The Board Development Conundrum in Local, Democratically Governed, and Membership-based Nonprofit Organizations

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Abstract

Board research, assumes that board members in nonprofit organizations are ready to undertake board development activities to improve performance, efficiency, and accountability. Findings from questionnaire of a representative sample of 20,000 local, democratically governed, and membership-based nonprofit organizations in the field of sports in Sweden challenge the general validity of this assumption. For example, board members in local nonprofit organizations in Sweden regard working experience as more relevant for fulfilling the organizational mission than either formal or board education. Moreover, board development activities are oftentimes encouraged, but neither prioritized nor implemented. The proposed paper therefore discusses the implications of these findings for the research field of nonprofit governance as well as address alternative development activities for local, democratically governed, and membership-based nonprofit organizations.