



How to motivate marginalized groups with various cultural backgrounds?

Abstract by

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This abstract provides an overview of a model implemented in Norway for mobilizing and guiding immigrants for business start-up. The model is based on the experience gained through the Norwegian Center for Multicultural Value Creation (NSFV). The center was established in the year 2005 with the vision of “*a value creating multicultural Norway*”. The aim was to facilitate and stimulate strong business start-ups and an entrepreneurial spirit among immigrants. The long-term goal was to create successful and competitive businesses that would contribute to regional value creation, growth and employment.

The background for the establishment of the center has roots on the increased level of immigration to Norway, and the challenges facing the immigrants entering the labor market. The challenge is especially noticeable among the highly-qualified immigrants that usually end-up in jobs with low-qualification requirements or are unemployed. The traditional view has been to look at immigration and immigrants as a “**problem**”.

NSFV was established to change this public attitude and rather focus on the “**opportunities**” created by immigration; on demonstrating the “diversity assets” – that is to focus on the values that the immigrants represent, rather than the problems of multicultural Norway. As means to this goal we have worked to nurture good role models among the immigrant entrepreneurs, making sure they are visible in business, political and public arenas - and using them as ambassadors and motivators for other immigrants. We have worked with highly-skilled immigrants that have fallen out of the job market. In this process, we have focused on matching the individuals’ skills, education, cultural background and motivation-level with the opportunities in the market. The aim has been to create a success recipe from the beginning.

The work has focused on

- *Resource mobilization, motivation and empowerment.* As part of this activity we identify the skills and qualifications of the immigrants through individual meetings, we help build up the person’s self-esteem and check the motivation and drive to become an entrepreneur.
- *Skills development on new business start-up and personal mastery.* The customized courses are module based and focus on the practical side of the business start-up as well as the process of understanding the issues of business culture and ethics in business life. We also focus on personal motivation and goals.
- *Business advisory services and coaching.* These are individual advisory services on understanding the business and market issues, and matching them to the market needs and opportunities. The users get help on building the idea to a business concept, and develop a business plan and budget.
- *Cooperation between the authorities, the industry and the minority groups.* The network of our cooperating partners is available as door openers, ambassadors, or experts on the way to business start-up.

- *Network groups.* The power of networking is strong. We create arenas for the immigrant entrepreneurs to meet each other and other groups from business life.
- *Financing network.* The NSFV does not have capital to finance the new start-ups. However, we do help the entrepreneurs gain access to existing financing schemes (both governmental and private).