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Title
Altruistic Academia and Social Development: Higher Education Institutions as a Catalyst of the Voluntary Sector Transformation in Taiwan

Abstract
Recent popularity of the alternative or reflexive development indicates a conceptual shift of “development” from emphasizing economic and political achievement to social and cultural features of plurality and sustainability. Such trend renders the voluntary sector more rooms in pursuing developmental goals. The capacity of this sector, therefore, comes into the spotlights again: how to improve its qualification in carrying out the missions? Accumulated cases worldwide have illustrated how higher education institutions might play a pivotal role in empowering the voluntary sector to actively assume its duty. Receiving subsidies from public budgets makes the higher education institutions a semi-public agents that carry public interests. Charging tuition and fee from students makes them a business. Soliciting tax-waiving donation from the society also entitles them a voluntary status. With such multiple identities, universities enjoy a strategic position that is not only an ideal platform for coordination but also an incubator of innovative ideas and practices for public, private and the voluntary sectors.

Experiencing marketization and secularization in the century, researches in the universities have substantially integrated with industrial development, while the institutes have been expected to assume social responsibility like the corporations in business sector. With the methodological breakthrough in action researches, intervention to change the conditions of the research targets via dynamic and interactive process started to gain greater legitimacy. The overall performance evaluation and resource distribution schemes, however, still bias against above tendency. Therefore, the scholarly actions in pursing diverse social goals was largely driven by altruistic spirit of individual scholars who would not benefit from such engagement.

This paper examines how the “altruistic academia” has emerged to change the quality of the voluntary sector. It specifies how the overall higher education policies and socio-economic
conditions in Taiwan have evolved to nourish such altruism, the actual impacts that have been generated, and the prospect of making universities the intellectual hubs for social governance.

**Keyword**

Univertsity Social Responsibility, Social Innovation, Action-oriented Academia