

Integration and green business development in a trust-building context

Mirek Dymitrow ^a

Kristina Fermskog ^b

Karin Ingelhag ^c

Shelley Kotze ^d

^a Chalmers University of Technology, Mistra Urban Futures / University of Gothenburg,
MUF, Läraregatan 3, Gothenburg Sweden: mirek.dymitrow@chalmers.se

^b Gothenburg Municipality, Department of Environment Management,
Karl Johansgatan 23 402 31 Gothenburg, Sweden; kristina.fermskog@miljo.goteborg.se

^c Business Region Göteborg, Urban Rural Gothenburg,
Norra Hamngatan 14, Gothenburg, Sweden, karin.ingelhag@businessregion.se

^d Chalmers University of Technology, Mistra Urban Futures,
Läraregatan 3, Gothenburg Sweden: shelleykotze86@gmail.com

Abstract

The success of social science research and collaboration projects which seek to gain involvement from a particular group of participants are highly reliant upon the quality of social relationships between all stakeholders and actors involved. This means that the quality of these relationships is reliant upon trust and obligations that are inherent within. Trust is a multifaceted process of sensemaking which is developed over time and is created and reproduced through social interactions at both an interpersonal and institutional level. It is argued that the most significant relationship within a project that seeks the engagement of immigrant communities is that between the project team and the gatekeeper. However, empirical examples show that projects focusing on specific kinds of development (like green development) may overshadow the project's social context in terms of who it is really for. Moreover, such projects may also inadvertently cater to actors already established on the local market (rather than focusing on the neediest) or even breed stereotypes about immigrants (such as that “all” immigrants are farmers, and hence green development is suitable for them). Unsurprisingly, unreflective approaches to themed integration projects are likely to raise suspicion and, probably undeservingly, spawn negative media attention. This presentation focuses on the backside of implementing a themed integration process in a setting marred by low levels of trust in municipal authorities, past difficulties of implementation and general reluctance of key actors. By making use of reflexive autoethnographic methodology, this presentation opens up to both the possibilities and challenges of an integration project aiming to create new jobs within green development. It also includes a number of recommendations for successful implementation.

Keywords

integration, green business development, trust, distrust, immigrants, participation