Professional article

# Regions and municipalities have stood the test - on dealing with the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic

**Björn Brorström and Mikael Löfström**

## Abstract

In connection with the pandemic, the Swedish governance model has been discussed and challenged. There has been a questioning of the ability of municipalities to deal with the crisis that the pandemic entailed. In the public debate, demands have therefore been raised for an increased centralization of central and local government areas of responsibility. At the same time, the crisis management of the pandemic has also revealed ignorance of municipal activities among state authorities as well as the fact that there are differences in conditions between municipalities for the implementation of the activities. Studies conducted by five municipalities and one region in the period 2020–2021 show, however, the results of the local level's ability to cope with the pandemic, which is also supported by international studies. The region and municipalities' crisis management has shown the strength of a decentralised governance structure, but also that important development issues and exposed shortcomings must be addressed for the effective management of future crises and for favourable developments in everyday life. The answer is not in increased centralization, but in strengthening municipal self-government and addressing the challenges of multi-level governance that have come to characterize the public sector.

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