

Political statement C13

Proponent: NPA Youth for Solidarity

Exclusion and extremism

Exclusion is an increasing social issue. The *UngData* survey from 2018 indicates that conditions have never been better for young people, while at the same time more people than ever before feel socially isolated. When everyone else is succeeding, it is even more difficult and hurtful to be left behind.

Feelings of exclusion are harmful to individuals and to society as a whole. The most important growth arenas for inclusion are kindergartens and schools, but children and young people need good leisure offers as well. There are environments where conditions are highly conducive to including young, vulnerable people. Some of these arenas focus on positive voluntary works, yet others can be based on criminal enterprise, drugs or radical ideas. The battle against extremism is directly linked to the battle against exclusion. The lack of a feeling of community, social responsibility and affiliation can lead to extremism, discontent and loneliness in the long term. It is here that voluntary organisations must plug the gap and provide good, safe places to meet, where everyone can feel welcome.

Increased polarisation and a public debate containing racist slogans - considered to be a right based on the fundamental freedom of expression - are other frightening tendencies currently on the rise. More and more countries are turning sharply towards nationalism and extreme right-wing thought. Isolating groups and creating an “us and them” environment is a dangerous way to go. Feeling ostracised from a given group can leave you desperate to find a new group to belong to – no matter who they might be. If you feel that society has let you down, most likely you will not feel any loyalty or any responsibility for contributing to this society. And this is precisely why we must not give up. We must continue to challenge prejudice, hate and xenophobia with facts, while simultaneously, in a serious manner, recognise people’s fear(s).

This is an area where Norwegian People’s Aid is to speak out strongly for inclusion, diversity and community. And against xenophobia, exclusion and extremism.

Norwegian People’s Aid demands:

- That Norwegian authorities implement tangible measures to combat extremism and rising racism in Norway.
- That Norwegian authorities implement an appropriate integration policy which ensures that people who are granted residence and who stay in the country are free to live their lives and have the opportunity to make a contribution.
- That all local authorities adopt an action plan to combat racism.
- A boost to operating subsidies and donations for voluntary organisations, so that we can create good, safe arenas for people who are otherwise at risk of being left behind.