

The New Century of Collaboration

NPO Annual Forum 2001

The NPO Annual Forum 2001 closed on the 5th of August in NAGOYA. This two-days forum, attended by 932 people from all over Japan, is one of the biggest event of the non-profit sector since 1996. Sixteen seminars and ten separate meetings were hold during two days, which developed the disputation about the subject as collaboration between the non-profit sector with other sectors.

<Opening> Nonprofits • Government • For-profits--- How to collaborate?

Opening forum is started by the speech of Fusao Ushiro, the chairman of committee. Mr. Ushiro claimed that NPO has been taught a lot from the public and business sector, and now it's time for them to learn from NPO as well.

As for the government, Ushiro pointed out that the coming era of decentralization is asking for the origin of self-government, which NPO have important value. "NPO find question, raise money by themselves and volunteer try solving the question. That is the origin of self-government." He also added that NPO will be a great illumination for the staff of local government who is considering the regeneration of municipal corporation.

As for the business sector, Ushiro argued that "Target Management" and "Customer Satisfying" are becoming the crucial topics for the companies. Thus they should learn from NPO in such aspect because NPO exists based on these two points. He also added that the corporated nonprofits, which are allowed to establish without any capital, attribute a great to forming entrepreneur spirit.

In the end, Ushiro claimed that there will be much higher requirement of collaboration of the three sectors, and the premise is to acknowledge the mutual subsist value.

Followed was a panel discussion by Takuya Okada, President of AEON Group and Akiko Doumoto, Governor of Chiba Prefecture.

OKADA started retail business in Mie prefecture at his twenties in 1946 right after the War. Now his company has became one of the top retailer in Japan with JPY 2,700 billion

sales amount per year.

AEON Environment Foundation and OKADA Culture Foundation started their various kinds of social contribution by supplying bursary to the orphan due to the traffic accidents. In the beginning they could only afford seven or eight children per year because company is too small. Now with the developing of his business, the bursary becomes more and more.

Okada stressed the role of small companies on corporate philanthropy. “Any company, no matter big or small, could contribute to the society if they have the will.”

AEON Group established “1 % Club” in 1989, which is another milestone of their society contribution activities. The group set up a tree planting program with inhabitant attending at the place where the new chain shop open. In order to help the mine casualty in Afghanistan back to normal society and set up their new life, AEON Group endowed a lot of money to Japanese Red Cross Organization, total amount reached 170 million within 3 years up to 2000. While AEON Environment Foundation, devote JPY 200 million every year, totally JPY 2.2 billion to support NPO which working on the environmental protection issues.

In the end, Okada concluded, “ The biggest advantage of retailing business is to keeping a close relation with the local district and local people. Thus we could make it better by supplying information, and making all kinds of activities with local inhabitant.”

Governor of Chiba prefecture Ms.Doumoto started to involve with NPOs when she was a senator. She claimed that “ I am the governor for NPOs” for she not only put up “prefecture governance for NPO ” in the pact, her success winning in the election was also greatly supported by the citizen group “kate-ren”.

Doumoto said that the number of staff who are in charge of NPO issues in Chiba Prefecture is increased from 3 to 6, but the biggest is problem is how to reform their consciousness.

“When I asked for the idea of developing collaboration with the citizen groups, some

staffs put up that 'let's set up a NPO'. NPO could never set up by government, it's commonweal could never judge by the government."

Doumoto stressed that the administration staff should never talk about collaboration without understanding the essence of NPO, and NPO cannot be subservient for receiving money from government. Therefore, it is most important to open information by both administration and NPO. She also shows the conjuncture feeling on Japanese NPO's frangibility compare with the Unite States and other EU members.