

Summary of the impact evaluation of the district playground in Hardau

Children have been involved in the planning process of numerous playgrounds in the City of Zurich to date. Unfortunately, there has been no comprehensive examination as yet into what kind of effect the participation of children has on quality, product satisfaction and playground use. The aim of this report is to contribute to the formation of a realistic picture of the costs and benefits of children's participation in playground construction using the district playground in Hardau as an example. This report plays a part in bridging this gap.

A project which took three years to complete and which brought together an unusual array of experts from administrative departments, the business community and the district itself, reached its provisional conclusion with the official opening of the district playground in Hardau in September 2007. The experts all committed themselves to the establishment of a binding policy of children's participation within the framework of professional case management.

In September 2008, a year after the official opening, Mega!phon carried out an impact evaluation of this project. The survey of those involved in the process and of the users revealed some important information with regard to future projects.

Thirteen questions, concerning satisfaction with the playground, its use and the playground's development process, served as the basis for the evaluation. For purposes of clarity, the questions were divided into the following themes: *product quality, sustainability, efficiency and image*.

Here is a summary of the results:

- The playground, which was planned in collaboration with children, shows high utilisation qualities and is seen aesthetically as a success by children, adults and experts.
- The playground was quickly embraced within the district. The children involved clearly identify themselves more with the playground. To date there has not been a single case of vandalism. The children undertake maintenance work as a matter of course, without being prompted.
- The participation process has a positive effect on interdisciplinary/interdepartmental collaboration and contributes to staff motivation.
- Administrative processes are not seriously disrupted. The participation of children results in a certain amount of additional time and expense being required on the one hand, but on the other hand there is an improvement in the quality of the product and its development.
- Participation projects such as this pave the way for children's involvement in the district, in the city and beyond.

Of course, neither the process nor the utilisation of the playground is without certain challenges and conflicts. This report provides a sophisticated insight into a project that is described enthusiastically by those surveyed as being both informative and enriching.

We hope that this report will contribute to further establishing children's participation in playground and district development projects. We hope that this report is an exciting read for you!

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