

EVALUATION OF 'MAKKIE'

Assessing a community currency scheme in Amsterdam



Investing in Opportunities



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INTERREG IVB

Evaluation of 'Makkie'

Assessing a community currency scheme in Amsterdam

- final report -

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1

INTRODUCTION

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Makkie is a community currency programme in the Amsterdam neighbourhood called the Indische Buurt, a neighbourhood with an overall weak socio-economic status. Makkie is one of many interventions in the neighbourhood, aimed at strengthening the local economy and social cohesion. Makkie was started in 2012 by the following project partners: urban district authority Amsterdam East¹, housing associations Eigen Haard, Alliantie and Ymere, Makassar Plein community and currency specialist Qoin.

Makkie serves as a reward mechanism to encourage reciprocal voluntary work or volunteering in neighbourhood organisations. It is a paper and digital currency that residents can earn through activities performed for issuing partners and may be used as payment for services at so-called redeeming partners. In addition, Makkie has a digital platform on which services can be requested and offered. The paper currency can also be used for mutual exchanges between citizens.

Two years after the introduction of Makkie in the Indische Buurt, Amsterdam East assigned RegioPlan Policy Research to evaluate Makkie.

¹ Amsterdam municipality is divided in seven administrative urban districts.

1.2 Objective and questions

With the evaluation, Amsterdam East aims to examine Makkie's ability to meet certain social, economic and environmental outcomes. The Makkie project partnership is aimed at the following social effects²:

- to create a clean, green neighbourhood;
- to break social isolation;
- to strengthen social capacities and self-esteem;
- to offer opportunities to young people;
- to strengthen the connection between local entrepreneurs and the neighbourhood;
- sub-objective 1: being the 'glue' between the different policy programmes (connecting and supporting existing initiatives in the neighbourhood);
- sub-objective 2: telling the story: Makkie as a showcase to the outside world.

The main objective of this proposed project is to assess the impact of Makkie and the extent of its contribution in achieving the stated objectives.

The central question of the evaluation was:

Did Makkie contribute to achieving the stated social, economic and environmental objectives?

² Adapted from the Makkie plan van aanpak, 2012.

To answer this key question, answers were sought to the following research questions:

- How is the Makkie scheme organised and how much time do the organisations involved spend on their tasks?
- Which organisations/entrepreneurs (issuing and redemption partners) participate in Makkie?
- How many volunteers are earning Makkies? What type of volunteer activities do they perform?
- How often and in what way do Makkie volunteers spend their Makkies?
- How satisfied are Makkie volunteers with Makkie?
- How familiar are the residents of the Indische Buurt with Makkie?
- Does Makkie stimulate residents from the Indische Buurt to do (more) voluntary work?
- Does Makkie produce any social effects at an individual level (i.e. Makkie earners)?

On behalf of (a.o.) the Community Currencies in Action (CCIA), the New Economics Foundation (NEF) designed an outcome framework, based on the Theory of Change.³ This framework is meant to support evaluations of community currency schemes. For the current evaluation, the Theory of Change framework was consulted. However, it turned out that the formulation of the framework was not SMART⁴ enough to be used in an effective and concrete manner in the research setup as we designed it.⁵ In other situations, such as the evaluation of Spice Time Credits (see chapter 2) this framework showed to be useful.

³ In 2013 a Theory of Change-workshop within the context of Makkie was organised. Locals of the Indische Buurt involved with Makkie, participated in this workshop. See: Boonstra and Van Olden (2013). *Verslag Theory of Change workshop Makkie*.

⁴ SMART stands for Specific Measurable Attainable Relevant Time-bound.

⁵ For more information on the methodology and rationale for the impact assessment of community currencies see: <http://ccia.eu/toc-toolkit>.

1.3 Our approach

Document analysis

The urban district authorities of Amsterdam East and the housing association Eigen Haard provided us with information about the Makkie scheme. Based on this information, we described the organisation of Makkie and were able to give an impression of the number of earned Makkies since 2012.

Survey Makkie earners

A survey on Makkie earners offered us insight into the type of voluntary work being performed by these Makkie earners, their experiences with Makkie and the effects of Makkie on their individual wellbeing (see Appendix). A link to the online survey was included in the Makkie newsletter and the Amsterdam East newsletter. Residents from the Indische Buurt could also complete the survey on paper in the offices of the neighbourhood management *Samen Indische Buurt*, MOI Foundation (social work) and Amsterdam East. In total, 43 Makkie earners started the survey; 31 people completed it. Because of the relatively low response rate, the survey results do not represent the entire group of Makkie earners, but should be regarded as an indication.

Questionnaire residents Amsterdam East

The statistics department of the municipality of Amsterdam (O+S) periodically conducts a survey among residents of Amsterdam. In this survey, a representative sample of the Amsterdam population in different neighbourhoods is asked a range of questions. The following questions about the Makkie scheme were included in one of these surveys in the Amsterdam East district:

- Are you familiar with Makkie?
- Did you do any voluntary work in your neighbourhood last year?
- Are you willing to do (more) voluntary work in your neighbourhood in exchange for Makkies?

The survey included 55 inhabitants of the neighbourhood Indische Buurt and 344 inhabitants in other parts of the Amsterdam East district.

Telephone interviews redemption partners

We conducted telephone interviews with four organisations that redeem Makkies. In these interviews, we inquired about their experience with the Makkie, whether the parties are satisfied with the Makkie scheme and/or whether they are willing to expand the possibilities. We interviewed:

- MOI Foundation (social work)
- Albert Heijn (supermarket)
- Chess club Indische Buurt
- Praxis (DIY retailer, withdrawn from the scheme)

Focus group with issuing parties

We organised a focus group involving several organisations that issue Makkies: the housing association Eigen Haard, CBK *Kunstuitleen* (art loan scheme), a hiking club for patients suffering from dementia (*wandelclub De Weg Kwijt*), and neighbourhood management in the Indische Buurt. During the discussion, we asked about their experiences with the Makkie.

1.4 Overview

Chapter 2 starts by providing some background on community currencies in various Western European cities. It then studies the objectives of the community currency Makkie in the Amsterdam neighbourhood the Indische Buurt. Chapter 3 describes the organisation and costs of Makkie. Chapter 4 describes how volunteers earn and spend their Makkies. This chapter also gives an impression of the people who earn Makkies. Chapter 5 focuses on the results of Makkie: are residents of the Indische Buurt familiar with Makkie? How satisfied are stakeholders with Makkie? Does Makkie stimulate voluntary work in the neighbourhood, and does it have a social effect on a personal level (Makkie earners)? In chapter 6, we draw our main conclusions.



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Makkie: a community currency

2 Makkie: a community currency

2.1 Community currencies: background

Community currencies (CCs) are exchange systems that function as supplements to ordinary money. They are used across the world in networks limited by geography, sector or shared values and are issued and managed in a not-for-profit mode.⁶ The community currencies often link unmet needs with otherwise unused sources. They can be used as an alternative means of payment aimed at promoting voluntary work and/or strengthening social cohesion in certain local communities (neighbourhoods, towns or even cities). A growing number of cities in Western Europe have their own community (or complementary) currency. For example, the English city of Bristol has the Bristol Pound which aims to encourage people to spend their earnings in local Bristol businesses. The Belgian city of Turnhout has its Troeven. Residents of Turnhout can earn these by doing voluntary work and can spend them, for example, in a local shop or organisation.⁷ Troeven are similar to Makkies just as the other example of community currencies, the Spice Time Credits in England and Wales. One Time Credit is earned for each hour of time given and acts as a 'thank you' to someone for donating time to their community or performing a service. People can then 'spend' Time Credits to access events, training and leisure activities provided by public, community and private organisations, or to thank others in turn. An evaluation of Spice Time Credits (2014) lists numerous positive effects of this community currency. Time Credits are an effective way to engage people in giving time to their communities and community organisations, in a sustainable way. The amount of time people regularly give through Time Credits programmes is notably higher than the national average for volunteering. The evaluation also mentions

⁶ <http://community-currency.info/en/>.

⁷ Boonstra et al., (2013). *Complementary Currency Systems. Social and Economic Effects of Complementary Currencies*; New Economics Foundation (2014).

that Time Credits lead to sustainable improvements in the quality of life, have opened up many opportunities for people to become involved in new activities and offer value as a complementary currency specifically for people and families on lower incomes.⁸

Box 2.1 CCIA

Six of these community currency initiatives in North Western Europe, including the Makkie, are joined in a four year European Interreg project Community Currencies in Action (CCIA). This transnational partnership is helping to lay the foundation for cross-sectorial currency innovations designed for the common good. CCIA provides a package of support structures to develop initiatives and promotes community currencies as a credible vehicle for achieving positive social, environmental and local economic outcomes.⁹

According to a study conducted by Boonstra et al. (2013), community currency can be a tool for change in the economic and social domain. It has the potential to strengthen local communities by reinforcing relationships, offering an alternative reward for services, and by enhancing local identity. The study mentions some factors that could determine the success or failure of a community currency:

- Spending possibilities: the more spending options, the higher the value of the currency.
- Education and mediation: a complementary currency is quickly forgotten. The right mediation and education will remind customers of the benefits of using the currency.

⁸ Apteligen (2014). *An Evaluation of Spice Time Credits*.

⁹ See for example: New Economics Foundation (2014). *No small change*. Evaluating the success of your community currency project.

- Organisational structure: the structure of the organisation will need to reflect its objectives and generate support and ownership, and deflect resistance among users.
- Ownership: the community will need to feel responsible for using the currency. It will need to adopt the use of it.
- Time: implementing a complementary currency takes time. Don't expect results immediately, but give the currency time to develop.
- The right team: the right people can motivate others and contribute towards a healthy circulation velocity.
- Ambassadors: ambassadors are a key way to extend the existing group of participants.

In our conclusions we will refer to these factors when assessing the observed effects of the Makkie scheme.

2.2 Makkie: a community currency in the Indische Buurt

The Indische Buurt in Amsterdam is a neighbourhood with an overall weak socio-economic status in which the Makkie was introduced as a community currency. Makkie serves as a reward mechanism to encourage reciprocal voluntary work or volunteering in neighbourhood organisations. It is a paper and digital currency that residents can earn through activities performed for issuing partners and may be used as payment for services from redemption partners. In addition, Makkie has a digital platform on which services can be requested and offered. The paper currency can also be used for mutual exchanges between citizens.

Makkie was introduced for policy objectives as defined by the four project partners: Amsterdam East, housing associations (Eigen Haard, Alliantie, Ymere), and currency specialist Qoin, an organisation that designs and develops community currencies. In their initial plan, the start-up partners defined the following social effects as aims for the Makkie scheme:

- to create a clean, green neighbourhood;
- to break social isolation;
- to strengthen social capacities and self-esteem;
- to offer opportunities to young people;
- to strengthen the connection between local entrepreneurs and the neighbourhood.

In addition, two extra objectives were set for Makkie. Makkie should function as the 'glue' between the different policy programmes (connecting and supporting existing initiatives in the neighbourhood), and be a showcase to the outside world.



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3

Organisation and costs of Makkie

3 Organisation and costs of Makkie

3.1 Organisation of Makkie

Makkie is an initiative of a group of organisations, namely: urban district authority Amsterdam East, housing associations Eigen Haard, Alliantie and Ymere, Makassar Plein community¹⁰ and community currency specialist Qoin. The organisation of Makkie consists of a steering group and an executive team. Together, they are responsible for the project.

Below, the roles of the steering group, the project leader and the executive team are examined, and the changes that have occurred with respect to these since the start of Makkie.

Steering group

The steering group determines the strategy of Makkie and assesses the results and operational plans. Initially, the steering group consisted of:

- the director of Qoin;
- the manager of art, culture, economy and tourism for Amsterdam East;
- the housing service manager from the housing association Eigen Haard;
- the programme manager for Civic Zeeburg, the social support consultant in the Makassar Plein community.

Soon after the start of Makkie, welfare organisation Civic left the steering group. However, it has cooperated with the urban district authority Amsterdam East within the framework of Makkie.

¹⁰ A partnership between residents, entrepreneurs and professionals in the Makassar Plein (square) neighbourhood.

Initially, Qoin supplied the project leader for the Makkie organisation. Furthermore, this organisation administered the Makkie budget. In 2012, Amsterdam East took over this role from Qoin. According to Amsterdam East it is the intention that its role of project leader is also temporary. Ultimately, the neighbourhood itself should take on Makkie and local residents should assume the role of project leader.

The Makkie organisation thus started with a top-down approach of its governance structure and administration. In 2013 a few residents of the Indische Buurt were asked to think about possible adjustments of the Makkie organisation. These adjustments intended to lead to an adoption of Makkie by the neighbourhood (bottom-up approach¹¹). Since then, certain elements of Makkie have been adjusted. Issuing and redeeming partners were not obliged anymore to register how many Makkies they received and/or issued, because the administration of Makkies turned out to be an obstacle for organisations to join Makkie. Another adjustment was the organisational focus on finding a project leader in the neighbourhood.

Since 2014, the Makkie steering group has played a different role in the Makkie organisation. Decision making was transferred to the already existing consultative structure of *Samen Indische Buurt*, another initiative of Amsterdam East and the housing associations Eigen Haard, Alliantie and Ymere, while the Makkie steering group became a strategic committee. The steering group of *Samen Indische Buurt* consists of the responsible alderman of Amsterdam East and the directors of the housing organisations

¹¹ This adjustment fits in the present discourse of a 'participation society' in which everyone (who is able to do so) takes the responsibility for his own life and his environment, and in which a governmental organisation plays no role or only a facilitating role.

mentioned before. The advantage of connecting with this steering group is that here, all the neighbourhood projects and activities of the Indische Buurt are discussed. This means the activities and initiatives of Makkie can be better geared to other neighbourhood activities and initiatives. Makkie is now considered integrally in connection with other activities in the Indische Buurt.

Executive team

The executive team (initially called the project team and later the neighbourhood team) is responsible for carrying out the various activities with respect to Makkie. The team's tasks include canvassing for redeeming and issuing partners, and establishing and running the Makkie store (see chapter 5), communication activities and the administration of Makkies. At the moment, the executive team consists of local residents of the Indische Buurt (3 persons) and representatives of Eigen Haard (1 person) and Amsterdam East (2 persons). The responsibility for project management lies with Amsterdam East.¹² In 2014, the team spent 36 hours a week on all Makkie-related activities (see Table 3.1).

¹² Initially, the executive team consisted of a representative of Qoin, Civic Zeeburg, Eigen Haard and Amsterdam East. A local resident of the Indische Buurt, who was a member of the Makassar Plein Community, was the project leader.

Table 3.1 Number of hours spent weekly on Makkie by each organisation

	Hours
Amsterdam East	20 hours ¹³
Housing association Eigen Haard	4 hours
Residents from neighbourhood the Indische Buurt	12 hours
Total	36 hours

Source: Amsterdam East/Eigen Haard

3.2 Costs of Makkie

Since the start of Makkie in 2012, the total costs in the period 2012-2014 amount to €146,500. This amount consists for a large part of staff expenses and of ICT, marketing and communication costs. For the year 2015, an amount of €36,000 is budgeted on behalf of Makkie activities (see Table 3.2).

¹³ Since October 2014, Amsterdam East has spent 12 hours instead of 20 hours on Makkie because an employee has been unavailable. Eigen Haard and a resident of the Indische Buurt have each spent 4 extra hours on Makkie since then. These extra hours were established on a temporary basis.

Table 3.2 Costs of Makkie

Costs 2012-2014		Costs
2012	€	68,500
2013	€	40,000
2014	€	38,000
Total	€	146,500
Costs 2015		
Staff expenses	€	25,000
ICT/website	€	2,000
Marketing and communication	€	4,000
Makkie store	€	4,000
Unbudgeted expenditure	€	1,000
Total	€	36,000

Source: Amsterdam East



4

Earning and spending Makkies

4 Earning and spending Makkies

4.1 Earning Makkies

How do volunteers earn Makkies?

Since 2012, Indische Buurt residents can earn Makkies when they perform voluntary work for an organisation in their neighbourhood. For every hour of voluntary work that they do, volunteers earn one Makkie. The Indische Buurt residents can use the Makkie website to see which organisations they can earn Makkies from, and which residents need a helping hand with certain activities. Makkie earners carry out a wide variety of voluntary work: from offering support in organising a neighbourhood event to writing for the Indische Buurt neighbourhood newspaper, or help out with cleaning activities. Makkies can also be earned by helping neighbourhood residents with certain activities, such as moving house or administrative tasks. Quite a few of the respondents voluntarily helped out in caring for elderly and/or sick people. One specific task was performed by two volunteers who assisted dementia patients in their strolls in the park (and prevented them from losing their way).

Our survey among Makkie earners showed that most of them earn Makkies by doing voluntary work involving organising and/or preparing neighbourhood events. In most cases, these are separate, one-off activities. The majority of the volunteer activities takes 1-2 hours per activity. The number of Makkies that volunteers have earned varies from a single Makkie to fifty or more Makkies (see Appendix).

A survey in 2013 showed that most Makkies are earned by doing jobs like gardening at Oost Indisch Groen, voluntary work at Sunday morning concerts, voluntary work at MOI Foundation and helping to

organise neighbourhood activities. The majority of Makkies were earned by volunteers of these organisations.¹⁴

Who are the volunteers?

In October 2014, a total of 589 Makkie earners were registered on the Makkie website. However, it is not known how many people within this group are active Makkie earners. Neither do we know how much time they spend on Makkie earning activities. There is, on the other hand, a group of Makkie earners who are not registered on the Makkie website; the size of this group is unknown as is the amount of time they spend on earning Makkies. It was stated in the focus group that in total several hundred Makkie earners might be currently active.

'Women are more likely to do voluntary work in exchange for Makkies. Men prefer to receive money for voluntary work. Initially, I expected that those receiving income support would be particularly keen to earn Makkies. However, it seems that people on higher incomes are also keen.'

MOI Foundation Employee

¹⁴ Boonstra and Klamer (2013). *Hoe gaat het met de Makkie in de Indische Buurt?*

The survey among Makkie earners gives an impression of who the Makkie earning volunteers are. Most respondents are women and are aged 35 years or above (see Appendix). Most of them currently do voluntary work or have done voluntary work in the past for which *no* Makkies could be earned. To date, approximately half have earned up to four Makkies doing voluntary work.

How many Makkies have been issued to date?

Since the start of Makkie in 2012 nearly fifty organisations have been issuing Makkies. These organisations received a total of 10,207 Makkies by the Makkie organisation for issuing goals. It is not known exactly how many Makkies the issuing parties issued; this information is not registered by Amsterdam East because the registration proved to be an obstacle for organisations to join Makkie (see also p. 18). We know how many Makkies two of those parties issued to volunteers: *Samen Indische Buurt* neighbourhood management and MOI Foundation (see Table 4.1). Other issuing parties do not keep records of this.

Table 4.1 Number of Makkies issued by two issuing parties

	2012	2013	2014	Total
Samen Indische Buurt neighbourhood management	103.5	422.5	660 *	1,186
MOI Foundation	238.5	250	389 **	877.5

* January 2014 to October 2014 period.

** January 2014 to September 2014 period.

A neighbourhood manager in the Indische Buurt is involved with Makkie on a daily basis. She rewards a group of 10-15 residents for cleaning the stairways in flats where no cleaning company is used. The volunteers, mainly women and young people, usually spend Makkies on a free visit to a special film in the Indische Buurt cinema. According to the neighbourhood manager, the number of Makkie earners has continued to increase since 2012.

There is a walking club for elderly people with dementia in the Indische Buurt. In exchange for Makkies, residents can go along on walks as a walking coach. There are currently around five voluntary walking coaches – mainly men – who accompany elderly people with dementia.

The art loan organisation CBK organises coffee concerts where volunteers help with preparations and reception duties on the day of the concert. Two or three Indische Buurt residents do this type of voluntary work every month (for around 3 hours). These volunteers also tend to spend Makkies on a free visit to a special film in the Indische Buurt cinema.

4.2 Spending Makkies

How can Makkies be spent?

Indische Buurt residents can spend their earned Makkies in various shops or community organisations. For example, in exchange for one Makkie volunteers can get a free cup of coffee in a neighbourhood café. Makkies can also be exchanged for free entry to swimming pool Flevoparkbad or ice skating rink Jaap Edenbaan (for 2 Makkies). Makkies can also be spent at smaller organisations, such as the Indische Buurt chess club (for a free chess course). In April 2015, twenty redemption partners were involved with Makkie.

'Our shop deals with Makkies every day. You can use Makkies to obtain a 1 or 2 euro discount on shopping above ten euros. (Lately) around 4 Makkies are spent every day. It's often the same four or five people who spend Makkies ...'

Albert Heijn employee

Big exchange partners, such as Albert Heijn (supermarket), have committed to Makkie on a contract basis. These partners return Makkies that volunteers spend in their shop to the Makkie organisation. Praxis (DIY store) also participated in Makkie as exchange partner in the past. One employee interviewed from this company said that he had participated in Makkie for more than six months. However, because so few Makkies were spent in that period, Praxis decided to withdraw from the scheme.

Until 2014, the small businesses participating in Makkie had to return the spent Makkies to the Makkie organisation. Now when they participate in Makkie they may keep and use the spent Makkies themselves. There are around five small businesses participating in Makkie. According to a representative from the Makkie organisation, it takes a lot of time and energy to attract small businesses to participate in the scheme.

'I think that Makkie is a very good initiative, on paper. In practice, however, there is little interest in Makkie. In a poor area like the Indische Buurt, people prefer to earn cash to do their shopping. Although our chess club has participated in Makkie for two years, so far no one has spent Makkies on a free chess lesson.'
Indische Buurt, chess club employee

How many Makkies have been spent to date?

The Makkie organisation does not have exact knowledge of how many Makkies have been spent (as at December 2014). According to a 2013 survey, until March 2013, a total of 2,040 Makkies were earned. How many of them were actually redeemed is unknown because the choice was made not to ask too much administration of the partners, as this proved an obstacle for participating. However, based on our survey among Makkie earners, an indication can be given of how Makkies are spent. Of the 28 volunteers, a total of 21 spent 280 Makkies up until October 2014. The remaining seven volunteers kept their Makkies in their wallets (see Appendix, Table B2.7/8).

'More attention could be given to exchanging Makkies with each other, there's a lot to be gained from this!'
Makkie earners survey respondent

The survey showed that most respondents spend their Makkies at Albert Heijn supermarket, where people can obtain a two euro discount on shopping over ten euros on basic needs as bread and milk (in exchange for 1 Makkie). According to details from the Makkie organisation, since the start of Makkie over 1,600 Makkies were spent at this supermarket. The number of Makkies spent at Albert Heijn has

risen since 2012: while from mid December 2012 to mid July 2013 around 200 Makkies were spent (at the Molukkenstraat branch), this branch received more than 450 Makkies in the period from mid January 2014 to the beginning of October 2014.

The survey among Makkie earners also shows that various respondents have used their Makkies for free entry to the Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra concerts. According to the Makkie organisation, in 2014 (up to October) a total of 50.5 Makkies have been spent at the Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra, which shows that there have been around seventeen visits to their concerts.

Volunteers who earn Makkies can also use these to reward other neighbourhood residents who help them with various things. The Makkie organisation does not know the extent to which Makkies are exchanged among neighbourhood residents because administrating this would put an extreme administrative burden on the users. The previous study from 2013 of Boonstra and Klamer showed that exchange of Makkies among Indische Buurt residents is negligible.¹⁵

¹⁵ Boonstra and Klamer (2013). *Hoe gaat het met de Makkie in de Indische Buurt?*

Reasons for not spending

The survey among Makkie earners shows that three quarters of the respondents have spent some or all their earned Makkies. Approximately a quarter have not spent their Makkies. The focus group showed that Makkies are often not spent. Although our survey – which shows that three quarter of the respondents use their Makkies – contradicts this, these findings of the focus group are in line with the findings of a previous 2013 study;¹⁶ which showed that only 14% of earned Makkies had been spent at the time of the study. Makkie earners who have not yet redeemed their Makkies gave a number of reasons for this in our survey. Some feel they don't need to be rewarded for voluntary work and that they aren't interested in the existing exchange possibilities. The survey in 2013 showed that volunteers at MOI Foundation often don't feel the need for Makkies and that they would prefer to receive money.

¹⁶ Boonstra and Klamer (2013). *Hoe gaat het met de Makkie in de Indische Buurt?*



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5

Makkie results

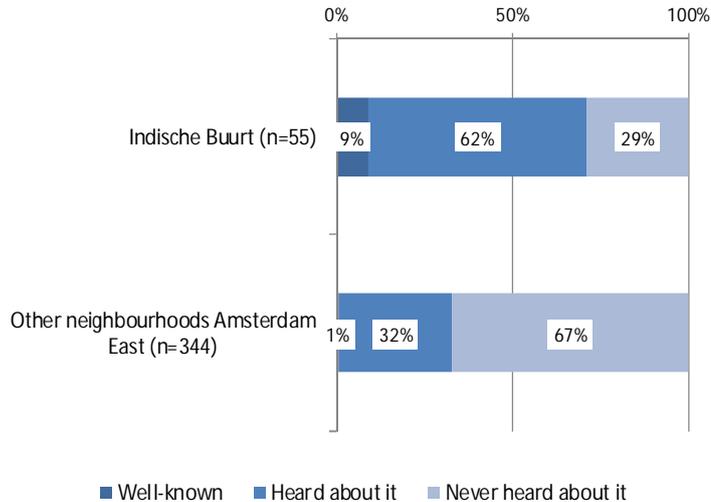
5 Makkie results

5.1 Familiarity with Makkie

Since the beginning in 2012, the Makkie organisation has brought this community currency to the attention of Indische Buurt residents in various ways. Makkie has its own website, there is a digital newsletter and there is a regular focus on Makkie in a local newspaper. Makkie neighbourhood managers also use word-of-mouth advertising to make residents aware of Makkie.

Partly thanks to these publicity activities, more than two thirds of the Indische Buurt residents know about Makkie, as was shown in a panel survey conducted by the Municipality of Amsterdam's O+S (statistics) service (see Figure 5.1). Even in other city district East neighbourhoods, around one in three have heard of Makkie. The panel survey showed that a few Indische Buurt residents are very familiar with Makkie.

Figure 5.1 Familiarity with Makkie



Source: O+S, 2014, processed by Regioplan

Participants in the focus group are under the impression that Makkie has become increasingly well known among Indische Buurt residents since it was launched, but also feel that there is still a lot to be done regarding familiarity with Makkie. According to them a lot of investment is still needed in Makkie

publicity. The Makkie store, that opened its doors in January 2015, is an initiative that can further increase familiarity with Makkie among residents of the Indische Buurt. This store, which is mainly intended for residents in a vulnerable socio-economic position, enables people to use Makkies to purchase certain basic necessities.

5.2 Experiences with Makkie

Interviewed redeeming and issuing parties in the focus group have a positive feeling about the right to existence of Makkie as community currency. They feel it has a very positive effect in the sense that volunteers feel rewarded with Makkies for their activities and are valued for doing voluntary work.

'I think Makkies are a fantastic reward for volunteers. A Makkie shows that Makkie earners are appreciated for their voluntary work.'

MOI Foundation Employee

Makkie earners were not asked about their general satisfaction with Makkie in the survey. However, they were asked whether they were satisfied with the number and type of possibilities for spending their earned Makkies. A minority of respondents was satisfied (see Appendix) and most of them expressed a neutral attitude towards the spending possibilities. Only a few were not happy with the possibilities.

Issuing parties in the focus group mentioned that expanding the number and type of spending possibilities would be an improvement. The previous study from 2013 (Boonstra and Klamer) also showed the existing spending options did not meet the needs of Makkie earners.

'At Studio K (movie theatre), staff weren't certain about what Makkies could be spent on. It's also not easy to find on the Makkie website or at Studio K. And a more varied range of shops on offer would also be nice.'
Makkie earners survey respondent

'There should be more outlets where you can spend them. And more, larger shopping chains should be affiliated to Makkie.'
MOI Foundation Employee

5.3 Makkie impact

Makkie: an impulse or stimulus for voluntary work?

In theory, the Makkie scheme can result in Indische Buurt residents doing more voluntary work because they are rewarded for it. However, it is also possible that the group of Makkie earners mainly comprises residents who already volunteered their time for activities prior to Makkie's existence. Based on the survey findings among Makkie earners, the impression is that the latter is mainly the case. Most respondents not only volunteered in the past but still do voluntary work now where they don't earn Makkies. What's more, most respondents indicated that Makkies did not encourage them to do more voluntary work in their neighbourhood (see Appendix). Still, as was mentioned in the focus group, it is

possible that people continued doing voluntary work who might have stopped if Makkie had not been introduced.

The O+S service panel survey asked Indische Buurt residents (N=55) whether they are willing to do more voluntary work in the neighbourhood in exchange for Makkies. Around half of the interviewees indicated that they might be willing to do this.

'Makkie may not have resulted in more people doing voluntary work, but people do stay active as a volunteer for longer because of the Makkie reward.'
MOI Foundation Employee

Social effects of Makkie

The social effects targeted by Makkie are to promote a clean, green neighbourhood, break social isolation, strengthen social capacities and self-esteem of residents, offer opportunities to young people, and strengthen the connection of local entrepreneurs with the neighbourhood.

In the survey, Makkie earners were asked which (social) effects doing voluntary work had on their own situation. The survey findings indicate that some Makkie earners have really benefited personally from doing voluntary work (see Appendix). Contributing to the environment offers them a sense of satisfaction and boosts their pride and self-esteem. They are also more familiar with their neighbourhood. One third of the responding Makkie earners indicated that they made new friends,

including those with different cultural backgrounds. The limited number of respondents however makes it hard to draw general conclusions from this.

Among some Makkie earners, doing voluntary work can help to improve their social skills and self-esteem and break through their social isolation. However, based on this evaluation, it is difficult to say how often this happens and the role Makkie plays in it. It is possible that the social effects described in the survey could also have been achieved without Makkie. After all, many Makkie earners in the survey already performed voluntary work without Makkie as reward tool.

'Thanks to Makkie, Indische Buurt residents can build and expand their social networks. A connection has been created between some volunteers and people supported by them. These volunteers also return more quickly to that person to offer help'.

MOI Foundation Employee

Based on the evaluation, only very tentative conclusions can be drawn regarding the contribution of the Makkie scheme to achieving the other objectives set (see p. 15). The creation of a clean neighbourhood is certainly helped through the cleaning activities of volunteers in certain housing blocks. But the extent is limited. Given the fact that around five local entrepreneurs are involved in the scheme, we tend to say that the Makkie scheme has had little effect on the connection between local entrepreneurs and the neighbourhood.



6

Summary and conclusions

6 Summary and conclusions

6.1 Summary

Makkie: background and objectives

Makkie is a community currency scheme in the Amsterdam neighbourhood called the Indische Buurt. Community currencies are alternative means of payment that aim to promote voluntary work and/or to strengthen social cohesion in particular local communities. Makkie started as a pilot in 2012 for policy objectives as defined by the following project partners: urban district authority Amsterdam East, housing associations Eigen Haard, De Alliantie and Ymere, Makassar Plein community and currency specialist Qoin. The Makkie scheme aims to achieve the following effects:

- to create a clean, green neighbourhood;
- to break social isolation;
- to strengthen social capacities and self-esteem;
- to offer opportunities to young people;
- to strengthen the connection between local entrepreneurs and the neighbourhood.

Makkie has also two sub-objectives. It aims to be the 'glue' between the different policy programmes in Amsterdam East (connecting and supporting existing initiatives in the neighbourhood), and it aims to be a showcase to the outside world.

Organisation of Makkie

The steering group determines the strategy of Makkie and assesses the results and operational plans. Initially, the steering group consisted of representatives from Qoin, Amsterdam East, Eigen Haard and Civic Zeeburg. Since 2014, the Makkie steering group has played a different role in the Makkie

organisation. Decision making was transferred to the already existing consultative structure of *Samen Indische Buurt*, another initiative of Amsterdam East and the housing associations Eigen Haard, Alliantie and Ymere, while the Makkie steering group became a strategic committee. The steering group of *Samen Indische Buurt* consists of the responsible alderman of Amsterdam East and the directors of the housing associations mentioned before.

The executive team is responsible for carrying out the various activities with respect to Makkie. The team's tasks include canvassing for redeeming and issuing partners, establishing and running the Makkie store, communication activities and the administration of Makkies. At the moment, the executive team consists of local residents from the Indische Buurt and representatives of Eigen Haard and Amsterdam East. The responsibility for project management lies with Amsterdam East. In 2014, the team spent 36 hours a week on Makkie-related activities.

Earning and spending Makkies

Residents of the Indische Buurt can earn Makkies by doing voluntary work for either organisations or other residents in their neighbourhood. There is widespread variety in the voluntary work Makkie earners undertake. Examples are: assisting in the organisation of neighbourhood events and assisting other residents in cleaning or administration activities. People can earn one Makkie by doing one hour of voluntary work. The number of participants is not registered. It is estimated that at this moment there are a few hundred active volunteers in the Indische Buurt.

Since the start of Makkie in 2012 nearly fifty organisations have been issuing Makkies. These organisations received a total of 10,207 Makkies from the Makkie organisation for issuing goals. It is not

exactly known how many Makkies the issuing parties actually issued, and thus how many Makkies were earned and redeemed by volunteers.

According to the results of our survey many volunteers spent their Makkies in exchange for a discount at a supermarket and/or free entrance to concerts of the Dutch Philharmonic Orchestra. Three quarters of the respondents have spent some or all their earned Makkies; one quarter refrain from spending their Makkies, because they are not satisfied with the existing spending options or because they feel they don't need to be rewarded for doing voluntary work.

Familiarity with Makkie

Since its start in 2012, Makkie has been promoted in the neighbourhood in various ways. According to a panel survey among residents of the Indische Buurt, 71 per cent have heard of Makkie of which nine per cent are very familiar with Makkie. According to organisations involved, residents of the neighbourhood have become increasingly familiar with Makkie, but they still think more publicity is needed.

6.2 Assessment

More than two years after launching the Makkie scheme in the Indische Buurt, the conclusion is that its impact on the local community is modest. Although exact figures are lacking, an estimated 3% of the working population in the Indische Buurt is participating in the scheme, of which some volunteers were

already active before earning Makkies.¹⁷ On the demand side there are about 20 redemption partners, including 5 small local businesses. From this data we conclude that an odd 1% of the local businesses in the Indische Buurt¹⁸ is involved in the Makkie project. It is exactly these spending possibilities that, according to Boonstra et al. (2013), are crucial for a successful operation of a community currency scheme.¹⁹ As stated in Boonstra et al. (2013), the Makkie is a project that will need some time to come in full swing. It is not easy to create a community currency such as the Makkie and really get it rolling.

Despite the fact that the Makkie scheme is fairly well known in the neighbourhood, it seems the organisation has not been able to make substantial progress in the use of Makkie up until now. In looking for possibilities to step up the use of the Makkie we can again turn to Boonstra et al. (2013) when they state the following factors for success (besides the already mentioned spending opportunities):

- (Potential) customers can be better informed about the benefits of using community currency.
- The community currency is helped with ambassadors in the neighbourhood.
- The organisational structure should be clear and fit for achieving the set objectives.

In addition to this, we advise the setting of more realistic and measurable objectives of the Makkie scheme. The current objectives can hardly be seen as realistic, taking into account the scope of the

¹⁷ This estimation is based on a total of 500 active Makkie earners. On January 1st 2014, the total working population in the Indische Buurt consisted of more than 17.000 persons. See: O+S (2014). *Stadsdelen in Cijfers*.

¹⁸ On January 1st 2014, there were 1,945 local businesses (with working employees) in the Indische Buurt. See: O+S (2014). *Stadsdelen in Cijfers*.

¹⁹ Boonstra et al., (2013). *Complementary Currency Systems. Social and Economic Effects of Complementary Currencies*.

scheme. Neither is it possible to measure the current objectives, which means that assessing the success of the scheme is hardly feasible. Also, Amsterdam East could consider using output indicators to measure certain results of Makkie activities, for example a number of active Makkie earners or a minimum number of redeemed Makkies per year.

Finally, we strongly advise that the registration of earned and redeemed Makkies is improved. At this moment, full information about the number of Makkies issued by issuing parties and the number of Makkies earned and redeemed by volunteers is lacking. According to Amsterdam East, plans are already made to improve the registration of Makkies, in a way that will not again impose an administrative burden on (mostly smaller) partners to participate in the scheme.



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APPENDIX

Appendix

Results of survey of Makkie earners

Table A.1 How long have you been doing volunteer activities where you can earn Makkies? (n=42)

	Percentage
0-6 months	17%
6-12 months	17%
1-2 years	29%
2 years or longer	12%
Don't know/no answer	26%

Source: Regioplan, 2014

Table A.2 How many volunteer activities did you earn Makkies with? (n=43)

	Percentage
1 activity	21%
2-5 activities	28%
5-10 activities	12%
10 or more activities	7%
Don't know/no answer	33%

Source: Regioplan, 2014

Table A.3 Type of volunteer activities (n=37)

	Percentage
Single activities	54%
Periodical activities	19%
Single and periodical activities	27%

Source: Regioplan, 2014

Table A.4 How much time do these volunteer activities take on average? (n=27)

	Percentage
1 hour	41%
2 hours	22%
3 hours	19%
4 hours or more	18%

Source: Regioplan, 2014

Table A.5 Theme volunteer activities (n=33)

	Percentage
Sport	6%
Art and culture	15%
Neighbourhood event	46%
Children/education	6%
Elderly people	27%
(Health)care	27%
Clean neighbourhood	27%
Other	30%

Source: Regioplan, 2014

Table A.6 Makkie: impulse for (more) voluntary work?

Are you doing voluntary work (now or in the past) you cannot earn Makkies from? (n=32)	Percentage
Yes, in the past but not anymore now	6%
Yes, still at this moment	69%
No	25%
Did Makkie stimulate you to do (more) voluntary work? (n=31)	
Yes	32%
No	68%

Source: Regioplan, 2014

Table A.7 Earned and spent Makkies

Amount of earned Makkies (estimation) (n=32)	Percentage
1 Makkie	6%
2-5 Makkies	19%
5-10 Makkies	16%
10-20 Makkies	22%
20-50 Makkies	3%
50 or more Makkies	13%
Don't know/no answer	22%
Amount of spent Makkies (n=31)	Percentage
None of the earned Makkies	23%
Less than 50%	16%
About 50%	16%
More than 50%	10%
All of the earned Makkies	26%
Don't know/no answer	10%

Source: Regioplan, 214

Table A.8 Way of spending Makkies (n=24)

	Number of persons	Number of Makkies
➤ €2 discount on €10 of groceries at Albert Heijn	9	83
➤ Free entrance concerts <i>Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra</i>	5	53
➤ Free entrance to the <i>Flevoparkbad</i> (swimming pool)	4	8
➤ <i>Canta Club Oost</i> – taxi rides in the Indische Buurt	4	9
➤ 10% discount on a taxi ride	4	8
➤ Praxis gift card of €10	3	25
➤ In another way than was mentioned in the survey	3	10
➤ Taste Before You Waste – <i>Eet mee!</i>	2	22
➤ Free cup of coffee at <i>Eetlokaal LT</i>	2	15
➤ Renting space in <i>Buurthuis de Meevaart</i>	2	32
➤ 50% discount entrance ticket the <i>Tropenmuseum</i>	2	3
➤ Special movies in <i>Studio/K</i> (cinema)	2	1
➤ 10% discount on purchase price at Praxis	2	1
➤ 10% discount at gift shop Rongsen	1	n/a
➤ <i>Voorlezen doet Wonderen</i> – 10 reading afternoons for children	1	n/a
➤ Free ice skating at Jaap Edenbaan	1	9
➤ Free 2nd ticket at playground TunFun	1	n/a
➤ 50% discount entrance ticket Museum Willet-Holthuysen	1	n/a
➤ Free entrance to show Magic Circus	1	n/a
➤ <i>Expeditie Javastraat – De Toneelmakerij</i> (theatre)	1	1
TOTAL		280

Source: Regioplan, 2014

Table A.9 Reasons of not spending Makkies (n=14)

	Percentage
Existing spending options are not interesting	36%
Did not have enough time to explore the spending options	0%
Saving Makkies for a certain activity/discount/etc.	7%
Don't need to be rewarded for voluntary work	43%
Other	14%

Source: Regioplan, 214

Table A.10 Contentment with spending options (n=30)

Number of options	Percentage
To a (very) large extent	27%
Neutral	40%
To a (very) small extent	17%
Don't know/no answer	17%
Sort of options	Percentage
To a (very) large extent	20%
Neutral	40%
To a (very) small extent	27%
Don't know/no answer	13%

Source: Regioplan, 2014

Table A.11 Effects of Makkie (n=30)

	To a large extent	To a limited extent	No effect	Not applicable	Don't know/ no answer
It satisfies me to make a contribution to the liveability of my neighbourhood	50%	27%	3%	7%	13%
It increased my pride/self-esteem	40%	17%	23%	3%	17%
I got to know my neighbourhood better	40%	30%	17%	0%	13%
I made new friends	33%	17%	27%	3%	20%
I know more people with a different age and cultural background in my neighbourhood	33%	27%	13%	7%	20%
I know more about what kind of activities take place in my neighbourhood	27%	33%	20%	0%	20%
I broadened my range of interests	23%	10%	37%	7%	23%
I'm less frightened and distrustful of other people in my neighbourhood	17%	13%	20%	30%	20%
I developed new skills	13%	17%	27%	13%	30%

Source: Regioplan, 2014

Table A.12 Are you planning to do voluntary work in your neighbourhood the next few years (n=31)

	Percentage
A lot of volunteer activities	13%
Some volunteer activities	74%
Probably not	13%
Certainly not	0%

Source: Regioplan, 2014

Table A.13 Sex and age of Makkie earners (n=31)

Sex	Percentage
Male	36%
Female	64%
Age	
< 18 years	0%
18-25 years	0%
25-35 years	19%
35-45 years	39%
45-55 years	13%
55-65 years	19%
65 years or older	10%

Source: Regioplan, 2014



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