

AN EXAMPLE OF SUCCESSFUL SELFORGANISATION AND PARTICIPATION

-35 YEARS OF JES*-

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*JES = Drug user „*Junkies*“, **Ex-User**, People in OST „*Substituted*“

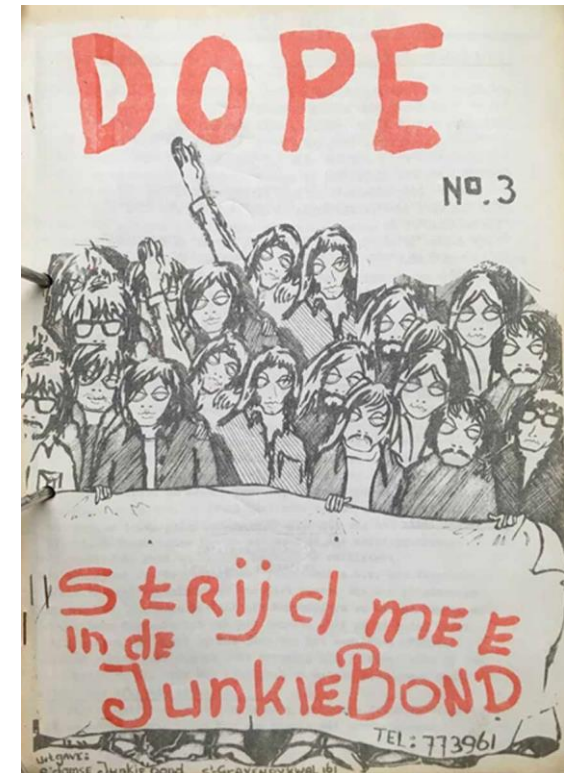


The drug services system

- Drug services has developed a diverse and high-quality range of services in many countries around the world
- The staff is generally well trained with different professions. They are psychologists, social workers, pedagogues, physicians, etc. They all do their best to provide suitable services for people who use drugs.
- Multi-professional teams often lack the perspective of drug users. They can contribute a unique perspective that cannot be replaced.
- Drug users are often only seen as patients or service users, but not as a valuable part of the team.

Drug user organisations and their participation

- First groups of PWUD started in the late 1970 in the Netherlands to raise their voices and reclaim their right to be their own spokespersons.
- In Germany in 1989, with the support of Deutsche Aidshilfe, a unique network of active users (Junkies), former users (Ex-User) and users in OST (Substituted) was founded
- It took a long time for JES to fight against objections and prejudices in the drug service system.
- The approach of DUO, which was not focused on abstinence but on the different goals of drug users, was viewed critically



1st postcard of JES 1989

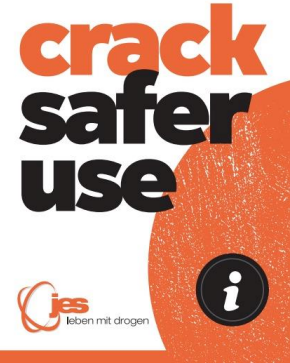


Magazin of Jukiebond Rotterdam 1978

Drug user organisations and participation

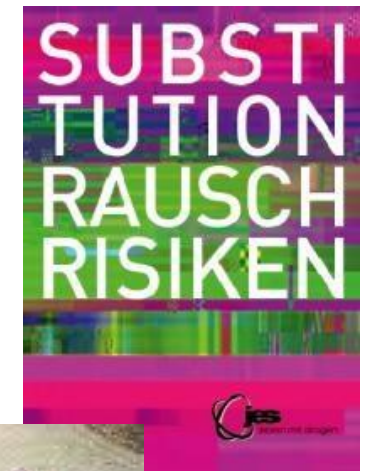
- Only through a combination of experience as a drug user and acquired expertise (via self-organized training courses, workshops own publications) was it possible to become a partner at eye level.
- Today, JES run own drug services and members are partners and team members in some drug services organisations.
- JES is also involved in political processes and expert groups
- Nevertheless, the involvement of drug users is still the exception rather than the norm.

Flyer about safer crack use



Poster about new HCV treatment

Broschüre about OST



Picture during a JES workshop



Prerequisites for participation in the professional drug service system

- **Reviewing the own attitude** (involving others, sharing responsibility, questioning hierarchies)
- **Willingness and courage to change** (including one's own perspective, one's own organisation, redistribution of resources)
- **Willingness to change existing relationships between staff and users/clients**
- **Willingness to make structural changes in the organisation**

The potential of participatory approaches

- Strengthening self-esteem by taking responsibility
- Important self-help structures can be supported and expanded (peer approach)
- Teams gain a previously missing perspective
- Relief for employees through shared responsibility



Issues of the JES magazin

Headlines:
Death penalty
Cannabis Legalization
Cocaine in Europe

35 years of JES - a drug user network

After 35 years

- the positive effects of self-organisations in terms of reduction of drug use, self-esteem and social contacts have been scientifically proven
- around 20 groups with 300 drug user activists belong to the JES network
- With the support of JES a international drug user network has been established. DUO on all continents
- JES has a firm place in the drug services system, on political level and in many expert forums.



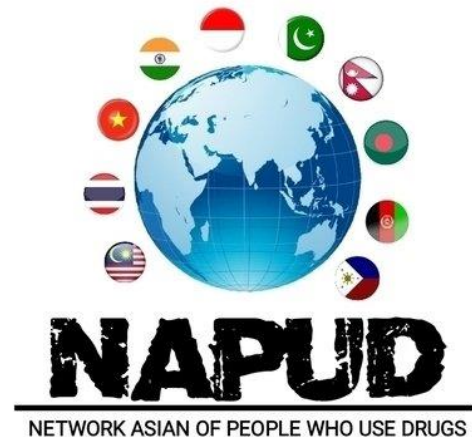
Summary

The promotion of self-organisations is a essential task and part of social work

Involving drug users can have positive effects for individuals as well as for drug service organization

The self-organisation of drug users offers the opportunity for networking and cooperation as well as learning from each other

Put the motto “Nothing about us without us” into practice in your daily work



Thanks for your attention

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