

Keynote Speech



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CORPORATE AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS CREATING A STRONGER CIVIL SOCIETY

OLD CONTEXT:

SERVICE MODEL:

The Victorian Model of benevolence. UK, Europe, US, not so much taken up in Asia. Implying moral judgments. I am better, or at least I am more fortunate. Results in discomfort for the giver and abhorrence on part of the receiver. Likely to be found in welfare services, children or aged or disability services and leaves no room for growth and development only for holding others in dependence. The model is well meaning and can achieve limited goals and outcomes but it is by no means a holistic model.

COERCION:

Obliging citizens to serve. Pressure of a variety of kinds is applied to gain loyalty or service or both. There is little or no capacity for spontaneity or genuine commitment to the work engaged in resulting in participants floundering as soon as artificial pressures are removed the work stops. The coercion model may be found in political parties, camps, associations, unions, co-operatives, statutory organisations and quasi-government organisations.

RECIPROCAL MODEL:

A Model both old and new. Drawn from a long established ancient tradition of sharing.

Communities where people have taken as norms the imperative of sharing their social skills, time, ideas and energies with their neighbours. Reciprocal volunteering is still practised in tribal groups, is often found amongst indigenous peoples, and in remote rural and regional communities. This model can also be called informal volunteering. There is no measure for this kind of volunteering but it is this human interaction that makes what we now call social capital. It is the glue that binds communities together.

NEW CONTEXT:

RECIPROCAL MODEL:

Reciprocal behaviour, doing something worthwhile for self as well as for the other is increasingly seen and talked about in the context of what volunteering really is. It sits more closely in the living of modern life, has more impact in a digital environment, and appeals more keenly to young volunteers, not so interested in joining, but keenly interested in getting something done and moving on to the next challenge.

MULTI-IDENTITY MODEL:

With rapid societal changes that we experience today life offers many new forms of stability and instability. This model offers amazing choice or a much wider inclusive path which both calls for and answers the need for a more reflective and active citizenship. Being able to tolerate and understand multiple identities is an important part of the role of the successful business executive as well as the ordinary citizen of the future. The act of volunteering in itself provides a significant space to "try on" a variety of identities while giving back to the community, thus the rediscovered value of something in it for me and something in it for you.

When we narrow ourselves to one identity we run the risk of being immersed in fear of change. We see this manifest around us in different forms of fundamentalism in family and work practises and it religion, ethnicity and nationalism.

Those who choose to work in multi-identity models offer more to business and community life as they take options for new ways of thinking and new relationships.

Different and valuable understandings occur within families, in the work place and, in local and wider communities of which they are a part. This model works in a spirit of equality and reciprocity thus it is a possible model through which to carve a true partnership between the two sectors.

We remain in partnerships of any kind today only as long as it makes sense to do so, whether those partnerships are between individuals, employers and employees, or otherwise. The norms of our grandparents are no longer absolute and will not be adhered to if they don't make sense in the modern world.

Volunteering in this model especially when business and community work together, can provide one of the strongest tools civil society has. It needs to use this tool wisely to reinforce the values it wishes to draw out of communities. Volunteering is the tool through which to build solidarity within each community of which it is a part. It is a pro-active model and takes us to a new level of understanding of the survival of the planet.

NEW SPACES:

New spaces are emerging in communities and are most visible at local governance level whether in business organisations or local communities. The spaces will be filled. They may be filled wisely or unwisely. Partnerships between business and community can share a pathway resulting in stable governance, in clean clear environments in which to live peacefully and conduct business safely and to the benefit of all. Governments and others can be held to account and corrupt practises and negligence stemmed by the combined attention of those skilled both in economic and social development.

Direct consultation can be conducted with stakeholders who both live in the community and buy products there. An opportunity for open supportive dialogue exists that demonstrates a willingness to listen and learn from both sectors.

Partnerships between the sectors sharing services together create trust and breaks down barriers of old and myths which each sector believed of the other. Business sometimes thinks community organisations can't be professional, can't understand the importance of finance and achieving strong sustainable outcomes. Community sometimes thinks business organisations are cold money making machines without a moral compass or an understanding of people.

The inclusion of both voices is an imperative for carving the way forward, modern citizens demand to be heard one way or another. Is it wiser to occupy the spaces with strong visible partnerships rather than those spaces being filled by protesters demanding a way through the mire.

TWO SECTORS TOGETHER:

All over the world there is demand both in business and community environments to do more without. Benefits of working together are real and inclusive.

EFFECTS OF ECONOMIC GROWTH:

Which can occur through greater employee productivity brought about by increased respect from employees, also by taking pride in the areas of community engagement their companies have a role in and experiencing added respect from clients, customers, suppliers and other stakeholders.

Being able to brand products with community need, so one becomes closely linked with the other in the minds of consumers. Knowledge gained each from the other sector which may provide market intelligence otherwise unavailable. And an opportunity for each sector to display its partnership with the other on web-site and other social media options which identifies one with the other with "an increased strength". A "cause" can sometimes do the talking to the value of the company or community organisation. There is too the possibility to leverage value-added support for a "shared product" through an advertising agency, media, or government that direct business or community transactions could not effect.

An opportunity to have the companies corporate citizenship recognised by other companies, governments and the community at both local and national levels.

CALL FOR HIGHER EDUCATION:

As digital life expands so too does the desire for added knowledge. Cross sector exchange of personnel can provide opportunities for all concerned. Leadership opportunities in community organisations for young executive who need to "cut their teeth" in management who may not be quite ready for the big promotion, or who may be following higher studies. Companies who need specialists in multi-tasking may find an abundance of opportunity for this skills development in the community sector.

Companies who have staff needing skilling up in communications, human relations, and motivational development could do well to turn to NGO's with highly successful volunteer programmes an excellent example of motivational skilling. Volunteers are motivated by the level of inclusion they experience and the identification they carve with the organisation or cause with which they are involved. They are not motivated by a remuneration package so the motivational skilling has to be high. Employees approaching retirement may enjoy being offered a secondment to a voluntary organisation of their choice for an agreed period to give

time for an adjustment to the next phase of their lives.

INFORMATION AND MIGRATION:

Community sector personnel would clearly value an opportunity for some staff to participate in training programmes offered in specific areas such as sales and marketing, product development, finance, fund-development, time management and the like.

A joint Leadership Development Programme for young leaders from both sectors offering the skills and experiences of each would be a wonderful way forward to develop multi-identity activities. A Leadership Development Programme/Institute encompassing the skills of business and the volunteer movement could make a unique contribution to volunteer effort in Asia. In the current environment of change and massive migration from place to place and country to country young leaders from both sectors could share a unique opportunity to develop multi-identity thinking and experiences to enhance their lives and increase their productivity in each sector.

A NEW NEED FOR RECIPROCITY:

We have thought about both the traditional and modern concept of reciprocity, a joint Leadership venture would provide something in it for business and the voluntary sector to work together, as well as something in it for the participants and those they would work with in the future in either sector.

An opportunity would be provided for a company to showcase clear goals and vision of partnership beyond market forces enabling it to be seen as a company that cares to make a difference. Employees would be oriented into a company with clear corporate citizenship goals and would feel their company clearly knows where it is going thus making the individual feel their work too is going to be valued and worthwhile. They would also have an opportunity to be recognised for what they are doing to put back into the community.

The voluntary sector partners would have greater opportunities to increase workplace skills in multiple ways, to engage in genuine discussion and examination of community challenges with experienced and often highly qualified personnel. They would meet fellow participants as human beings, seeing challenges and promises as "ours" rather than working in silo's separating business and voluntary sector goals in traditional ways which has often led to an us and them mentality. An opportunity exists for a stronger meeting of minds in developing

business goals which both sectors need, and being involved in information and action in community initiatives leading to a more rounded life, when able to feel part of a much bigger picture and to enjoy knowing that both sectors are making this possible. Connecting the sectors like this would not be easy but it would be worth it.

Volunteering is Today's Imperative, people need people.

Men and women are volunteering:

- In search of freedoms
- To fulfil basic needs
- To associate with others and to learn

Corporate and Voluntary Sector Partnerships can provide the glue with which to bind a strong civil society.

