

What is “development of welfare society(发展福利社会)”?

INTRODUCTION

0. Let us see the world from a new perspective

1. What is “welfare society(福利社会)”?

A local community where each and every member of the society is enabled to develop the capacity of his/her livelihood and to make use of a variety of opportunities, through government, market or within the community, for uplifting of welfare of his/her own and of others

2. What is “development (发展)”?

3. What is “development” of “welfare society”?

Public policies and community actions to create and promote a welfare society

4. Why did we at NFU attempt to create the new concept?

Through the government-sponsored COE (Center of Excellence) Program “Asian COE toward New Policy Science for Social Well-being and Development”, 2003-08, Nihon Fukushi University was engaged in inter-disciplinary research activities integrating, particularly, community welfare and social development. Community welfare researchers tried to overcome limitations of conventional “welfare state” model of unilateral, institutional service provisions and a rigidly professionalized worker-client perspective. Social development specialists viewed the “expert” exercises of top-down, blue-print planning for the distant future was increasingly irrelevant to the human development and security of the world poor. In both disciplines and in both South and North of the globe, more participatory, process-oriented, community-based, interactive approaches were called for, to fill gaps in institutions.

5. What is the purpose of our research at NFU?

In both contexts above, we attempt to identify a variety of mechanisms of new welfare provisions that are self-initiated and maintained by community members at the grassroots. A social space for activated interaction among community members and between inside and outside communities should lead to more enabling policy environment at the macro level. The interaction should also change professional-client relationships at the micro level, so that developmental social workers would act as an agent of change in the community. We maintain that the role of government is of prime importance, as will be discussed later, but its intervention and support should primarily be aimed at enabling communities.

6. How did we review the existing theories of relevance? →請參照中文資料

James Midgley’s theory of “social investment(社会性投資);

Amartya Sen’s theory of “capability”(development as freedom);

Toshihiro Yogo’s theory of local social development;

In our study, we focus on the *community* level, pay attention to *interactive process* among actors through which relationships are *transformed* and more enabling policy framework can emerge.

7. Structure of our study

Macro level policy study: enabling environment and institutional change to ensure people to act as “agents”;

Meso level planning perspective: creating a social space for interactive processes among actors;

Micro level care support methodology: mutually changing, mutually empowering practices.

CASES OF ILLUSTRATION FROM JAPAN

1. Community Support Workers (CSW : 地域支援企画員) in Kochi Prefecture(高知県)
2. A “Community House” organized by “Togetsuso(冬月荘)” in Kushiro City(釧路市)
3. Proposed “centers for mutual support” in tsunami-hit areas

After the triple disaster of earthquake, tsunami and nuclear power plants on 11 March, NFU research group has been working at three levels:

One is policy advocacy through backstopping assistance to a local non-government, non-profit organization (NPO) called Community Life Support Center (CLC). Its director Mr. Ikeda is a member of working group for Government Reconstruction Committee. We advocate that communities must be maintained throughout stages from evacuation camps to temporary housing and eventually permanent housing. And as an instrument for this, a place for community interaction must be installed in every temporary housing area. This approach will transcend the government’s programme of an “elderly care center” in each housing area, which tends to be conventional compartmentalized top-down service delivery only for the temporary housing stage of two years or so, and leading to the dependency on the government.

Another is informational and research support. We are helping document how people have been suffering precisely, what are the issues involved in transition period from evacuation centers to temporary housing, as well as monitor and identify positive efforts by people to get together and recover livelihoods. The documentation will be used for policy advocacy and training of facilitators for community development.

Third, we attempt to help initiate a concrete pilot model of a place of community interaction. For example, in Otsuchi town (a very remote fishing town which was totally devastated), a woman practitioner of acupuncture and moxibustion 鍼灸師 lost her house and clinic. A place for acupuncture could naturally become a center of community interaction particularly for elderly people. Starting with a small clinic, it can evolve into a community center with her house, through community efforts.