

Norwegian Minors (youths) and their exchange of sexual services

*Assault, Prostitution, Experimentation or
Survival Sex?*

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Nordic Prostitution Network

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About us and our work

- Ulla Bjørndahl
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 - Pro Sentret is the City of Oslo's service for people selling sex and a National Centre of Expertise
 - Worked at Pro Sentret since 2007 information/education/mapping/reporting...
- Anne Grytbakk
 - Child Care Worker with a masters degree in SW
 - Lecturer at Sør-Trøndelag University College
 - Worked for 12 years at Ung Pro (Church City Mission in Trondheim) with young people at risk

The term «exchanging sex»

- The term is better because the boundaries are blurred when it comes to the minors activities (compared with adults selling sex)
- Minors does not identify their actions as “prostitution”
- The stigma relating to prostitution should be avoided
- Intervention is easier if we use **their own words**
- Usually the transaction happens somewhere in the “grey zone” between:
 - “normal” sex which is based on excitement and equality
 - and
 - prostitution: buyer, seller, money

What?

- Minors having sex in exchange of:
 - money
 - drugs
 - clothing
 - food
 - accommodation
 - emotional security
 - cigarettes
 - credit/top-up cards for their phones
 - gifts
 - access to a bar, a party
 - etc



- The power balance between the parties is often unequal
- The minors motivation for the exchange is often something else than sex
- The minor can be forced by others and in some cases there are forceful circumstances, but the minor can also be very active in marketing, organizing and establishing the exchange
- Some exchange sex as a part of exploring their own sexuality, sexual curiosity and sexual boundaries
- Others exchange sex to solve crises/ have a urgent need of money, food or a place to sleep

Prevalence studies

	Participants	Girls	Boys	Average
Ung i Oslo (1996) (2002)	12 000 youths in Oslo (14-17 years)	0,6 % Debut: 14,1	2,1 % Debut: 13,5	1,4 % Once or more
Ung i Trondheim (2005)	6273 youths in Trondheim (15- 18 years)	?	More boys than girls	3, 5 % once or more
Ung i Trondheim (2009)	4289 youths in Trondheim (15- 18 years)	?	?	15 years: 1,6 16 +: 2,5 The last year
Nordic Baltic (2007)	4911 youths in 9 regions in Norway (17-19 years)	0,7 % - 1 %	2,8 %- 5, 4 %	? Once or more

Who?

Important: the data where collected at schools and asked only about sex exchanged with money

Ung i Oslo

- Diverse social backgrounds
- More prevalent among youths with:
 - family break-up
 - high level of alcohol consumption among parents
 - hanging out in the city center at night
 - victims of violence
 - depression/ anxiety symptoms among the boys
- Strong connection between selling sex and...:
 - high number of sexual partners
 - early sexual debut
 - conduct problems
 - high use of alcohol and drugs

Who?

Ung i Trondheim:

- Higher prevalence among youths who reported:
 - high use of drugs
 - experienced bullying
 - poor diet
 - feeling lonely
 - not spending much time with their family

Nordic Baltic:

- Those who had experienced sexual assault or assaulted others were more open to the idea of selling sexual services than the others
- The boys had a more positive attitude towards prostitution than girls had

Where?

- Not at the traditional adult markets i.e. escorts sights, streets and massage parlors
- Internet (apps, social media, chatrooms)
- City centres
- Malls
- Older «boyfriends»
- «Neighborhood uncles»
- Gathering places for young people
- Private parties
- ...







Ida – 16 years

- Ida was lonely and missed her daddy
- She got a new friend(26) online who become “everything” for her
- The grooming is about befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child/minor
- She wanted a new father, but she met an abuser

“ The worse thing about it all was when I realized that I had been tricked “

Kari and Mari 15 years

- They got a new friend on the Internet. He was 23 years
- Kari and Mari thought he was funny and a little particular.
- They meet him with his car and one day he asked them to give him a blowjob
- The girls get alcohol and cigarettes.
- Kari and Mari thought they were smart – and get exactly what they wanted
- Who is cheating?

What happens?

- Minors are sexually exploring, very naive and inexperienced
- Some are even more curious and exploring
- Some minors need more support and instruction than others
- They don't know as much about sex and sexual feelings as adults think they do
- Young sexuality, in both girls and boys, is attractive

Challenges

- Even the abusers are surprised and puzzled by how easy it is to deceive young boys and girls
- Peers can be abusers
- It is difficult to expose these matters
- Maybe the minors need more support and guidance from adults?
- Even young people want to be a subject and not a victim