



# Exploring integration activities organised by social enterprises

- losing the subject in favour of language

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# Background and previous research

Immigrants must participate actively (40 hours a week) in:

- Swedish for immigrants (SFI)
- Social orientation
- Internship

Filling participants' time, controlling that they participate – administration overload (Larsson, 2015)

Difficult to coordinate activities between a large number of actors (Qvist, 2016)

What the participants do (activities) comes second (Larsson, 2015)

- Participants are adapted to a programme
- Lack of connection to expected professions
- Activities that focus on language and general knowledge (Qvist & Tovatt, 2014)

# Exploring integration activities organised by a social enterprise

Action-oriented research in collaboration with a social enterprise based at the outskirts of Gothenburg, working with community based tourism

- Showcase parts of Gothenburg that are not part of the normal tourist route
- Contributes to the creation of more nuanced images of areas often seen as problematic
- Aims for inclusive tourism regarding both visitors and producers. Aims to create meetings between people/groups who otherwise would not have met

# Exploring integration activities organised by a social enterprise

The organization arranges guided walks, lodging, home stays and co-creative food events in Bergsjön, Angered and other areas

Has established a programme for integration which had an initial focus on entrepreneurship in the tourism industry

# Possibilities for tourism as a facilitator for integration

- Low threshold to work
- Career opportunities
- High demand for staff in many areas
- Source of learning about the Swedish society
- Identification with your new city of residence (pride/ownership)
- Relationship building
- Two-way integration



# The exploration so far

## Challenges:

- Coordination issues between stakeholder conducting activities for integration...
- leading to of attendance at the programme, and participants loosing out on income



# The exploration so far

Challenges: dependence on intermediaries for reaching participants

- The public employment service have not made a complete check of the programme regarding quality and content.
- The social enterprise does not have insight in participants education and professional background.
- Was ensured by an actor at the public employment service that they would organize with twenty participants, but only received two participants.



# The exploration so far

Challenges: Extremely varied groups making it difficult to keep on a level that is rewarding for all participants

- Some participants have educational backgrounds or job aims that does not fit in to the focus on tourism
- Some have long university educations behind them, others have elementary education
- Some are motivated to plan their own projects (e.g. planning a food event), others are not





# The exploration so far

Participants see language as a main priority, as a way to learn Swedish faster and thereby get closer to the job market

- As a complement to Swedish class, since “you get to practice the words you learn at SFI”.
- “I meet participants and they are surprised that I have only been learning Swedish for six months. I make is a good example, and they see that it is possible”.



# The exploration so far

What does the touristic activities contribute with?

- “it as a good opportunity to meet people and make new connections. You get to practice Swedish and be in a situation where people are listening to you” (about conducting guided tours)
- “It is a way for people to learn about other cultures, and what it was like in my city”
- You learn about Sweden through tourism

## Challenges

- “I will need a lot more knowledge about the place and its history before I will see myself as a guide”.
- Situations where participants feel guests are only asking question about them, without sharing their own experiences from Sweden.



# Preliminary conclusions from the social enterprise perspective – challenges

They lose their core identity and area of expertise in order to fit in, and teach in areas where they are only laymen.

Activities such as guided tours and food events are dependent on the ability of the organization to secure booking for such activities.

Social enterprises often find it difficult to mediate their core identity and offer in an understandable manner, which makes communication with employment agencies and possible participants problematic.



# Preliminary conclusions from the social enterprise perspective – opportunities

- Cultural brokers and intermediaries due to for example own experience of immigration, multilingual expertise
- Possible for participants get a close relationship with the organization due to its small size..
- ...gives more responsibilities for participants, resulting in heightened confidence



# Possibilities for change

Develop a new structure for the integration programme in collaboration with the organisation

From language and general knowledge to focus on

- Tourism labour market
- Tourism educations
- Hospitality
- Study visits
- Network
- Practice through food events etc.



# Possible continuation

The role of tourism in multicultural societies - adding to stereotypes or contributing to diversity?

Act for the inclusion and representation of diversity in tourism development and place branding.

Studies in Sweden, Kenya, Japan, US and China – diverse, multicultural contexts.

*Tourism imagery comparison*

*Guided tours in suburbs*

*Multicultural food events*

*Multiculturalism in participatory development of physical and built environments*

*The tourism agency as a space for integration*

*Visiting friends and relatives tourism*

*Ethnic networks and tourism*