

Abstract

The dissertation, in the form of qualitative historical research, follows the development of institutional care for at-risk children. The focus is on a detailed description of eight innovative projects created at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. It stresses the inspirational overlapping of the described projects in the context of contemporary Czech etopedic practice. This historical period was chosen as it was a time of all kinds of experiments. Looking back and describing successful solutions to care issues in the past can contribute to the current discussion on the effective form of institutional care in Czechia.

The dissertation focuses on Junior Republic (USA), Ford Republic (USA), Little Commonwealth (UK), Baumgarten (Austria), Boys Town (USA), House of Orphans (Poland), Gorky Colony (Soviet Union), and Summerhill (Great Britain) – as these models are only briefly described in Czech scholarly literature.

To achieve its goals the research relies on the combination of a direct method and a multiple case study. For triangulation, various primary data sources are used.

Topics that have emerged in the past relate to the present situation via Standards of Quality of Care (2015), with 17 inspection reports from residential institutions caring for at-risk children, and 17 annual educational plans.

A detailed scrutiny of these materials showed that the elements that worked in the past, (and may work in addressing current issues), are the active approach of directors to fundraising, entrusting more responsibility to children, developing financial literacy in inmates, and the use of modern technologies.