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Child Protection Systems:

An international study comparing child protection systems from five countries (Australia, Finland, Germany, Sweden and the United Kingdom) that provides scientifically founded recommendations for improving child protection in Switzerland.

Efficiently protecting children from violence and abuse is the stated aim of all countries that have signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, nations organised according to a federalist system face specific challenges when it comes to the creation of an effective and wide-reaching child protection system. This also applies to Switzerland, where responsibility for child protection mainly lies with cantonal and local authorities. While this enables local needs to be addressed, it can prove challenging when it comes to maintaining an overview and coordination. In this regard, it may be worth looking outside one's own country and analysing how others are tackling this challenging task and what approaches appear most promising.

International comparison of effective child protection systems

For this reason, the newly established Swiss Project Fund for Child Protection+ (see box) appointed the Bern University of Applied Sciences to carry out a study. Its aim was to analyse the current level of provision of effective child protection systems in various countries, to compare good practice on an international level and to examine it with respect to application in Switzerland.

An initial step involved local academics carrying out analyses in five selected countries (Australia, Finland, Germany, Sweden and the United Kingdom). In a second step, the results were subjected to further investigations and evaluations with regard to the feasibility of implementation in Switzerland. This was done with a group of experts comprising Swiss specialists from the fields of law, academia and practical application, who then derived recommendations for Switzerland.

Recommendations for Switzerland

The 14 recommendations derived for Switzerland provide politicians and those active in the field with scientifically founded ideas as to how child protection in Switzerland can be more effectively advanced. The recommendations relate to both national and cantonal measures, as well as to education, family participation and the methodology of applied prevention and intervention methods. What is fundamental to the recommendations is the fact that they apply at different levels, are tailored to one another and are designed to support two key systems: a capable emergency system that mobilises when cases of violence or abuse have occurred; and an identification and prevention system that identifies at-risk population groups and uses preventive measures to ensure that emergency cases do not occur whenever possible.

A brief overview of the 14 recommendations as well as the entire study can be downloaded at <http://kinderschuttfonds.ch/publikationen/> in German, French, Italian and English.



Schweizerischer Fonds für Kinderschutzprojekte
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Contact:

For questions on the study:

Manuela Krasniqi, phone 031 322 91 69,
manuela.krasniqi@bsv.admin.ch
Child and Youth Affairs,
Federal Social Insurance Office (FSIO)

For questions on the Swiss Project Fund for Child Protection:

Muriel Langenberger, President, Tel. 031 324 81 93,
muriel.langenberger@bsv.admin.ch
Head of Child and Youth Affairs,
Federal Social Insurance Office (FSIO)

Swiss Project Fund for Child Protection

The charitable association %Swiss Project Fund for Child Protection+(formerly PPP . Programme National pour la Protection de l'Enfant) identifies and supports evidence-based prevention and training projects with measurable results. It also funds applied research projects that seek to close knowledge gaps in the field of prevention. Through the active dissemination of results, findings and experiences, its medium-term aim is to form a knowledge network that benefits all the parties involved in child protection and contributes to the sustainable improvement of child protection.

As a public-private partnership (PPP), the association combines the knowledge and existing networks of its public and private members, and adds to existing structures and organisations in the field of child protection through its activities. The three founding organisations are:
Federal Social Insurance Office (FSIO),
Oak Foundation,
UBS Optimus Foundation.

www.kinderschutzfonds.ch