youth to clinics, hospitals, shelters, psychiatric wards and more.

OnLife Initiative:

We offered support to ELEM youth whose process of moving into independent living situations was halted due to the crisis. We did so using a closed online group, offering relevant content through the platform.



The Struggle of the Third/Voluntary Sector

During the corona crisis, ELEM, along with other major Israeli NGOs, stood at the forefront of the battle to save the third sector from collapsing, in order to survive the crisis and keep assisting the most vulnerable and weakened demographics in Israel's society. ELEM participated in roundtables, panels and conferences featuring national decision makers to fight and influence on behalf of the third sector.



4/17/20

"ELEM is the biggest NGO serving youth, and young men and women at-risk, and the Corona crisis hurt our income greatly," says Inbal Dor Kerbel, ELEM's CEO. "The business sector is absorbing losses, the general public received a massive blow, fundraising isn't relevant considering the public's current state of mind, and the government and the authorities still don't have a sorted plan to support the NGOs, and the entire voluntary sector. All the while the sector is required to serve the weakest and most vulnerable demographics."



4/16/20

Nava Barak, President of ELEM Israel: "Thousands of at-risk youth, and young men and women, who lack family support, became more invisible than ever. At this complicated time, they're more likely to get hurt, more exposed to violence, abuse, and loneliness. This is the reality in which all of us at ELEM work harder than ever in order to help them face this distress, and overcome these hardships."



3/29/20

Inbal Dor Kerbel, ELEM's CEO: "We're required to do way more these days, and at the same time we don't receive the means or the approval from the government to keep up the work, and our pockets are getting empty by the second."

Partners and Donors

Thank you! To the many donors, businesses, and partners who stood by our side during this tough period. Thank you for the immediate assistance, the emergency grants, devotion, and partnership – during the hardest of times.

Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Social Services 
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"Matching From the Heart"

Giving wholeheartedly to those in a greater need! During the Corona Crisis, every family in Israel received a stimulus payment of 500NIS/\$145 per child. Many chose to donate the stimulus to those who needed it more, as part of the nationwide campaign - "Matching From the Heart," launched by "Loving Heart," The Rashi Foundation, and other philanthropic foundations. The funds donated by the general public in Israel were matched by philanthropic foundations. This sort of collaboration between 11 NGOs has never been done before. During the campaign, ELEM raised over 600,000NIS/\$173,450. We'd like to offer our immense gratitude to the foundations that initiated and carried this important campaign!



ELEM – We Are A Human Tapestry



ELEM's staff and volunteers

We'd like to thank all of our employees and volunteers, whom, despite the challenges the corona Crisis put them and their families through, stood with us and gave above and beyond, from the bottom of their hearts and souls. This period showed more than ever that the human spirit of our people is the most meaningful driving force in the heart of ELEM's work.

Looking Forward - Ahead of 2021

The real heroes of the corona crisis are the youth and young people who survived this period. But we all know this isn't the end. The consequences of the crisis are long term. Only now, as we go back to business as usual, we're starting to discover the 'Corona Effect' and see the aftermath - social, financial, and emotional consequences. During this period, it is up to the people of the third sector, those who assist the most vulnerable demographics, to face the social and financial consequences in Israel. This is why we urge the launch of a government assistance grant for the third sector, and continuous support of the business sector which will allow the NGOs to continue and assist those who need the help.

ELEM - Youth in Distress

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For donations visit: www.elem.org.il