Learning from the Non-profit world?

Mission or money. What makes the world go around?

by Stefan Wallner
What do we face?

- Borders between the three sectors are vanishing
- Growing heterogeneity of Npos
- Identity has to be designed by oneself (in every sector)
- Being “the good one” is not a monopoly any more (e.g. 2. savings bank)
- Self-efficacy a new dominant psychological concept for dealing with the search for meaning in life and the (self) motivation of people in modern societies
What makes NPOs so fascinating – especially in times of the crises?

- It is trust and motivation for participation and real engagement, which leads to legitimacy.

- But: Do not substitute good intentions with results.
What is the relevant difference?
It’s the mission – not the money.

- The Board of NGOs is often contributing money itself. So they are “shareholders” of the impact and not of the profit.

- Even if NGOs often pay peanuts or are governed by volunteers, they select very skilled and engaged people.

- The flat hierarchies of most NPOs. There is high demand but also corresponding responsibility for people working in NPOs and a direct involvement in services and immediate feedback from the environment. I can see, hear and feel the impact of my work – every day. That is the best and most relevant feedback.
How to do the “aggiornamento” of the mission?

1. Cultivate the conflicts of objectives in the mission for organisational learning and use the huge surface of the organisation.
Bergamo –
„the ideal city“
The tricky triangle of balance in society

Church

Responsibility

Market place

Freedom

City Hall

Security
Conflict of objectives in the mission

Church

Volunteer movement

Marketplace

Service provider

City Hall

Advocacy / watchdog
How keep the fire of the mission burning without causing a collective burn-out?

2. Learn how to fail better:

   * Ever tried.
   * Ever failed.
   * No matter.
   * Try again.
   * Fail again.
   * Fail better.

   Samuel Beckett