

RSOG and the Office of the State Secretary of Sarawak

A Joint Seminar on “Public Engagement with the Non- Government Organisation”

with

Professor Makoto Nagahata
Meji University, Japan

When : 26 November 2014
Where : Four Points Hotel, Kuching Sarawak
Speakers : Professor Makoto Nagahata

About The Seminar

In recent decades, as modernization has prevailed all over the world, traditional local communities drastically lost its importance on human life, and both the nation states and capitalist economy play much important roles for fulfilling various needs of the people. However, no one denies that there are various issues in our society which can be solved neither by public sector nor by the private companies alone. It becomes inevitable for local governments to have collaborative actions involving Non-Government Organisations (NGO) in order to overcome complicated issues in modernised societies. In the seminar, firstly, historical background of NGO emergence will be reviewed, then the key roles of NGOs in providing services and solving local issues in community development will be discussed through introducing practical cases in Asian countries including Japan. Finally, a few technical tips for engaging NGOs in development activities will be introduced. It is expected that the participants of this seminar will be able to find out more about theoretical insights and practical knowledge on NGOs and their engagement in community development and policy implementation.

Summary

In this workshop style Seminar, Prof. Nagahata spoke briefly about the origin of Non-Governmental Organization (NGO). According to him, the idea of NGO was mooted by

small communities as there was a need to work together for their survival, production, re-production and identity. The common characteristics of NGO are that these organizations are innovative in terms of promoting their causes, possess hard work, determination and initiative, issue based, have limited resources and dependent on the support of the relevant stakeholders especially the public.

One of the main attributes of NGO is that it is non-profit driven entity and it is more focused on fighting for a specific cause such as human rights, environment, education and women related issues. Prof. Nagahata posed a question to the participants on what are the collective actions that community people do together. Some of the answers given are marriage, gotong-royong, religious gatherings, cultural activities, economic activities, sports programmes and educational activities for the children. He then provided examples of NGO engagement in Yokohama, Japan including Children Nurturing Support and Park management association in Yokohama city.

Prof. Nagahata further elaborated that when a group of individuals form an NGO to champion a cause, it enables them to have easier access to resource, chance to expand service and opportunity to be involved in policy/planning formation. He added that there are different areas of engagement that requires flexible, sensitive or careful treatment/assistance, professional skill and knowledge, active participation of local community, consensus formation by local community and creation of active community. There are various types of engagement:

- Contract out (entrust)
- Joint committee
- Co-organizing
- Exchange of information
- Subsidize
- Sponsorship

Issues Raised

1) The establishment of an NGO has evolved from a community based organization championing local issues to a more established entity that is an important advocate of issues representing the people such as human rights, education and environment.

2) NGO is important as it function as a mediator for various stakeholders to discuss and share ideas and perspectives about a project or program.

3) The common characteristics of NGO include hard work, determination and initiative, issue based and limited resources.

Participation Profile

27 Participants attended the workshop, They comprise mainly of District Officers in Sarawak and Officers from the State Secretary of Sarawak.

About the Speaker

Professor Nagahata graduated from the University of Tokyo, Faculty of Law, and obtained a Master's degree in international relations theory from Sophia University. Formerly served as Director of Overseas Project Division for the NPO Shapla Neer (Citizens' Committee in Japan for Overseas Support). He possesses extensive experience in rural development and alleviation of poverty through multi-stakeholder collaboration, including human resource management in community development in Bangladesh, Vietnam, and Indonesia.

Contact

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