

Researchers as Collaborators

Reflexive lessons from evaluating
the WE Finance Code

Kathleen Stephenson
with Ira Chatterjee and
Seda Yalcin - Muftugil

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam
The Netherlands

Context / Challenge

The initiative

Voluntary, in 30+ countries

Nothing is enforced

Coalitions report up to global

Built on the supply side of finance

Our research over 70 interviews
with various stakeholders

Orchestration (Abbott & Snidal)

Governing without authority, through
intermediaries and incentives

Four gaps it cannot close alone



Evidence / Experience

What we supply

Vantage point: insider-outsider research
(Louis & Bartunek, 1992)

Legitimation: Suchman (1995)

Momentum: relational energy (Owens et al., 2016)

Relevance: the honest broker (Pielke, 2007)

What we receive

Access, standing, learning,
potentially an opportunity to publish



Recommendations

For partnerships like this one

Make sure the means are not decoupled from the ends (Bromley & Powell, 2012)

Treat observer effects as engagement

Name what each side gains, openly

Build capacity that outlasts us

Count applied work in careers

**Committed to the issue,
open about the organising**



Key Takeaways

Main messages

We are not external to the Code
The exchange runs both ways
Reflexivity means naming both

Thank you

Kathleen Stephenson
k.a.stephenson@vu.nl
Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam



Katie Stephenson

Associate Professor of Organizational
Change and Leadership at Vrije Universit...

