

# The child- and youthcare system in times of covid in Austria

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Who was relevant for the system in times of covid?

Not Social Work-

What was relevant for the child- and  
youthcare system in times of covid?

Not the child welfare

Restrictions on:

Contact between children and parents  
(Problematic homesending in endangering family situations)

Social fields like school or kindergarden  
peer contacts face-to-face outside and inside  
institutions

leisure time activities

These restrictions lead to more pressure on children, youngsters and their families.

But instead of

Enlarging social work it came in the first period to:

Reduction to office and home-office work for the field profession of social work

Typical for Austria:

Reducing the federal law for child and youth care to a one-page-paper handing on the legislative process to the nine federal counties, who, so far, only had the legislative process for the concretion of guidelines of the federal law.

The nine counties can only make changes in the nine existing laws by consensus:

The system got stuck in itself.

The main impact of covid to the child and youthcare system is standstill.

Eventhough there is innovation – this does not change the system but rather reinforces the standstill. Innovation is integrated without replacing anything.

3 cultural aspects:

Paternalism

Expertocracy

Labeling abnormality as a disease

# Attitudes that replace self-reflection

A naive belief in progress; „We get better step by step!“

A superficial view on mistakes: There are black sheep as everywhere!“

No effect analysis: „We do our best and that must be enough!“

Systems-change?

Yes!

To understand this situation, we have to understand the child- and youthcare system as a system in a sociological meaning, on a macro level.

What are the specific roles to be in the system:

the case and the professional

Who decides, who gets (and who loses) the role? - The system.

What is the „Gründungsgewalt“ incorporating violence (Rene Girard) of the system?

Basic principles of social systems (N. Luhmann):

The element is communication, nothing else

„communication must go on“

Communication runs via roles

# Necessity of a systems change

A system does not change from inside, as long as communication is going on, it only adapts to its surrounding

Any critics has to have the form of a systems-communication

A system can not be changed from outside, it can only be irritated by ist surrounding

Who could irritate the child- and youthcare system?

Politics

Mass-media

Science