

Menneskerettighetsrådet - Study on impact of covid-19 on young people

What are the main challenges that young people face in your country in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic and the response to it? If any agedisaggregated data has been collected in this regard, please include it in your response.

Challenges for young people with disabilities

Violence and abuse

Available knowledge about children and young people's exposure to violence and abuse during the first closure indicates that girls, young people with disabilities, young people in low-income families and young people in families where their parents had psychosocial difficulties have been extra exposed during the pandemic. On behalf of Bufdir, NKVTS conducted a national survey among young people (N = 3,575) aged 13–16 years. The survey shows that about 1 in 6 reported at least one form of violence or abuse during the eight weeks the school was closed in the spring of 2020. Furthermore, the survey found that the proportion of young people with disabilities exposed to violence or abuse during the closure was about twice as large compared with young people without disabilities (1 in 3 against 1 in 6, respectively).

School and education

Several children and young people with disabilities have been without a high-quality school – and educational assistance over time. It can be challenging to make up for lost learning outcomes. Studies show that children with the right to special education or with other needs for facilitation at school, have received less follow-up and a poorer offer than expected.

In a survey organized by the DPOs it is reported that many have gotten less out of teaching compared to before the pandemic, and that this is related to less social stimulation, less follow-up from the teacher, lack of access to study place/library and lack of access to technical aids. Almost half of those who receive special education state that they have not received what they are obliged to.

Social isolation

Many young people who are at risk have had to isolate themselves to avoid becoming infected, although services and activities was reopened. Several young people at risk reported a lack of awareness of infection control and a lack of facilitation for digital participation in various arenas. This in turn can lead to more isolation.

Furthermore, a survey shows that digital solutions for teaching have not worked or just worked partly for many young people with disabilities. This is partly due to little adapted digital solutions, lack of universal design, and poorer follow-up from teachers. Many of the students with disabilities have been very dependent on parental help.

Challenges in coordinating services

Studies conducted by NOVA, commissioned by Bufdir, indicate that the pandemic and the closure have had extensive consequences for the health, care and welfare services offered

to children with disabilities and their families (Bøhler & Ugreninov, 2021; Bossy & Hervie, 2021). A key finding in Bøhler and Ugreninov's (2021) qualitative study is that challenges related to the coordination of various services were reinforced, in the way that parents were given a greater share of the coordination responsibility. Both the children and families experienced a great burden due to absence of a great number of services.

Participation in sport and leisure activities

The corona situation has had major consequences, for children and young people's participation in leisure activities, and for the organizations that offer meeting places and activities. Closures, both locally and nationally, have led to that organizational activities have largely not been possible to carry out as normal. Nevertheless, leisure activities have been carried out in line with the infection control guidance.

Participation in art and culture

Rambøll's report «Mapping of municipal and county municipal measures aimed at the cultural sector to mitigate the consequences of the corona pandemic» sums up that "Municipalities and county municipalities points out recruitment as by far the biggest challenge in the cultural sector in the future. It is pointed out in particular that the public waits for reopening, that volunteering suffers, but also that it is difficult to bring back participants on activity offers, especially among children and young people." A specific problem that has been pointed out is that there has been given more support to the sports field, and that big and organized actors have received support, whereas the smaller and / or poorly organized have not. "

Measures

What measures is your Government taking to support young people and ensure the full implementation of their rights during and after the pandemic? Please provide examples of policies and programmes adopted to this end, in particular regarding

- *right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health (including with the increase in domestic violence and abuse, anxiety and depression, stress caused by social isolation, etc.);*
- *right to participate meaningfully in political and public affairs (including in connection with the prohibition of gatherings and transition to online rallies);*

Sports and voluntary organizations have carried out activities for children and young people even during periods of strict restrictions. We do not yet know what consequences the pandemic will have for dropouts from children and young people in leisure activities, but this is something we will follow up. It has become clearer how important leisure activities are for children and young people, and especially for vulnerable children and young people.

Diversity and broadness in activities were facilitated through good support schemes for volunteering so that more children and young people will have the opportunity to participate in cultural activities, sports and volunteering. The pandemic has had major consequences for the culture, volunteering and sports sectors. Temporary state support schemes from 2020

have aimed to stimulate activity as far as this has been possible within current infection control.

The government's covid-19 schemes in the field of volunteering and sports

In 2021, there were two covid-19 schemes for sports and volunteering. The purpose is to support voluntary policy goals of broad participation and diversity and to remedy the sector through the ongoing covid-19 crisis. The government has announced that the schemes will be extended until end of June 2022.

Covid-19 schemes for arts and culture

The government has taken measures to maintain an arts and cultural offer through the pandemic. The stimulation scheme for the cultural sector is not directly aimed at children and young people, but they are also a target group.

Revised national budget 2021

In the revised national budget for 2021, three packages of measures were presented for vulnerable groups. Among others, extra funds were granted for the grant scheme for people with disabilities and funds for a new grant scheme to increase activity among children and young people with disabilities. Furthermore, extra funds were allocated to strengthen the investment in welfare technology among children, young people and adults with disabilities, to strengthen the stimulation program for health volunteering and to strengthen measures within child rehabilitation in specialist health services. In addition, extra funds were allocated to the supplementary scheme to make up for lost learning.