

Factsheet: PAJA



New method

PAJA is the Dutch acronym for Amsterdam Youth Audit Project. The basis of the PAJA method is that young people themselves evaluate their care and support facilities. The assessment is done by a youth team. What do (homeless) young people think of the care and support available to them? And how do they feel the quality can be improved? After undergoing intensive training, they will conduct a poll among their peers using these facilities, after which they will evaluate the facilities themselves. Next, they will suggest changes to be made. All this is done in cooperation with the organizations or support facilities involved. One component of this method is a manual enabling organizations and municipalities to start up projects themselves.

Volksbond

PAJA was established by Volksbond, an Amsterdam welfare organization providing care, housing and daytime activities to the homeless. From October 2008 till June 2009, PAJA has been tested by four Volksbond establishments: Bertolt Brecht Huis, Sarphatistraat 102, Kazerne (a project performed in cooperation with OCTRA and Partners BV) and Eerste Helmer. About ten young clients of these support facilities took part in this pilot. All participants were young people facing many problems. This youth research team adopted the name *Young Voices - just 2B heard!*. They were supervised by Projektburo. Verwey-Jonker Instituut provided in dept monitoring of the pilot.

How can an organization or municipality benefit from PAJA?

This approach was specifically developed for young people, but can also provide inspiration to other care and support clients and organizations: Working with PAJA enables *organizations* to achieve two objectives at once.

1. Clients' or residents' active and self-governed involvement leads to empowerment and therefore to greater participation of a vulnerable group encountering many difficulties.
2. A carefully performed assessment provides a wealth of information about the organization's ins and outs. The organization obtains a clear evaluation from the client's perspective, as well as practical leads for quality improvement.

Municipalities can employ the PAJA approach to supplement other evaluation and accounting methods in their relationships with subsidized organizations. This instrument provides a tool for transparency and conscious quality improvement. It evaluates items on which municipalities are legally bound to report on account of the Dutch Wmo welfare legislation and the Local Policies project for homeless youths. In the longer term, PAJA may develop into (a component of) a quality hallmark for facilities.



PAJA target group and objectives

PAJA turns out to be a suitable method for evaluating (homeless) youth facilities.

Young people discover that their voice counts in evaluating the facilities where they reside, but also what skills they need for an evaluation and how they can develop such skills.

The coming years are to show whether PAJA is also suitable for other groups, for instance for adult clients of organizations providing shelter and daytime activities.

PAJA's main objectives are:

- a. Performing a non-voluntary examination from young peoples' perspective: providing an incitement forcing organizations to set up activities for and by (homeless) young people.
- b. Empowerment of individual young people. They discover that their voice counts. Participating in an evaluation team reinforces the participants' individual skills and their mutual bonds.
- c. Strengthening social contacts.
- d. Contributing to the development of a new form of client participation.
- e. Contributing to the evaluation of subsidized facilities and supplementing existing evaluation pathways.



With regard to PAJA, the following publications have been produced:



Report:

Jongeren keuren hun opvangvoorziening.

An evaluation of the PAJA project enabling (homeless) young people to audit the facilities available to them.

Authors: Jodi Mak, Maarten Davelaar & Inge van der Lee. Published by: Verwey-Jonker Instituut



Manual:

Jongeren keuren hun opvangvoorziening.

PAJA manual.

Authors: Jodi Mak, Maarten Davelaar, the Young Voices and

Projektenburo Amsterdam.

Published by: Verwey-Jonker Instituut

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