How the Partnership Works under emergency? - The relationship between Government and Nonprofit organizations

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August 2009, Typhoon Morakot devastated Taiwan and brought up to three metres of rain falling between August 7 and 8, producing Taiwan’s worst floods in 50 years. Ping-Tung County was one of the most hit area. This article is based on how Ping-Tung County Government and nonprofit organizations work together to cope with the disaster. It is an experience-base article. The evidence and material used in the paper is based on the under-going project sponsored by the Pington County Government. In-depth interview, secondary analysis and literature review are the main methods that used to explore how the two sectors work together to cope with emergency.

Firstly, the article would start from asking what the key elements that nonprofit organizations had in mind when decide to taking up the partnership. It needs two to form a relationship, so what nonprofit organizations expect from the cooperation will affect the way partnership work. Then, it will go on to explore the issue over power distribution, especially over financial resource. Financial support is one of the main perspectives using by scholars when looking at the relationship between nonprofit organizations and government, but the discussion was mostly based on normal situation. From the literature, it was the government who had been treated as the key financial provider and had made its own reputation as "controller". Therefore, the article would like to explore whether these discussion/models would be the same under emergency, especially how Taiwan’s case response to that.

Secondly, who is the key service provider is another issue dominated the discussion over the relationship. Existing literature shows that nonprofit organizations had to comply with the regulations while working with government. This had affected the independence of nonprofit organizations and, more or less, reducing the flexibility and mobility of nonprofit organizations. The article would like to examine the emergency experience of Ping-Tung and try to find out how it fit in the academic discussions.

Thirdly, the article will go on to look at how the partnership influences the development of nonprofit organizations. How nonprofit organizations copy with the routine work and staff shortage while they decide to take up the partnership to meet the emergency needs. One of the arguments from the literature is working with government would jeopardize the sustainable development of nonprofit organizations, especially under contracting-out. Hence, will these worries be the same in the case of emergency work and how nonprofit organizations think about them would be important for the future. After all, it takes two to form a relationship. If nonprofit organizations had no future, no partnership could exist.