

Ideas about Tripartite Partnership (TPP) – Sophia Kao, Jan 06

1) Objectives for promoting TPP in HK

- Currently the objectives for promoting TPP are generally unclear, and definitely not shared; resulting in lack of shared goals, agreed strategies, shared agenda and clear roles for the 3 key parties.
- From the United Nations and World Bank developmental frameworks, TPP is a key component to enable sustainable and balanced social and economic development with positive public outcomes.
- Through a shared understanding and ownership of social issues, TPP makes new solutions and opportunities possible through the collaborative efforts of the three sectors.

2) Conflicting Expectations and Suspicion

- Instead of converging on shared objectives, local development of TPP is hindered by misconceptions about the purpose of TPP as realignment of resources and responsibilities, reinforced by current initiatives (such as the Partnership Fund) that unduly focused TPP on money and unwittingly embroiled TPP in the controversial issues of “who should fund welfare services”.
- Misconceptions lead to suspicions about each other’s expectations e.g. on the one hand, some NGOs are suspicious of business in offloading their social responsibilities as reflected in staff redundancies or paying lip service to TPP only for corporate image building; and of government in shifting service funding responsibilities to business. On the other hand, some businesses are wary of NGOs becoming dependent on them for ongoing service funding.

3. What next in the development of TPP?

As a start,

- A degree of **consensus**, amongst the 3 parties, must be established on the **purpose** of TPP and the impacts of shared interest to be achieved.
- Apart from moral imperatives, identify areas of **shared concern**; specify the **expected benefits** not just for each of the 3 sectors involved, but with **added values** resulting from TPP for the community and where the 3 sectors’ interests may converge.
- **Re-define roles** of TPP for each party and identify effective strategies for

action, e.g.

- i. the role of business is not to become gap funders for service organizations; but to exercise CSR while performing its core function of ensuring economic growth, creating jobs and sharing “wealth” with the wider community where its employees are a major stakeholder, and not just with shareholders alone. Greater CSR impact may start from home, with business becoming good employers creating family-friendly working environment and exercising responsible business strategies and practices that create local jobs and pre-empt social problems,
- ii. that of the third sector is to provide in-depth knowledge of the community, assist in-depth engagement with the different sectors of the community, act as bridge builders with business and government; and
- iii. that of Government is to motivate, moderate (where there are conflicting interests) and facilitate.