15.569 Leadership Lab: Leading Sustainable Systems - Fall 2012 & IAP 2013

Noroeste Sustentable (NOS)
Project Team: Kuzuaki Baba, Masateru Kawakami, Jorge Malibran, and Timothy Winters

Purpose

- The mission of NOS is to **create value**, both economic and social, for the communities of the Gulf of Mexico
- NOS expressed the need for a **new functional structure** to help increase its efficiency, to facilitate better allocation of limited resources (human capital, funding and others) while avoiding becoming bureaucratic, and eventually to reach a more ideal position in its system

Activities

**INQUIRY INTO CURRENT REALITY**
- Phone interviews, online questionnaire
- Observations, focus groups
- Discovered **hidden structures**

**COMMUNICATION EXERCISE**
- Based on 'Three Islands' game
- Three teams overcame **communication challenges**
- Reflection session facilitated learning

**GOAL SETTING EXERCISE**
- Learning how to **set goals** effectively and efficiently
- Used observer roles and fish bowl format
- Included resource allocation simulation

**EMPOWERMENT EXERCISE**
- Reflected on project outcomes, including communication and goal setting issues
- Facilitated planning **personal development**

Insights

- **Creative tension and openness** can energize an organization and help it become resilient to conflicts
- Inadequate **communication** make it difficult to reach desired goals
- Lack of **information sharing** leads to misalignment in shared priorities
- Individual **personal development** is essential for creating an empowered and **holographic organization**

Recommendations

- **Utilize facilitation techniques** and small group discussions to promote more effective meetings
- **Share** results and action plans after meetings
- **Replicate reciprocity** of “check-in” in daily communication
- **Establish shared priorities** through periodic goal setting
- **Create personal development plans** to empower all NOS team