

Japanese Phenomenon Hits Sweden

Project Hikikomori helps young people who isolates themselves at home for extended periods of time and who neither work nor study. The project helps young people overcome isolation and become more involved in the community.

Hikikomori is a collective name for the hundreds of thousands of young Japanese who, due to the demands of society, choose to isolate themselves in their parental home having almost no contact with the outside world. The phenomenon is also found in Sweden albeit slightly different and smaller in scale. Withdrawing from society may have negative consequences, and the young people who withdraw in this manner may struggle to move forward in life with studies, work and family.

They want to go out in the world, they want to make friends or lovers, but they can't.

Tamaki Saito, psychiatrist

The Hikikomori Project in Sweden

Assistance and treatment is individualized and requires cooperation between different players in society to be successful. Participation in Hikikomori is divided into three steps:

Step 1: Create trust between participant and supervisors, identify the participant's background, problems and dreams for the future. Method: various mapping and assessment forms. Motivational interviewing.

Step 2: Conversations with a supervisor and social activities within as well as outside of the project premises. Visiting the participant at home if needed. The activities are scheduled and published in advance on the project's blog. Participating in the activities is voluntary. Method: exposure, socialization and motivational talks.

Step 3: Initiate preparations for studying, working or job training. Study visits and further conversations with the supervisor as well as ongoing social activities.