

Spiritual capital

IN THE THIRD SECTOR



From Faith-Based NGOs to Spiritual Capital

- Original title: Applying spiritual principles and core values in the leadership, management and service of faith-based NGOs.
- Current working title: Spiritual Capital in the Third Sector
- Although drawing on research on faith-based NGOs, the aim is to develop a conceptual framework and training materials which are applicable to any third-sector organization, regardless of religious or non-religious background.
- Methodology: grounded theory

mapping FBOs in hk

- Stage 1: interviewed leaders of some of the larger and smaller FBOs in HK (also Taiwan, Malaysia and Macau), from Christian, Buddhist, Muslim, Hindu and Baha'i backgrounds: SKH Welfare Council; Caritas HK; International Migrants' Alliance; Tzu Chi; Habitat for Humanity; Chi Lin Elderly Home; Tsz Shan Monastery; Art of Living; Centre for Spiritual Progress to Great Awakening; Badi Foundation; etc.

- Goal: to learn the core values and spiritual principles of the organization, and how they inform the organization's leadership, management and service.
- Identification of innovative cases and best practices: groups that are consciously inspired by their spiritual values; apply their values in an innovative fashion; and serve the community in general rather than only their own religious group or identity.

spiritual capital

THE CAPACITY GENERATED BY

A SPIRITUAL ORIENTATION TO LIFE, i.e.

1. SOURCE OF MEANING IS SPIRITUAL: Meaning, purpose and value in life does not lie in material possessions, wealth, fame, power or pleasures.
2. INNER ORIENTATION: It lies in relating to our “spiritual nature”: transcending the ego, realizing the inner beauty, goodness and nobility within us.
3. OUTER ORIENTATION: It lies in relating to the spiritual nature, beauty and goodness of other humans, of the universe, and of ultimate reality.
4. SENSE OF ONENESS between the inner and outer dimensions; connection between self, others, the universe, and ultimate reality.

spiritual motivation

- **FEELING:** This leads to a wellspring of love and compassion -- feeling pain at the pain of others, joy at the joy of others.
- **ACTION:** It leads to the desire to **act** to reduce the pain of others, to increase the joy of others,
- **CHANGE:** And even to change the world, so that there will be less pain, and more joy -- so that suffering and oppression may end, creating a world of justice and unity.

spiritual capital in the third sector

- Concept of spiritual capital appears in literature on business leadership and ethics
- It is even more applicable to third sector organizations: most third sector organizations are to some degree implicitly motivated by a spiritual orientation as described above, and rely on spiritual capital as an important resource

spiritual capital: individual capacities

- Confidence
- Sense of purpose and direction
- Emotional balance, peace of mind and joy
- Patience, forgiving, generosity
- Ability to cooperate with others
- Desire to serve others

spiritual capital: collective capacities

- Unity of vision, purpose and core values
- Interpersonal trust, harmony, conflict reduction
- Intrinsic motivation and mobilisational capacity

generating spiritual capital

- Training in spiritual concepts and wisdom
- Modelling through inspirational stories and examples
- Creating a physical and social environment
- An ethic of service which downplays hierarchies
- Empowering the weak
- Spiritual practices (meditation, prayer)
- Placing an intrinsic value on each individual (whether worker, volunteer or person being served), rather than as an instrument for other goals (Critical distance toward professional and managerial approaches)

conceptualizing spiritual capital

- Relationship between spiritual capital, social capital, cultural capital, economic capital
- Relationship between intrinsic and instrumental values

spiritual principles

- Spiritual principles provide the link between intrinsic and instrumental value, and guidelines for generating and applying spiritual capital.
- Examples of spiritual principles: oneness, compassion, justice, equality.

Spiritual Principles

Inner Spiritual
Motivation

Outer Social Ideal



Process of action

1. Internal management level
2. Program level

Fig. 1 Spiritual Principles as a process that orients and aligns individual spiritual motivations & social action towards a social ideal. In this case, social action takes place in the institutionalized context of nonprofit/nongovernmental organizations and their various forms of social action

training modules

- Identifying and applying spiritual principles in the following four areas:
- Elaborating the vision, purpose and core values of the organization.
- Integration of personal spiritual growth and service to humanity.
- Unity and trust in group consultation and decision making.
- Evaluation of lines of action, projects and management.

next steps

- Sept.-Dec. 2012: Mini-workshops and focus groups with leaders and volunteers of organizations with best practices. Goal: refine the conceptual framework on spiritual capital
- Jan.-April 2013: Writing of cases; Drafting of training materials; Setting up website
- End April 2013: Conference
- Sept. 2013 -April 2014: Training workshops
- May 2014: Final experience-sharing conference