



A 'locals' perspective towards social acceptance of the Closing-the-Circle project in Houthalen-Helchteren---

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Overview

1. Why did citizens take the initiative to start up a 'Locals Work Group'? Who are 'the locals'?
2. Why? Knowledge overcomes fear
3. How? A critical approach whilst being receptive to change
4. **Big challenge:** Participation without insight leads to utterance without perspective.
5. The driving force that kept 'The Locals' going for more than seven years.

1- Why did citizens take the initiative to start up a 'Locals Work Group'?

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- First ELFM symposium 2010 → The Locals
- Fourteen members → critically examine → project + reactions
- Information gathering meetings → trustworthy sources → past 7 years
- Follow and influence CtC project



2- Knowledge overcomes fear

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- History → dust, odour, nuisance, heavy traffic → inhabitants → suspicious
- The right to be concerned → quality of life, health
- NIMBY syndrome → no argument → downplay the anxieties, to stigmatise
- Building knowledge → building credibility → building trust

3- A critical approach whilst being receptive to change

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- Local population → protection of the environment, health, safety.
- Optimistic approach → obtain safeguards → ensure reliability (without causing nuisance, adverse effects in the short or long term)
- Transparency throughout the entire project → follow-up, controllability.
- Big challenge!

4- Participation without insight leads to utterance without perspective.’ (part 1)

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■ ***“Inspraak zonder inzicht leid tot uitspraken zonder uitzicht!”***

- Well-founded agreement / no agreement → clear understanding → essentially
- Critical stance → authorities / businesses → convince society → just benefits
- Principles of ‘The Locals’:
- Knowledge about the project \neq immediately agree
- Local residents agreement → understand what will happen → here and how (Including technologies and processes)



4- Participation without insight leads to utterance without perspective.' (part 2)

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- Do understand + not agree → clearly justify opinion
- Knowledge + insights → well founded objections → described precisely
- Education institutions, scientists, business leaders → likely to listen → clearly formulated objections
- Politicians → interest
- Very important task → work together → scientific community → translate complex information → understandable for general public



5- The driving force that kept 'The Locals' going for more than seven years

- Public → objective scientific knowledge → fully informed decisions, conclusions.
- Proposals → project managers → adjustments (Early warning system, test excavations, ...)
- Results → public
The Locals = neutral actor
- ELFM → opportunity → final chapter
- Ultimately → end of old form of waste processing

