

The Study on Facilitating Citizen Participation of NPO-based Community development

-In Case of the NPO Seaside Gallery-

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Key Words: NPO, Seaside Gallery Citizen Participation, Community development, Local/Regional resources

1. Backgrounds and Purpose

Activities of diverse parties in the region which do not only rely on the local government are demanded for current community development. The number of NPOs that work for it has been increasing recently and these NPOs have been acting as accepting the various value of today and addressing the needs of each region. Especially, for organizations which are engaged in community development, partnership with government is essential to offer multiple services as dividing roles. In the meantime, there are issues that NPOs contract with government on the cheap. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to inspect the current community development by finding problems through participating events of an NPO and contacting with stakeholders and by participant observation.

2. Outline of the Research

This research focuses on a local organization, NPO Seaside Gallery, in Kochi Prefecture which is engaged in the community development in Kuroshio-cho. This field study was conducted intermittently between 08/2009 and 10/2010. Examination of the NPO has done through participant observation, experience of internship, planning and running of events of the NPO, interview and daily conversation with the NPO and its stakeholders.

3. Research Results

NPO Seaside Gallery has worked for over 20years in Kuroshio-cho and became an incorporated non-profit organization from a private organization in 2003. Since then, the organization has more promoted new ways of participation of the local residents in the activities of the NPO such as generating employment in the area and sending out information of sightseeing, and these activities contribute to the community development. Also, these activities are considered the means to remain a tight relationship between the NPO and the local government. At the same time, it is thought that the NPO is crucial for the community development because they have relationships with many stakeholders in and outside the region. Meanwhile, according to the fact-finding survey of business schedule and work sharing toward the staff of the NPO, it is revealed that the system of the organization is not consisted enough to promote the participation of the residents. This is resulted from several reasons; burden of works on a part of the organization, the relationship with the government, and difficulty of sharing feelings or goals.

4. Conclusion

It is found that significant people in the organization are feeling fatigue because of the burden of the works. Increase and complexity of the procedures which are caused by becoming a NPO generates this problem. Additionally, each project is committed by each project is commissioned by different parties even in the same government, so it is difficult for each group in the NPO to help other projects even in the same organization. Thus, each group works only for its own project and people in the organization do not understand each other. Also, there is no opportunity to have a meeting for the organization as a whole and these results in not sharing senses or feelings. Thus, it is necessary for small organizations such as the NPO to have a system which can manage projects flexibly and over the groups. With this system, the organization which the residents can participate in the community development would be achieved.