

The Practical Roles and Skills of Community Workers: The Case of the Typhoon Morakot Community Empowerment Program

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Abstract

Community work is one of the three major methods of social work. To send professional community workers into communities to help community capacity enhancing and community changing are core practical task for community work. In the era of post-welfare countries after 2000, governments have paid more attention to community work for expecting community organizations to invest in public affairs for against globalization, social exclusion, and marginalization. But there are few professionals who hired to help the community for development or change in the 1970s. The community work practice techniques are re-emphasized and become a new academic topic in these two decades, though they are backward in the 1970s.

In Taiwan, no matter whether it is community development or community building policy, there are few cases in which professional workers hired to provide community capacity, let alone experienced professional workers practice in the community. The 26 professional community workers were employed at the typhoon Morakot affected area for promoting community reconstruction by setting community-empowerment centers in Taiwan 2012-2013. We hold this unconventional program of professional services and had interviewed the social workers and their supervisors to generalize the professional role of community workers, practical skills and practical working models.

This research induced the professional roles of community workers as analyzers, evaluators, program planner and executor, connector, educators and mentors, partner, and team leader. The six sets practical skills are drawn as building relationships and understanding community, stimulating community sense, initial working, organization, and management community team, program developing and implementation, accompany and encouraging. Part of the roles and skills of community work is the same with casework, group work, a part is unique, and part is consistent with program implementation volunteer management. Finally, further discussion about practical community models and the skills and roles of community workers were done.

Keywords: Professional Role, Community Skill, Community Empowerment