DARK SIDE OF THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR:

Notes from an Open Lecture

Sheffield Hallam University - Centre for Voluntary Sector Research

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I. OVERVIEW OF THE DARK SIDE OF VOLUNTARY SECTOR (VS):

A. Definition of the Dark Side: Rule-breaking, including but not limited to breaking laws
B. Dark Side present in ALL sectors and groups/ organizations of human society---
   1) Family/household sector
   2) Business sector
   3) Government sector
   4) Voluntary/nonprofit sector
C. Roots of Dark Side in human nature & selfishness, as well as in "bad barrels" (situations and groups conducive to deviance).
D. Relativity of Rule-Breaking and Deviance
   1) The Relativity of Group Perspectives on Deviance
   2) The Relativity of Degree of Societal Consensus on Norms
   3) The Relativity of Changing Deviance Attitudes/Perceptions Over Time
   4) The Relativity of Net, Long-Term Contributions to Positive Social Change
E. Rule-Breaking in conventional NPOs of various types
   1) Foundations
   2) Nonprofit service agencies
   3) Voluntary associations

F. Rule-Breaking in and by Deviant Nonprofit Groups (DNGs)
   1) Innocuous DNGs (e.g., a transvestite club, a new religious sect)
   2) Dissenting DNGs (anti-slavery groups long ago, women's rights groups past and present)
   3) Noxious DNGs (Nazi Party 1921-1933 when a nonprofit; terrorist groups like Al Qaeda)

G. Need to study, monitor, and deal practically with the Dark Side of Nonprofit Organizations (NPOs) as part of operation and management of any NPO (risk-management; accountability).
   1) Get past fiction that everything done in the VS is positive, beneficial, and proper---"angelic". Overcome unwarranted and unrealistic "boosterism" and "polyanna" views of VS.
   2) Only by careful monitoring and sanctioning of rule-breaking can NPOs develop and maintain an ethical culture and genuine accountability.
   3) Help beneficial NPOs survive and grow, in spite of some "bad apples" and "bad barrels" in many NPOs At different times.
   4) Where would medicine be if physiologists only studied health, ignoring diseases and injuries and how to prevent or remedy them?

II. SOME POSSIBLE PREVENTIVE MEASURES AND REMEDIES

A. BOARD OF DIRECTORS/TRUSTEES/COMMITTEE:

1) Board member training in fiduciary and oversight responsibilities. See Corbett book below.
2) Some times when Board meets without Chief Executive to consider privately matters of proper conduct of the Executive and board members themselves.
3) Use of secret ballot voting process on key matters of policy, especially fiduciary and oversight responsibilities.
4) Annual financial auditing by an external agency selected by the Board.

5) Sending Auditor's Reports directly to Board members, not thorough the Chief Executive.
6) Maintenance of an NPO culture of ethical behavior, transparency, accountabilty, and rigorous honesty---both internally and externally.

B. EXECUTIVE STAFF
1) Annual training of all Executive Staff in ethical procedures for nonprofit organization (NPO) management.
2) Requirement of signatures of two top managers for any expenditures over £1,000 (or ?).
3) Modeling an ethical NPO culture by the CEO and other top executives.
4) Monthly brief meetings of Executive Staff to monitor and consider ethical behavior among themselves and lower participants.

C. REGULAR PAID STAFF
1) Annual training of all Regular Paid Staff in ethical procedures for nonprofit organization (NPO) management.
2) Encouraging all Regular Paid Staff to do peer-monitoring regarding ethical behavior, reporting suspected or observed lapses to designated Executive Staff member.
3) Encouraging ideas for improved ethical behavior from Paid Staff, including anonymous comments.

D. VOLUNTEERS
1) Including training in ethical behavior in initial volunteer-training program.
2) Encouraging all Volunteers to do peer-monitoring, including monitoring of paid staff, regarding ethical behavior, reporting suspected or observed lapses to designated Executive Staff member.
3) Encouraging ideas for improved ethical behavior from

Volunteers, including anonymous comments.

Corbett, Christopher. 2011 *Advancing Nonprofit Stewardship Through Self-Regulation: Translating Principles into Practice.* Sterling, VA: Kumarian Press.