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## **The Corona effect: Teens are lonelier and more depressed**

Somber reality: a special report by ELEM exposes the influence of the pandemic on the youth • According to ELEM, there's been a spike in inquiries made to the NGO between the months of March – May • ELEM has told of a large increase in the number of youth reporting sexual violence, physical or verbal abuse and hunger or poverty.

Written by Yael Odem.

Suffering from loneliness and greater depression: Thus far, the focus of the Corona crisis has been, for the most part, the elderly, whom due to the isolation and the need to watch over themselves experienced deep loneliness. But it appears that younger people, too, are suffering from the consequences of this crisis. A report by ELEM/Youth in Distress in Israel, which was published today (Monday) and was handed to President Rivlin and the Minister of Welfare, uncovers the consequences of the crisis on the youth in Israel.

[Read the full report](#)

According to the report, between the months of March – May, 5% of the youth who reached out to ELEM reported suicide attempts, 29% said they suffered from loneliness (2.25 times more than last year,) and 43% experienced depression, anxiety and emotional crises (4 times more than last year.) ELEM says that 15% shared that they recently used drugs, and 23% reported alcohol consumption (a 13% increase compared to last year.)

ELEM's reps told us that during the crisis, 59 young single mothers reached out for assistance (2.5 times more compared to last year.) 159 of the youth who reached out to ELEM developed eating disorders (a 50% increase compared to last year,) 232 tried to harm themselves, and 251 young men and women found themselves without a roof over their heads during this rough period of all times.

And while most youth consider home to be a safe space, ELEM reports an increase of inquiries about extreme incidents that happened at homes. The report indicates that 160 young men and women turned to ELEM with stories of sexual violence at home (almost twice than last year,) 336 reported

suffering from verbal or physical abuse (a 70% increase compared to last year,) and 624 said they suffer from hunger or poverty.

ELEM also had to adjust its operations during the crisis. Among other things, digital operations expanded so much, that they saw a 40% increase in services provided online. In addition, ELEM helped with quarantine of homeless youth, it distributed food supplies and participated in a variety of social initiatives.

**ELEM Israel President, Nava Barak:** Covid hit the entire world, and within this great hardship and adjusting to the new reality, weakened demographics, that are marginalized as it is, became even more marginalized. Many at-risk youth throughout Israel, who are facing many hardships on a daily basis, suffered during the Corona crisis more than ever. Distress has grown deeper, to the point of intense emergencies. ELEM found itself facing new challenges and in order to face them we expanded our services and kept meeting the youth on all fronts of operation, while adjusting to the new normal - on the streets, at ELEM's emergency centers, on social media and on Zoom. We didn't give up on a single one.

**ELEM Israel CEO, Inbal Dor Kerbel:** Considering the varied extreme hardships the youth has experienced during the crisis, and in spite of the new challenges brought by it, our teams kept locating youth, listen and assist, without losing a single youth. In addition, during the crisis, ELEM took part in the fight to save the third/voluntary sector from possible collapse – with the goal of continuing to provide help to the most vulnerable demographics in our society. Summer break has recently started, and with the concern of a second wave during these challenging times, there's no doubt that the social and emotional consequences of the crisis on our youth will remain relevant for a long time to come. We will keep doing our very best in order to be there for them.