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Title

What Can Nonprofit Education Provide to Develop Competencies for Collaborative Leadership?

Abstract

The purpose of this research is to grasp the skills and competencies necessary for collaboration among nonprofits, government and corporations. Whether you are working at nonprofit organization, government, corporations or other organizations, collaborative skills and competencies are required to proceed works with others effectively to pursue common objectives of collaboration. More and more universities have offered classes on nonprofit organization at universities.

Wish and Mirabella (1998) suggests that the courses on nonprofit education have spread in the U.S. widely and has been offered mainly at the graduate level (Mirabella and Wish 1999). However, the focus of literature has been on the graduate degree in the U.S. and little is known about the situation and the outcomes of nonprofit education and its connections to the career path at undergraduate level and in other countries.

The author has offered nonprofit organization seminar classes at undergraduate program for 10 years and about 100 students have taken the seminar class since 2008 at the Business Specialization, Faculty of Economics, Tohoku University, Japan. Moreover, other classes on nonprofit organizations were offered at other universities and high-schools in Tohoku Area. In this study, questionnaire surveys, focused group discussions and interviews were conducted. In addition, text of minute papers, reflection papers and theses of the students were analyzed.

Out of 100 seminar students, very few students have chosen the nonprofit organizations as their first career. Most of the graduates have chosen public officials at national and local government, and for-profit big companies. However, some of them were found to have some connections to nonprofit organizations as a part of their work and/or as their private activities.

The major findings were that the outcomes of nonprofit education were (1) knowledge about
nonprofit organization and its role and significance in community (2) understanding of nonprofit organization as a partner of collaboration in relation to their work at corporations and government (3) collaborative skills such as teamwork, compassion, listening and respect to diversity, (4) leadership and management competencies, especially organization management, and (5) civic mind, and feelings of contribution to society.

One graduate has initiated a collaborative project in her corporation in partnership with local government to develop civic bonds in the community. Another graduate has been engaged in disaster reconstruction projects in collaboration with nonprofit organization at government in Tohoku. Both graduates initiated leadership from the first year of their career with the enthusiasm to contribute to their workplace and community utilizing what they have learned on nonprofit organization at university.

Academic implications on nonprofit education at undergraduate level and the career path are discussed as well as practical implications for nonprofits and universities.

**Keyword**

nonprofit education, competency, leadership