

INTERNSHIP REPORT

If you don't have a network, you have nothing

The key to supporting key-figures

Stakeholder perceptions on the creations of a Resident Leadership Programme designed to combat loneliness in Amsterdam Osdorp

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to provide recommendations to the city district of Amsterdam Nieuw-West on how to stimulate and facilitate the development of a sustainable Resident Leadership Programme, designed to combat loneliness by empowering its residents. This study was based on sixteen semi-structured interviews with residents that have organised initiatives for the neighbourhood (key-figure residents), or wanted to do so (aspiring key-figures) (all volunteers). A qualitative research method based on Grounded Theory was used in the research process. Three different factors were found to be most important for the emergence and retaining of key-figure residents: a central person in their social network who also fulfils the role of a central node in the network of professionals, the importance of a personalised, context-adjusted approach, and the increase of awareness of all the social activities and facilities in the neighbourhood. There appears not to be a need for a Resident Leadership Programme. Rather, to stimulate the future development of volunteers, two alternative recommendations are offered. For one, it is advised for any governing body to invest in the position of a person that fulfils the role of a central -friendly- node in an area, that connects the residents to the professionals. Furthermore, people formally appointed the task to evaluate, and provide funds to social initiatives need to be educated to prioritise the objective social features of said initiatives. Future research should be aimed at the success factors of what makes a good central person, motivational factors, and ways to improve awareness about the possibilities in the neighbourhood.