



Street-based youth work in context of Covid-19 - exchange of experiences and potential ways forward

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Uteseksjonen - the City Centre Outreach Service

- ▶ **Street based Outreach Work with patrols every day and night all year around**
- ▶ **Flexible and individual and customised follow up**
- ▶ Psychologists and Cannabis Detox Programme
- ▶ Counselling service
- ▶ Coordinating Crime Prevention towards young adults up to the age of 24 (SaLTø)
- ▶ Mapping and documentation (Rapid Assessment & Response)
- ▶ Various reinforced measures (coordinating trustee's, peer education/peer support, indigenous workers, employment, activity's with mentors, music therapy)



National context - Norway: What is happening in the field

Politics and Practice

- ▶ Vulnerable children and youth have been neglected during covid 19 and lockdown
- ▶ Professionals from services for youth have been working from home or used for emergency work elsewhere
- ▶ Follow/up by phone or video has been cancelled by youth due to fear of reactions from family
- ▶ Vulnerable children and youth from poor families with minority and/or refugee background has been in focus due to often poor language skills and less technical and digital skills and resources
- ▶ Great concern about the spread of covid 19 amongs youth due to lack of social distancing
- ▶ Resources made available for information campaigns
- ▶ Focus on reaching minorities and using different languages and also social media incl. chats
- ▶ Street based outreach work has been used more as a method of reaching at risk groups incl. youth
- ▶ School has been open for vulnerable youth
- ▶ Street based youth services has been seen as key services



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- ▶ After lockdown less vulnerable youth in the City Centre but the most vulnerable youth was still roaming the streets
- ▶ More conflicts in relation to open drug scenes, worries about increase due to absence of the general public / right now we have serious conflicts going on
- ▶ Lack of consideration regarding infection control / social distancing
- ▶ Young adults borderlining open drug scenes prior to lockdown now openly participating in drug trade



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Covid-19 impact on outreach work in Oslo

- ▶ Outreach work were considered as priority measures from the beginning
- ▶ New (and strict) health and safety routines to protect staff from infection
- ▶ Strong focus on health and safety for youth to prevent spreading Covid-19
- ▶ Reporting to administration and dealing with media / what is really going on
- ▶ Encouraging youth to follow health and safety instructions regarding to Covid 19, handing out disinfectant gel
- ▶ Survey about knowledge amongs youth about Covid-19 and how it has affected their lives / findings will be used in our outreach work this summer



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Some thoughts

- ▶ When a lockdown hits and everybody is told to stay home - not everyone has a safe home to stay in.....
- ▶ The importance of professional street based outreach social work as a link between at risk population and welfare services in general - and maybe especially in a lockdown situation
- ▶ The need of trained and skilled social workers and nurses in Street-based outreach youth services
- ▶ General training in health and safety matters pay off when crisis occurs - routines and systematic work prepares for these situations
- ▶ The importance of a good dialogue with and involvement of youth in all stages of the work
- ▶ When the crisis hits, we are also more adaptable to change and new ways of working, some of the changes makes us work smarter (innovation)
- ▶ Crisis demands good leadership / stand by your youth workers / they are frontline heroes



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