

Summer in the shadow of corona

At-risk young people
 June-August 2020

ELEM helped

6,051

30% more than
 March-May

teens and young adults



The second wave of the coronavirus outbreak is raging and Israel is in a lockdown that may last for several weeks. The situation of at-risk youth is deteriorating. The end of the first lockdown brought with it a ray of hope, but the second lockdown is now exacerbating their distress.

This report covers the issues facing youth who met ELEM during the second coronavirus outbreak, June-August 2020.



10,878

Face-to-face meetings



9,568

Online and social media meetings



596

Emergency humanitarian aid



590

Teens and young adults at extreme risk



476

Teens and young adults without stable families

During the second outbreak, ELEM staff and volunteers went above and beyond to support our beneficiaries. 99% of staff and 96% of volunteers reported feeling substantial and impactful during this period.

"You give us a sense of belonging. I've been through quite a bit in my life; I've been through my father's murder. I was suicidal, I was depressed. Without the ELEM outreach van, without that weekly chance to talk, I don't think I would be here today."

(B., a teen from Lod)

What happened to teens during the second coronavirus outbreak?

Even after the first lockdown, routine didn't return for teens. There was an atmosphere of "anything goes." The lack of structure during summer vacation left many teens at loose ends for days or weeks, many wandered the streets or social media. **Risk phenomena that surged among teens and young adults during the first outbreak, took root as a new normal during the second outbreak.**

1. Worsening of emotional and mental health risks



Depression and anxiety

3 times greater than 2019*



Loneliness

2 times greater than 2019*



Along with the increase in emotional and mental health risks, ELEM saw:



Increase in self harm

1.5 times greater than 2019*

1.5 times greater previous quarter



Increase in eating disorders

2 times greater than 2019*

1.25 times greater previous quarter

"We – people who suffer from depression, people who suffer from anxiety. We – people who want to end their lives because of fear, because of suffocation. We – people who were harmed in their own homes or in the homes of others. People who never feel safe. COVID-19 won't kill us but the lockdown might." (D., a member of the ELEM activist community)

2. Increase in substance abuse

During this period, the distress the youth faced led to efforts to escape the harsh reality. We saw an increase in use of mind-altering substances:



Alcohol abuse

2 times greater than 2019*

1.6 times greater previous quarter



Drug use

2 times greater than 2019*

2 times greater previous quarter



The increase in substance abuse corresponded to an increase in:



Attendance at unsupervised parties

Outdoor raves, dance parties and parties in rented spaces

4 times greater than 2019*

3. Increase in violence

Many families faced unemployment, poverty, hunger and anxiety which translated into an increase in both verbal and physical violence. In addition, the second outbreak brought an increase in sexual violence.



Violence at home and on the streets

2 times greater than 2019*



Sexual violence

2 times greater than 2019*

2.5 times greater previous quarter



Sexual violence

2 times greater than 2019*

2.5 times greater previous quarter

* Compared to the same period in 2019

The second coronavirus outbreak raised new, worrisome phenomena. ELEM expects these effects to worsen in the coming months:

1. Attrition from school



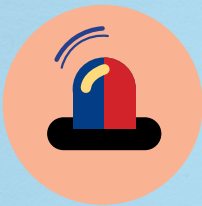
1 of every 10 teens ELEM meets tells us they didn't go back to school in September. We will not be able to verify this statistic for a few months. Some of these teens – minors under age 18 – have begun to work to support their families.

2. Family unit



1 of every 11 teens ELEM meets tells us that COVID-19 harmed their families, exacerbating hunger, poverty, unemployment, leading to depression and even attempted suicide by one or both parents.

3. Brushes with law enforcement



1 of every 20 youths were involved in criminal activity or clashes with police - up 85% over the previous quarter - due to a lack of structure, their poor economic situation and the desire to let loose.

Corona is here to stay

Corona is here to stay and the lockdown will exact a tremendous price. Unlike the first lockdown, the second lockdown brings a lack of hope. The data in this report was collected up until the implementation of the second lockdown.

At this time, we are experiencing:

- Deteriorating basic conditions for our teens and young adults (poverty, hunger, unemployment) and basic needs (food packages).
- Some ELEM support transitioning from face-to-face to online (Zoom, social media)
- High demand at ELEM programs for homeless young adults



Teens and young people are facing an even harsher reality so it is important that we all be aware, pay attention and keep our eyes open to what is happening in homes and on the streets. It is even more important that ELEM projects stay open. ELEM will remain dedicated to helping as many young people as possible handle their distress and reduce risk.

We must be strong heading into 2021, which will be extremely challenging in general, but especially for the nonprofit sector.

* ELEM - Youth in Distress works in cooperation with the Social Services Ministry. Throughout the coronavirus outbreak, many ELEM programs partnered with government ministries, local government and charitable foundations to continue supporting vulnerable youth.

ELEM - Youth in Distress

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