

Abstract

Deviation as maldevelopment or a potential resource

Methodology and findings from three creative workshops

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Neglected children often develop in a way which deviates from the norm of 'normal development'. They can develop specific competencies, such as higher levels of accountability, reflexivity and the ability to read other people's needs and intentions, as well as disorders such as anxiety, loneliness and self-hatred. However, it is extremely rare that the special characteristics, that these children have developed, is recognized as competencies and supported as a resource. Instead, they are seen as symptoms of 'maldevelopment'. This makes these qualities and competencies something to be compensated and countered, before the child can develop 'healthy', that is normally.

Observation of the above outlined problem makes the starting point of a project with the title 'deviation as a potential resource – a visionary approach to social work with children. In the first phase of the project, three creative workshops: one with children; one with adults who as children were regarded as deviating; and one with social workers, is carried out. The purpose is exploration and development of ideas about how to do things differently: how the view and practices in regard to neglected children's deviation can be turned upside down from maldevelopment and compensation towards recognition and empowerment. In the presentation, we - beyond explaining the methodology of the creative workshop, including the epistemological rationales for choosing this approach - report on the findings.