



## CARE

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### Care work forces women into precarious life circumstances.

In Austria care work is family business and thus strongly linked with gender hierarchies. For 46% of the elderly people in need of care this is provided exclusively within the family, 32% are supported by mobile care services, 17% stay in care homes and 4% are cared for by round-the-clock care (24 hours care service).

More than 70% of the home care is provided by women.

„Cash for Care“ is an illusion, says the Professor of Political Science Erna Appelt (University Innsbruck), because nursing benefits are not at all an adequate compensation, but it rather forces the nursing people into precarious life circumstances: 47% of the nursing people get either no income at all or a monthly income only up to 700€ (net, without 13. and 14. monthly payment). About 1/5 of all nursing people do not have any income of their own, among these are 91% women.

Round-the-clock care, mainly based on freelance work, is organised as pendular migration from eastern neighbouring countries. Foreign women provide care work underpaid, mainly under very difficult circumstances and almost without social rights. And this care-model is not available for the low-income class.

The Austrian care system focuses not on the effective demand, but on a minimum of nursing benefit under tight cost objectives in a neo liberal New Public Management sense. The big gap in the whole social system is closed by family members, which are mostly women.

### What is Good Life?

We need a new view on our world and on our personhood, claims Michaela Moser, Professor at the Department of Health and Social of the Fachhochschule St. Pölten. Currently our thinking and our language are shaped by a dualistic hierarchical order: Men stand above women, culture above nature, etc. But this order is about to crumble.

Based on the question about good life, Michaela Moser claims a radical change in the perception of understanding and practical experience of care work. One vital element is the perception that human freedom is always realized in relatedness, that dependency and neediness are basic conditions of our personhood. How can freedom in dependency co-exist properly? Which competences do people need to run a good life? How do we have to organise our relatedness to enable a good and succeeding life for all?

### Politics without a sense of crisis

We are in a multiple crisis and in a care crisis, too. Paradigms and aspects of a new order are already developed and some of them even implemented, e.g. basic income, common ways of life, solidary economic businesses. How is it possible to transfer these particular experiences into wider life contexts? Operational networking on all different levels is necessary. Individuals as well as groups of people have to be empowered to represent their own interests and to co-operate especially in the question of care work.

For politicians it is strongly recommended to achieve a sense of crisis and a deeper insight into the crisis.

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