

2011

STATE OF VOLUNTEERISM IN CHINA

Engaging People through Ideas, Innovation and Inspiration



Foreword

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme is the UN organization that promotes volunteerism to support peace and development worldwide. Volunteerism is a powerful means of engaging people in tackling development challenges, and it can transform the pace and nature of development. Volunteerism benefits both society at large and the individual volunteer by strengthening trust, solidarity and reciprocity among citizens, and by purposefully creating opportunities for participation. UNV contributes to peace and development by advocating for the recognition of volunteers, working with partners to integrate volunteerism into development programming, and mobilizing an increasing number and diversity of volunteers, including experienced UN Volunteers, throughout the world. UNV embraces volunteerism as universal and inclusive, and recognizes volunteerism in its diversity as well as the values that sustain it: free will, commitment, engagement and solidarity.

UNV identifies volunteerism as an essential element for the realization of the Millennium Development Goals.

UNV began its operations in China in 1981 in support of the UN system. Under the administration of UNDP, it has been contributing to development results through volunteerism. Until today, over 250 international and national UN Volunteers have served in United Nations programmes in China and nearly 200 Chinese volunteers supported poverty alleviation, micro finance, environmental protection, cultural heritage protection, HIV and AIDS prevention, migration and NGO development in over 35 countries as international UN Volunteers.

Looking back on the achievements in the development of volunteerism in China, the past decades are filled with stories of success promising a prosperous future for citizens' participation in the development of China. The study at hand, "State of Volunteerism in China 2011 - Engaging People through Ideas, Innovation and Inspiration" not only marks both the 30th anniversary of UNV in the country and the 10th anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers (IYV+10), but also represents the first comprehensive research on volunteerism lead by UNDP and UNV in China. And some findings of this report also contributed to the "State of the World's Volunteerism Report" to be globally launched on International Volunteer Day (IVD) this year.

The report captures the current status of volunteerism in China and presents an insight into the existing drivers and

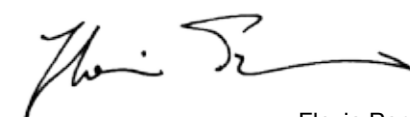
trends. Available to the public online in both UNDP and UNV websites, the report is a reference tool for policy makers, academia, organizations and individual volunteers.

In Chinese society, volunteerism is based on the core values of family and community cohesion. Such a solid foundation provides the perfect environment for volunteerism to thrive in China and become one of the vehicles for achieving the government's vision of a prosperous society. UNV will continue supporting the further development of volunteer action in China through research like this one to enhance its sustainability and close link to the government national development agenda to the benefit of all in China and beyond.

Equally, I believe that the voluntary engagement of Chinese citizens, in all its various forms, represents an extremely valuable means towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and having China fulfil its full potential by transporting the consolidated gains of volunteerism for development to other countries.

UNV would like to express its high appreciation to all partners, institutions and experts, who have contributed to the research, as well as all members of the UNV National Steering Committee, and especially the China International Centre for Economic and Technical Exchange, for their continuous support.

UNV is strongly committed to their partnership with China, and I look forward to continue working together to integrate volunteerism into national development plans to an even greater extent.



Flavia Pansieri

Executive Coordinator, United Nations Volunteers

Bonn, November 2011



Preface

It is a pleasure to present to you the "State of Volunteerism in China 2011 - Engaging People through Ideas, Innovation and Inspiration".

This report represents a remarkable output of the "Strengthening Volunteerism for Development in China through the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games" project, a partnership between the Beijing Youth League (BYL), Beijing Volunteer Federation (BVF), China International Center for Economic and Technical Exchanges (CICETE), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme.

The report includes the tremendous voluntary engagement during the Wenchuan Earthquake in 2008, the Beijing Olympics in 2008, the 2010 World Expo in Shanghai and the 2010 Guangzhou Asian Games in which many UNDP and UNV projects and partners have been closely involved.

The compilation of this report has been a dynamic process in which a wide range of stakeholders, including government counterparts, volunteer organizations, academic institutions, private sector and UN agencies have provided valuable inputs and insightful comments. UNDP and UNV thank Dr. Kerry Brown, Vice Professor Zhang Xiao Hong from China Agricultural University, Vice Professor Zhang Qiang from Beijing Normal University and Professor Tan Jian Guang from Young Cadres Management College of Guangdong Province as the research team for their remarkable work.

The overall purpose of this report is to review and analyze the different forms of volunteerism that have developed in China, the mechanisms of civic engagement at all levels and the role of the government in maximizing and supporting these efforts to achieve development goals. To fulfil this purpose the key objectives of this report are:

- To strengthen the national volunteer infrastructure in China by enhancing its capacity to become more relevant and effective in achieving sustainable development, in line with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2011-15 and Millennium Development Goals (MDG).
- To make recommendations towards creating an enabling environment for a national volunteer infrastructure, volunteer management capacity, resource mobilization and integration capacity, opportunities and sustainability, linking local volunteer groups to mainstream development partners, and identifying gaps and opportunities to strengthen volunteerism in the priority areas of the UNDAF 2011-15.

The report has been based on analysis of information from three areas. Firstly, it consists of a literature review, in Chinese and English, of material relating to volunteering over the last decade. Secondly, a number of interviews were undertaken by the research team in various parts of China in the summer of 2010, looking in particular at organisations which worked with volunteers, and understanding their achievements, challenges, and the kinds of practical issues that they confronted. Finally, there is a stress on qualitative rather than quantitative analysis, using the extensive background of the three main researchers and the team leader to outline the main issues effecting volunteering, internationally and within China. The report addresses issues agreed beforehand by UNV and its key partners in China.

As a result, this report takes on the challenge of conducting a comprehensive report on volunteerism covering both, the formal structure and function as mandated and implemented by the government, grass roots NGO and civic society organizations, as well as, other forms of volunteerism performed by academia, civil society and private sector. This research, a reference tool of the current status of volunteerism in China followed by a set of recommendation for further volunteer framework development, highlights the power of volunteerism as a changing agent and identifies the possible steps ahead to optimize and foster the growth of volunteerism further in China.

UNDP hopes that this report will encourage similar research work in the future where volunteer related organisations continue to work together, exchange views and stimulate the debate on how to further enable the growth of sustainable volunteer action for development in China and disseminate past numerous achievements to the broader international community.



Renata Lok-Dessallien
UNDP Resident Representative
UN Resident Coordinator
Beijing, November 2011



Acronyms

AYAD	Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development
BOCOG	Beijing Organizing Committee for Olympic Games
BVF	Beijing Volunteer Federation
CANGO	China Association for Non-government Organisations Co-operation
CASW	China Association of Social Workers
CPC	Communist Party of China
CFPA	China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation
CICETE	China International Center for Economic and Technical Exchange
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CYL	Central Youth League
CYVA	China Young Volunteers Association
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GONGO	Government-Operated Non Government Organisations
HK\$	Hong Kong Dollar
IVD	International Volunteer Day
IYV	International Year of Volunteers
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
JOCV	Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers
KOICA	Korea International Cooperation Agency
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MOCA	Ministry of Civil Affairs
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NPC	National People's Congress
NPI	Non-profit Incubator
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PRC	People's Republic of China

CNY	Chinese National Yuan
SAR	Special Administrative Region
SARS	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome
ToT	Training of Trainers
UN	United Nations
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
US	United States of America
USD	United States Dollar
VSO	Volunteer Service Overseas
WTO	World Trade Organisation

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1. Executive Summary

Since the International Year of Volunteers in 2001, perceptions of volunteering in China, its development and function in strengthening social capital, and its recognition by the government have advanced rapidly. In 2000, there was a basic infrastructure of policy and administrative support, with only brief acknowledgement of the role of volunteering in delivering development goals set out in the national Five Year Plans and in national and provincial regulations. A decade on, most of China's provinces and municipalities recognise the importance of volunteering, both through policies, regulations and administrative support. At a national level, the National People's Congress, the Office of the Spiritual and Civilization Development Steering Commission, the Communist Youth League and the Ministry of Civil Affairs in particular have increased their acknowledgement of the importance of volunteering. There is now a rich network of government and non government entities involved in the development of volunteering and matching it to social needs. In particular, the image of volunteering has grown increasingly positive for both public and government perceptions. Volunteering has become part of the mainstream.

Much of this is the result of the role of mass events, and of response to disasters, with poverty relief activities and community services also playing their part. 2008 has been called the unprecedented Year of Volunteering in China because of the huge impact of two very different events which saw extensive volunteer participation. The Wenchuan earthquake in Sichuan, in which over 70,000 died, allowed many to see how volunteering can mobilize people to respond to overwhelming natural catastrophes. Meanwhile, the Beijing 2008 Olympics, Shanghai 2010 Expo and Guangzhou Asian Games showed to a wide public in China the positive spirit of volunteering with as many as 4.2 million officially registered volunteers in different ways around the three events.

On a smaller scale, grassroots community volunteering has

also developed, building on the foundation of the first such groups established in the late 1980s. These have involved people of all ages, and have helped build social cohesion particularly in municipal areas. The Go West Development Campaign has also mobilized many Chinese volunteers to offer their services to the western, less developed regions of China, as well as international volunteers abroad.

While there have been big advances over the last decade in volunteering in China, there remain many challenges to its further development, and in particular to linking it to the development goals of the Chinese government. Volunteer groups still lack a proper identity. The administrative and institutional framework to assist and help their development is still being put in place. There is a lack of law to protect volunteers when they are participating in volunteering services. Fundraising remains a challenge, and while international cooperation has been strong, it could be enhanced.

This report considers the standing of volunteering before the implementation of the next major national budget plan, the 12th Five Year Plan, brought in from 2011. It recommends that volunteerism should play a key role in the delivery of China's development goals over the coming decade – rebalancing the economy, addressing inequality and maintaining sustainable growth. It proposes a number of simple administrative measures can be taken to build on the clear successes of the last decade, and to optimize the role of volunteering even further in China's future development. It recommends diversification and innovation of volunteering opportunities adapted from the traditional models used to now, and a stronger role for grassroots groups, with clearer government support through regulation and budgetary assistance being given to them. Volunteering is now a recognised and valued part of Chinese civic life. There is every reason to believe that the next decade will see it expand and develop even further.



The "Great Wall of Smile", Volunteers during Shanghai 2010 Expo

2. Context

2.1 National Development Achievements and Challenges

Since 1978, China's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) increased by an average of 9.8% every year. Its per capita GDP has risen dramatically, with the UN estimating that over 500 million people have been lifted out of absolute poverty over this period. A huge process of privatization has meant that from 1978 when 99% of economic productivity was still in the hands of the central state, there is now a balance between state and non state enterprises. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) estimated in 2005 that as much as 60 % of GDP growth now comes from the non state sector.¹The 2009 China Urban Development Report noted that by 2020, 50% of the whole population will be

¹OECD 2005

living in cities. China has, in the space of a generation, industrialized, and created the world's largest export-driven economy. All of these processes have significantly increased since the year of China's entry to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in 2001. GDP growth figures have continued to show big improvements. According to the latest data of the <2010 Economic and Social Development Statistical Bulletin>, published by National Bureau of Statistics of China in March 1, 2011: the annual net income of rural residents is 5919 RMB per capita, while the disposable income of urban residents is 19,109 RMB per capita. This wealth creation has been accompanied by similar advances in education standards, health and nutrition, and in levels of mortality and literacy.

Such rapid growth, however, has created major challenges. These are recognized in the United Nations Development

Assistance Framework 2011-2015 (UNDAF). While stating that 'Chinese people are now wealthier, better educated and healthier than ever before' the report goes on to set out the following key development problems:

- increased disparities between rural-urban and increased disparities on income
- serious environmental and natural resource costs arising from rapid growth
- 100 million still remaining in poverty and over 10 million in

absolute poverty

- limited access to social services²

2.2 National Development Goals and Volunteerism

The Chinese government has set itself the priority of achieving a well balanced and moderately prosperous society by 2020. The MDG 2010 Report for China affirmed that China has made remarkable achievements in achieving the MDGs, particularly in the eradication of poverty, hunger and illiteracy, and a reduction in the mortality rate of infants and children under the age of five. Additionally, China's experience and its support to other developing countries also highlight China as an important contributor to the MDGs and towards global partnership for development.

Nonetheless, China still faces many challenges particularly in facing considerable environmental pressures and the regional and rural/urban income gap. China has formulated the 12th Five Year Plan (2011-15), particularly focussing on addressing income gap and the inequality of access to quality medical care and educational services in order to move China's social development ahead more rapidly and beyond the original MDG targets.

Within this context and in partnership with the Chinese



government, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for 2011-15 will focus on the following three priorities:

- 1) That government and other stakeholders ensure environmental sustainability, address climate change, and promote a green, low carbon economy
- 2) That the poorest and most vulnerable increasingly participate in and benefit more equitably from China's social and economic development
- 3) That China's enhanced participation in the global community brings wider mutual benefits³

For each of these, volunteerism has a role to play. For output one above, it is to strengthen community based approaches in promoting volunteerism within climate change adaptation strategies and implementation, and allowing UNDP and UN Volunteers (UNV) to work with government counterparts and the private sector to provide technical support in the training and management of volunteer organizations to raise awareness on the effects of climate change and promote sustainable practices. It proposes support to strengthen capacities for multi-hazard response and management, enhancing public awareness

and volunteer management on disaster relief and reduction practices, and helping to integrate community-based disaster risk reduction practices into the national and local development agenda.⁴For output two above it is to help the UNDP/UNV work with Chinese government counterparts and voluntary associations to strengthen an inclusive national volunteer infrastructure in rural and urban areas to increase civic participation, build social capital and promote volunteerism for development towards achieving the MDGs. ⁵For output three above it is to increase the international deployment of Chinese nationals as UNV volunteers to UN missions and programmes as part of a pilot programme linked to China's increased international co-operation.⁶

According to the 1999 UNDP report, 'Volunteerism in China', one of the first volunteer-involving community project was set up in 1989 in the Heping district of Tianjin to provide assistance to the elderly. This project served as a model for a number of other similar community projects in the rest of China. The report explained that volunteerism in Chinese society has its own history and characteristics, and that this was rooted in a key element of social life in China, the centrality of the family and the local community



Box 1. Key Developments in Chinese Volunteering since 2001

²UNDAF, 2011 - 2015

³UNDAF 2011-2015

⁴UNDAF 2011-2015

⁵UNDAF 2011-2015

⁶UNDAF 2011-2015

⁷Ding Yuanzhu, 1999

Challenges	Recommendations
Lack of public perception	Strengthen the regulatory environment, 'in view of the huge changes facing China in transition'
Need for a more robust, varied volunteerism sector in order to respond to the effects in Chinese society of rapid development	Improve training
Lack of clear regulations for different kinds of volunteering groups, with particular problem arising from the placing together of groups with more commercial purpose and those with religious functions	Improve the public perception of volunteers
Problems of management issues, with a lack of systematic governance practices for volunteer groups, many having widely varying constitutions	Develop voluntary resources, to enfranchise the old, disabled, etc.
Lack of training for volunteers	Increase the scope of volunteering to embrace other kinds of work
The need to reduce the role of government substantially, aiming for sustainable volunteering which is not reliant on large public events	Develop the use of information technology and in particular the internet

Box 2. Challenges and Recommendations for Volunteerism in China

around which and in which the family operated. Similar district volunteer committees increased from the late 1990s encouraged by the senior Chinese leader, Song Ping, who stated that 'government should take people's problems seriously but local community associations can also help to solve many problems.'⁷The report also analysed the impact of residence committees in Guangzhou which were established from the 1990s onwards, some based on models from Hong Kong followed by the series of regulations and guidance notices issued by MOCA amongst others in order to legitimize, and start to regulate, this raft of new, semi-official organizations. In the same period of time, youth volunteering grew rapidly and had a big impact on society.

In 1987, Guangzhou established a hot line for youth volunteering. In 1990, Shenzhen opened the first legally registered Volunteers Alliance. In 1993, the first municipal level youth voluntary organization, Beijing Volunteers Association (now Beijing Volunteers Federation) was established. At the end of 1993, millions of young people

initiated voluntary service along rail lines in the name of 'Youth Volunteers', promoting volunteerism to the public. This culminated in 1994 in the establishment of the China Young Volunteers Association, under the China Communist Youth League, signifying a major step forward and milestone in the development of volunteering in China.

Much of the 1999 UNDP report prefigured later developments. It cited the significance of the use of volunteers at the large expo in Kunming in 1999, and the deployment of voluntary groups in 1998 during the disastrous floods that year. This has parallels with mass events such as Beijing Olympics, Paralympic Games and crisis relief such as Wenchuan Earthquake relief work, which will be covered later. The report also covered the establishment of a regulatory and administrative framework in which volunteerism was able to operate at that time. The 1999 report also outlined a series of problems, and then potential policy responses. This can help frame the ensuing ten years, in measuring progress. The summary of challenges and recommendations are listed in Box 2 below.

⁷Ding Yuanzhu, 1999

2.3 Policy and Institutional Support for Volunteering

In both the government-issued China in the 21st Century Agenda (1993) with its emphasis on sustainability and participation, and in the national Tenth and Eleventh Year Plans running from 2001 to 2010, positive development of social welfare projects, social mutual help activities, and support for volunteerism has been enshrined in national policy. The 12th Five Year Plan, which will run from 2011, will also include further provisions for help with developing volunteering in poverty relief and help for the aged and disabled. Since 2001, there has been an evolving national and local policy support framework. This can be found in legal regulations, administrative policies, association rules and support given by state leaders and various departments.

There has also been attention at establishing a clearer enabling policy and regulatory environment at provincial level. For example, in 1999, the first rule about volunteering in the mainland of China, 'Rules of Youth

Volunteering Services of Guangdong Province' was promulgated; in June 2003, Heilongjiang province adopted the 'Regulations on Voluntary Service', placing emphasis not just on young people but also the middle aged and senior citizens.⁸In December 2007, the 'Act for the Promotion of Volunteerism in Beijing' was issued, aimed at promoting the development of the volunteering sector. So far, 29 of China's 32 provinces, special administrative regions and municipalities have now issued regulations on volunteering.

In 2008, the Spiritual Civilization Steering Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) issued an administrative policy on volunteers. This can be seen as the definitive national policy on volunteering so far. Liu Yunshan, a member of the Political Bureau of the CCP Central Committee, also issued a clear a directive on how to develop volunteerism and coordinate the complex group of stakeholders. On his initiative, the China Volunteer Service Foundation was founded in 2009. In the same year in 2009, the drafting process for a national volunteer legislation began and the bill was submitted to the NPC in 2010.



Box 3. Examples of Legal Regulations and Policies

⁸ Beijing International Volunteers Association and United Nations Volunteers, 2005

Key Government Departments/ Party Committees on Volunteering:

Spiritual Civilization Development Steering Commission

Ministry of Civil Affairs

Communist Youth League of China

List of Government-Operated Non Governmental Organisations (GONGO) under each one:

China Young Volunteers Association

China Association of Social Workers

All China Women's Federation

China Red Cross

China Charity Federation

All-China Federation of Labour

Box 4. National Bodies on Volunteerism

However, there is a feeling that the national policy on volunteering, and the leading agency on volunteering amongst government ministries, needs to be clarified and strengthened. One of the challenges of doing this is the existing complex group of stakeholders who have responsibility over various areas of the legislation and regulation of volunteering. This will be further discussed further in Section 4.

Other government departments the Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Personnel, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health have also paid attention to and input into shaping policy and policy thinking about volunteering. There is therefore a system of stakeholders in this area, rather than decision making powers residing in one particular body. Many of the volunteering associations and entities also have province-level mechanisms to support them. For implementing international volunteering programmes the key organizations are the China International Center for Economic and Technical Exchange (CICETE) and the China Association for Non-government Organisations Co-operation (CANGO) under the Ministry of Commerce.

2.4 International Volunteering and Public-Private Volunteering Partnerships

In 2001, during the designated UN International Year of Volunteers (IYV), China held a number of events and activities marking volunteerism in China. The China National Committee for IYV, chaired by Vice Premier, Wu Yi was established, and launched a series of events and award ceremonies, as well as the International Conference on Volunteer Service held in 2002, which successfully promoted and increased public recognition of volunteering. International Volunteer Day (IVD) on 5 December is celebrated annually by key government agencies and associations related to volunteering. According to one assessment, IYV 2001 enabled departments of Party and government to recognise the value of volunteer activities and to give greater space for volunteering to expand. The main impact on China included changed perceptions on volunteering, increased profile and awareness as well as

expanded networks which helped to diversify groups which are involved in volunteering.⁹

International volunteering organizations in China have continued to run volunteer programmes since the 1980s. While the main sector for volunteer assignments remains in language training, there has been a gradual shift to meet increasing demand for specialist and technical volunteers, particularly in the area of environment, healthcare, business and industry promotion.¹⁰ Such trends are evident particularly in international cooperation programmes with Japan, Republic of Korea, US, Australia. More recently, given the high national recognition of volunteering, demand has also shifted to technical and advisory support to promote the development of China's national volunteering system and programmes (see Box 5).

While inbound international volunteering programmes

are shifting to more specialised activities, the last decade has also seen the expansion and increase of China's international volunteering programmes, in line with China's increased South-South cooperation programmes in other parts of the world. In 2002, the Youth Overseas Service Plan was introduced and implemented by the China Young Volunteers Association. In the scope of this plan, between 2002-09 the China Communist Youth League has dispatched 450 young volunteers to 19 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America.¹¹ In 2004, the Volunteer Chinese Teachers programme was launched by the Office of Chinese Language Council International (Hanban) under the Ministry of Education whereby volunteer teachers are assigned to Confucius Institutes across the world. By the end of 2008, Hanban had deployed 5,000 Chinese volunteer teachers to 48 countries in Asia, Europe, US, Africa and the Pacific.

⁹Tan Jianguang, 2011

¹⁰Brassard, Caroline, 2010

¹¹Central Youth League, Official Website, 2010



For example, since 1986, the Japanese Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) Programme has dispatched more than 700 JOCVs in the area of Japanese language training, education and health with over half of the assignments in language training. In 2003, JOCV began the Senior Volunteer Programme in China which saw the deployment of 30 senior volunteers between the ages of 40-69 years old with significant specialist and professional work experience.

Since 1993, Peace Corps China has been running the US-China Friendship Volunteers programme and currently, 80% of the 100-120 Peace Corps volunteers from the US assist in the training of English teachers and professionals while the remaining teach English in technical schools in China.

VSO started working in China in 1981 by mainly focusing on English language teaching as well, at both in-service and pre-service levels. They quickly expanded their fields of work and are currently involved in structured training and expert consulting on volunteer based programming, volunteer management best practices and organisational development as well as consulting and supporting of the corporate sector during CSR activities.

The Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development Programme (AYAD) started working in China in 1999, concentrating on the work fields education, rural development, health, environment and governance. Recently their work fields focuses on environment, health and governance related issues.

The Korea Overseas Volunteers (KOV) programme resembles an important part of the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) grant aid programme by dispatching Korean nationals to partner countries to share expertise, knowledge, and experience in order to make practical contributions to their socio-economic development. Between 1994 and 2009, a total number of 244 volunteers were sent to China to, like the 10 currently appointed volunteers, work in sectors such as education, health, environment and rural development as well as information & communication technology.

An example of fruitful cooperation within a multi-stakeholder group is the project "Strengthening Volunteerism for Development in China through the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games" (2007 – 2011), a partnership between the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Beijing Youth League, Beijing Volunteer Federation, and China International Center for Economic and Technical Exchanges. During the four years of this project a variety of activities to build on the enthusiasm for volunteering boosted by the Beijing Olympics has been carried out, promoting volunteerism for development.

Box 5. Key Examples of International Volunteering and Cooperation Programmes

In the last decade, there has also been increasing awareness of the role of corporations and non-profit organizations in social development in China, particularly through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives. For example, one of China's largest property development company, Vanke and electronics company, TCL Corporation supported volunteers in the Wenchuan Earthquake in 2008. International corporations such as Bayer and Price Waterhouse Coopers, Nike Foundation have active programmes to support CSR and volunteering in China. Through these CSR programmes, grassroots organizations receive support from both Chinese and non-Chinese corporations. One estimate states that Chinese foundations mobilised USD 35 billion in 2008 alone for a range of causes, with environment being one of the largest.¹² International partnership and co-operation is seen as one of the key ways to address management, training, regulatory and capacity building needs of Chinese volunteer organizations, and has been positively supported by the government.

¹²Interview, Beijing, August 2010

3. National Volunteering System in China

3.1 Overview

The national volunteering system in China is a complex system of integration and coordination between party committees, government youth league, young volunteers associations, social organizations, community organizations, non-profit organizations, the philanthropic and business community at the national and local levels. A general mapping of the key stakeholders in this system is outlined in Box 6 below.

Due to such division of institutional responsibilities and wide variety of volunteer registration platforms, there is currently no definitive statistic for the number of volunteers currently active in China. A survey carried out in 2001 stated that on average, 769 million Chinese donated 77

hours per year to voluntary activities. This calculation was based on a broader categories of volunteering activities including helping others, public welfare, and charity.¹³ Out of the total, 51.3% were one-time volunteers, while 10.9% (83.9 million) were frequent volunteers. More recently in 2007, according to statistics from the Ministry of Civil Affairs, there were 270,000 community volunteer organisations in China, with more than 30million volunteers, of which 5.6 million were registered as volunteers. The China Young Volunteers Association (CYVA) has 30 million registered volunteers nationwide. Millions of volunteers have also been mobilized in support of large-scale events such as 1.7 million volunteers for the 2008 Beijing Olympics, 1.9 million for the 2010 Shanghai Expo and 600,000 for the 2010 Guangzhou Asian Games.

Level	Integration	Coordination	Notes
National Level	Led by Central Party Committee and the State Council, the Central Civilization Committee was trusted to build up greater integration.	Central Civilization Office established the steering team to coordinate, with MOCA and CYL as coworkers.	MOCA and the other departments established this steering team. CYL coordinated the youth voluntary service.
Local Level	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Established 'Committee for voluntary service' Established 'Development and Coordination Team for Voluntary Service' Established 'Party and Political Coordinating Committee for Voluntary Service' 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Civilization Office was trusted to coordinate voluntary service CYL was trusted to organize and coordinate voluntary service MOCA was trusted to coordinate voluntary service Volunteers Association was trusted to coordinate voluntary service. 	The Central Civilization Committee is responsible for coordinating voluntary service nationwide. The Civilization Office is required to cooperate with the other departments, respect the factual situation, and offer mutual help.

Box 6. Types of Mechanisms for National and Local Voluntary Service Integration and Coordination

¹³Asia Pacific Philanthropy Consortium, 2001

3.2 Key Developments in Volunteering Programmes and Activities

There is a broad range of volunteering programmes and activities in China which has emerged and can be broadly classified as the following:

- Participation in large-scale events
- Support for the vulnerable, including helping the young, the disabled, the aged and the poor as well as the environment
- Community volunteering service
- Emergency response volunteering service
- Private Sector and Corporate volunteering
- International volunteering

Since 2001, key national events in China involving millions of volunteers have reshaped the public perceptions of volunteering and the recognition of its significant value in engaging people, particularly youths. Volunteer involvement in large-scale international events in China has provided a significant and crucial platform in the promotion of volunteerism nationally. Through such heightened public awareness, former volunteers have gone on to initiate, lead and pilot volunteer-involving activities to assist vulnerable groups in their own communities. In Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou, the respective governments have continued support towards the establishment of provincial-level volunteer federations and associations to further promote volunteering. In particular, the unprecedented humanitarian response to the 2008 Wenchuan Earthquake involving hundreds and thousands of volunteers has led to the recognition of the important role of trained volunteers in emergency response, better coordination mechanism and an increase of grassroots organizations which has continued to support the reconstruction and longer term development efforts.

All of these key events and two sectors involve elements of the four key areas of volunteerism: mutual aid or self-help; philanthropy or service to others; participation; advocacy

or campaigning. The Beijing Olympics and the Wenchuan Earthquake in 2008, in particular, raised the public understanding of volunteering, and in that sense, 2008 can be called the boom year for voluntary organizations.¹⁴ Surveys after the Olympics showed that the public understanding of volunteering had improved because of the games, and the participation in the Olympics had had a positive impact on the volunteers' value orientation. Because of the games, according to one assessment, 'the public's commitment to socially responsible behaviour has been generally upgraded'.¹⁵ Events in 2008 also greatly increased Chinese government perceptions of the value of volunteering, and in interviews in August 2010 amongst officials and those connected with government officials, there was no case of anyone saying that volunteering was not now playing a much stronger role in Chinese society. Many cited these two events as the ones that had had the biggest impact on this mindset change.

3.2.1 Participation in large-scale events

Volunteer participation at the 2008 Beijing Olympic was at an unprecedented scale in China and internationally. Olympic and Para-Olympic volunteers directly serving in the venues totalled 121,430. Additionally, there were 1,582 volunteers who worked for the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games in the preparation phase, 400,000 city volunteers serving at volunteer stations across Beijing, over 1 million social volunteers and 200,000 cheering volunteers. A municipal-level focal point organization was set up by Beijing Municipal Party Committee, Beijing Municipal Government, and Beijing Organizing Committee for Olympic Games and supported by Beijing Communist Youth League, Beijing Volunteers Association, and the Volunteer Department of Beijing Organizing Committee for Olympic Games (BOCOG) to oversee the recruitment and management of Olympic volunteers.

Given the scale of interest in Olympic volunteering, a systematic and comprehensive recruitment and training processes were introduced. The recruitment process for venue volunteers was carried out in three phases over 19 months and saw the selection of 121,430 volunteers from



over 1.1 million applications. Training programmes were provided through textbooks, online platforms, scenario-based simulations at training bases and by national and international experts from the Sydney and Athens Olympic Games and UNV. In order to maintain volunteer motivation, an incentive-based recognition programme was developed which included certificates, badges and participation at special events. For the first time, the volunteer organizers also had to develop policies in order to ensure the provision of insurance, risk management, health and safety procedures for volunteers.

The 2009 report on the Beijing Olympic Volunteer Operations highlighted that through this experience, an innovative model of volunteer management and recognition has been developed to allow for large-scale volunteer participation. Consequently, the report estimated that Beijing Olympic volunteers contributed approximately 200 million volunteer hours which carries an estimated economic contribution of CNY 4,275 billion (USD\$642 billion). Nationally, the Olympic volunteers programme received high accolades and recognition from government

and party leaders which also significantly helped to raise the awareness and visibility of volunteers leading to a greater public sense of social responsibility.¹⁶ The Beijing Youth League and Beijing Municipal Government have continued to provide support to the establishment of the Beijing Volunteer Federation (BVF) as a volunteering coordination center for over 400 member volunteer



¹⁴Tan Jianguang and Wang Yuanyuan, 2009

¹⁵Zhang Xiaohong, 2009

¹⁶Olympics and Volunteering Report, 2009

organizations working in the sub-district level of the capital.

It is evident that such volunteer experience and legacy have inspired large-scale volunteer programmes in other cities in China, notably at the 2010 World Expo in Shanghai and the 2010 Guangzhou Asian Games. The 2010 Shanghai Expo mobilised a record number of 1.9 million Expo volunteers to serve at the expo venues and throughout the cities. As the Expo ran for a longer period of six months compared to the Olympics, the Volunteer Department has had to adapt the volunteer management process with an emphasis on maintaining volunteer motivation. The Volunteer Department introduced a regular monitoring and evaluation mechanism which allowed for Expo volunteers to provide feedback on their experience every week. This meant that the organizers were able to make timely adjustments towards improving the volunteer programme throughout the duration of the Expo. Additionally, an extensive Expo volunteer database was set up which will remain accessible for the Shanghai Volunteer Association and relevant volunteer organizations in the future. Building on such momentum, the Volunteer Department of the Guangzhou Asian Games were also quick to employ former Olympic volunteer managers which contributed to the development of a comprehensive Asian Games volunteer recruitment, training and management system adapted to the Guangzhou context. The Guangzhou Youth League and Guangzhou Municipal Government have also allocated funding and resources to strengthen the Guangzhou Volunteer Association and to set up a volunteering training and research center. Perhaps an even stronger legacy is that through such investment and innovations, the governments and communities of Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou have built a strong foundation for the development of regular and longer-term volunteering programmes in the future.

3.2.2 Poverty Alleviation

Since 1999, the Go West Campaign, part of the Chinese government national development plans in the western region of China, included the role of volunteering. The western regions in China remains the poorest nationally, covering over 10 provinces, and almost two thirds of

China's landmass. Since 2003, the 'Great Opening Up the West Campaign' encouraged unemployed college graduates to move for 1-3 years to the western regions, either as teachers or administrators. The CCCYL launched its own 'Go West' Volunteer Programme, and by 2009, this project has despatched 100,000 graduates as volunteers in education, healthcare, agriculture and cultural development. Volunteers receive a small stipend and preferential considerations in civil service tests and graduate school entrance exams.

3.2.3 Community Volunteering and Support for Vulnerable Groups

In the last ten years, a wide range of grassroots organizations have been established, many in the area of environmental protection as well as to provide support and assistance to the migrant population, women, children, disabled and the elderly. However, as many of the grassroots organizations do not have legal status, it is difficult to give even a clear estimate of the numbers of such groups across China. Some have been supported by international donors, entrepreneurs, philanthropists and through public donations. While they continue to operate despite the difficult legal environment, grassroots organizations have gained greater space in comparison to a decade ago and their social role in contributing towards national development is increasingly being studied and encouraged. Although many of grassroots organizations are highly dependent on volunteers to support their work, however, the capacity in volunteer recruitment and management for regular and long term volunteering activities could be improved, in addition to project cycle management and fund-raising skills. This was a point made in a special report issued by Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) in 2005.¹⁷ Thus, while there is high public interest in volunteering, the challenge is in channelling and managing the large number of willing volunteers to a wider variety of short and long term volunteering opportunities.

3.2.4 Emergency response volunteering service

The 2008 Wenchuan Earthquake devastated large areas of Sichuan Province with more than 70,000 people dead and 40 million people affected. The key humanitarian assistance and operation was led by the Chinese government and international partners. Public donations were also channeled through the State Council Disaster Relief Center. There were also a nationwide outpouring of emergency relief and recovery assistance carried out by large numbers of spontaneous volunteer groups, corporations and other social and voluntary organizations.

According to official statistics, national and international emergency volunteer teams amounted to over 3 million volunteers, and up to 10 million volunteers in the post-disaster recovery and reconstruction work. One estimate states that the post-disaster response made an economic contribution of about 18.5 billion CNY towards key development. Many volunteer organizations provided support in areas such as education, poverty relief, community development, healthcare, disease treatment, environmental protection, and animal protection.

Indeed, the depth and breadth of the post-Wenchuan earthquake relief efforts were unprecedented in the volunteering history of China and has influenced the dynamics of cooperation between government, volunteer groups and the private sector. Firstly, the large-scale response had initially faced problems due to a lack of coordination and mismatch between areas in need and relief provision. In response, a number of civil society and volunteer organizations initiated an information-sharing platform. One key example is the 5.12 NGO Services Center in Sichuan which functioned as a coordination and network center to provide first-hand information on areas of need and the relief work of each organizations, in order to avoid duplication and overlapping. The center began in 2008 with a network of 21 volunteer organizations from Beijing, Guizhou and Shaanxi provinces and by 2010, the network has expanded to 110 volunteer organizations carrying out longer term development work. Secondly, the earthquake response brought together closer cooperation and strengthened the trust between government, private sector, universities, volunteer and civil society organization. For example, the Mianzhu

Municipal government established a Foundation Office for the Coordination of Social Resources and has continued to regularly involve volunteer organizations. The local government of Shanghai supported Sichuan in establishing the volunteer management system, Dujiangyan. At the 5.12 NGO Service Center, the network members also included government, private sector and volunteer organizations providing a three-way partnership as well as bringing support from Beijing Normal University and the University of Hong Kong. A new model of co-operation was therefore formed in this process, providing a fresh way in China for social management and social innovation. Thirdly, the scale of the response was also catalyzed by the speed of public information sharing maps of areas in Wenchuan needing assistance transmitted by thousands of online users, some of which to the Sichuan Earthquake Command Center and used for directing troops and relief efforts.

In recognition of the role of volunteering, the Sichuan Provincial People's Congress passed the 'Sichuan Volunteer Services Ordinance' in September 2009 which outlined a legal framework for the registration of volunteers and organizational rights, obligations and legal responsibilities.



Disaster Relief for the earthquake-stricken area Shifang of Sichuan province in 2008

¹⁷Dong Qiang and Zhai Yan, 2008



Children in Wenchuan, the earthquake-stricken area in 2008 came to watch Beijing 2008 Olympics

3.2.5 Corporate and private sector volunteering

The increase in the number of international and national corporations in China has led to the burgeoning of corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, many of which are implemented directly by respective corporations. Corporate volunteering activities are one of the key CSR programmes and have increasingly been considered as an opportunity to develop soft skills and raise social awareness. For example, Amway (China) officially initiated its volunteering programmes since 2003. So far, there have been 148 Amway volunteering groups and more than

40,000 registered volunteers in China who have provided volunteering services of over 500,000 hours. Since the 2008 Sichuan earthquake, Bayer (China) has established a volunteer office in Jiangyou and sent more than 200 employees to participate in a 6-month volunteering programme focusing on post disaster reconstruction work. The IBM (China) Volunteer team assisted the Public Security Bureau of Chengdu to design their security system and consequently was awarded in 2008. While there is a significant interest from the private sector in promoting volunteering, the key challenge is in identifying and developing suitable and sustainable volunteering programmes.

Voluntary service in China has also seen innovations in its programs. In 2008, with the help of the State Council, Youcheng Entrepreneurship Poverty Relief Foundation established and designed a poverty relief action plan with the aim of achieving poverty relief in rural areas through the voluntary service in the MDGs.

Zhizaitianxia, a brand created by YouCheng, is a volunteer program which creates systems and platforms promoting volunteerism, and has created an 'express' for voluntary service, providing professional training and consultancy for different types of volunteers. Zhizaitianxia's work includes three parts: a human resource platform, volunteer group, and volunteer programme.

YouCheng Human Resource Platform has several sectors: volunteer recruitment, knowledge education, volunteer exchange communities and management incentives. The Volunteers Group has altogether 13 groups from 2008 to the end of 2010, including 70 volunteers in Xining in Qinghai Province, Kunming in Yunnan Province, Aba, Mianzhu, Bazhu, Yilong and Pengzhou in Sichuan Province, Longan and Nanning in Guangxi Province, Weichang and Luanping in Hebei Province, Jianshi in Hubei Province and two villages in Beijing.

Further YouCheng Volunteer centers are set up in poverty stricken areas, and are self managed and operated by permanent and temporary volunteers. The Centers provide volunteers with daily living needs, knowledge and cultural exchange. The centers will become a base for the development and support of the leaders of "new philanthropy", and will serve as a breeding ground for social entrepreneurs.

YouCheng has volunteers in various fields: poverty relief, education, environmental protection, and first aid. The training it provides concentrates particularly on the cultivation of volunteer capacity, including research, innovation, resource integration, brand building, operation management and adjusting capacity.

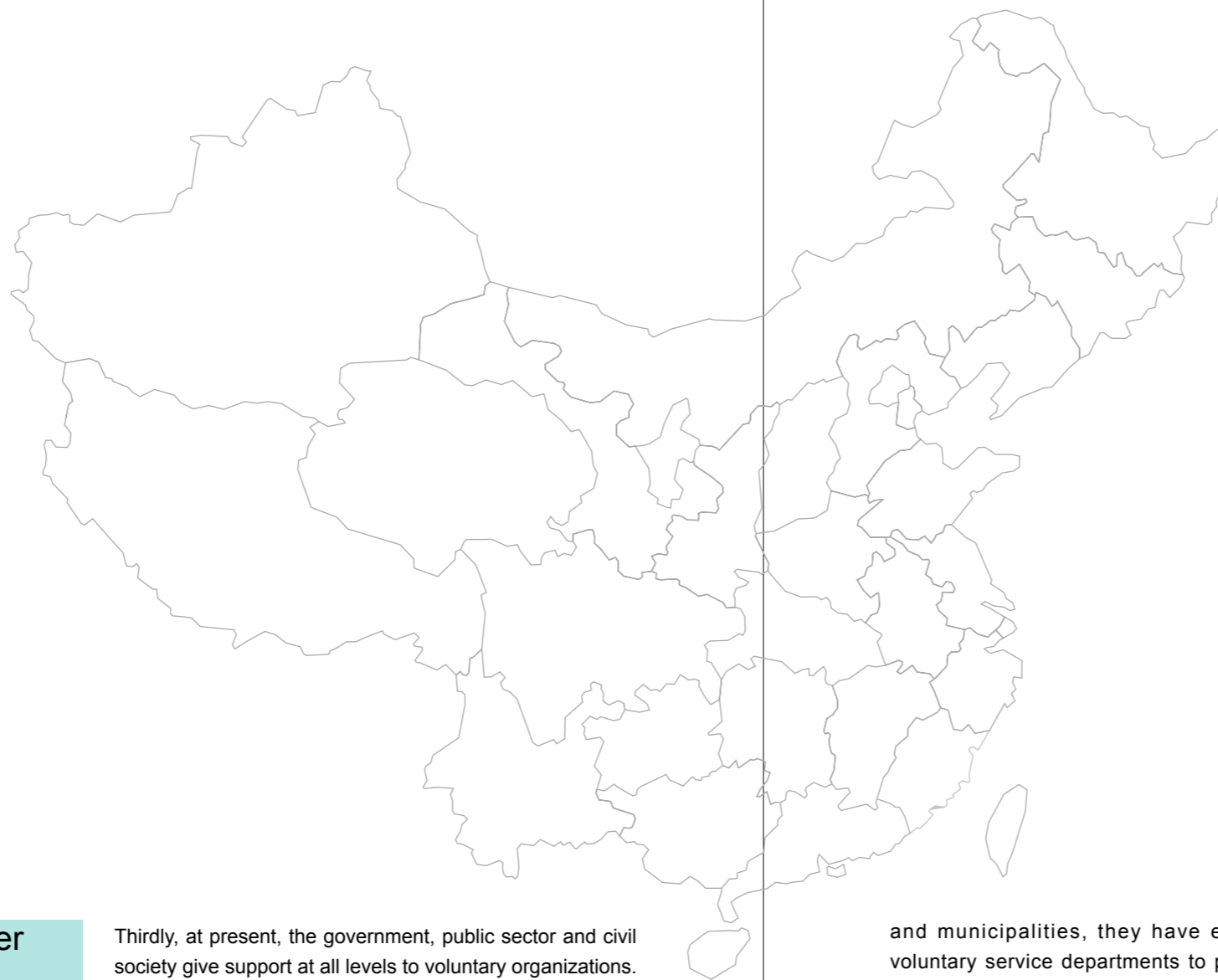
Box 7. Key Example of Philanthropy

3.2.6 International Volunteering

Since 2001, international organizations have played an increasing role in China and by the same token, increasing numbers of Chinese volunteers have been deployed on international volunteer assignments.

International volunteers have mainly work in the area of language teaching and providing technical expertise in development and humanitarian programmes. UNV started in China in 1981 and has fielded international volunteers serving in the fields of poverty reduction, environment, programme development, gender equality training, information technology and institutional capacity building. The Volunteer Service Overseas (VSO) volunteering programme also began in 1981 with international volunteers working in quality education, prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS, national volunteering service, and communication based in Beijing and the western provinces in cooperation with over 30 partner organizations.

For Chinese volunteers, since 2002, the Chinese Youth Overseas Volunteer Programme has deployed 450 Chinese volunteers to 19 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Since 2005, the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation (CFPA) has cooperated with international aid agencies such as Mercy Corp in providing emergency relief goods and medicine in response to the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami in 2004, Hurricane Katrina in 2006, and the 2007 Pakistan earthquake as well as development aid to Africa. In August 2010, after the extreme flood in northwestern Pakistan, the CFPA worked with UN World Food Programme and carried our fundraising activities for Pakistan. In 2009, after a needs assessment in Sudan, CFPA planned to build a maternal and child care hospital, hoping to contribute to reducing maternal mortality and infant mortality. As of 2010, building work has started on the hospital. With the purpose of promoting Chinese language and culture abroad, the Chinese non-profit public institution, the Confucius Institute, was established in 2004. By the end of 2010, 322 Confucius Institutes and 369 Confucius Classrooms had been established in 96 countries and regions around the world.



3.3 Different Kinds of Volunteer Practice

The voluntary service sector in China has significantly diversified since 2001. One of the main reasons lies at the organizational level, where greater and better management has contributed to positive changes. At least three factors form a part of this and support it. Firstly, as stated above, many provinces and municipalities have issued specific regulations on volunteering. The Central Spiritual Civilization Committee has also issued supportive policies to encourage volunteering development. Secondly, those who once engaged in the voluntary service, whether as a group or an individual, have passed on the positive aspects and experiences of being volunteers to more people, and this has meant that more groups are involved and the public perception of volunteering has increased. During the Gansu floods in 2010 many inhabitants near the locations of the disaster mobilized themselves to help and described themselves on television reports as 'volunteers'. The concept of volunteering is becoming mainstreamed.

Thirdly, at present, the government, public sector and civil society give support at all levels to voluntary organizations.

This section will analyze the volunteer management system as it currently exists in China to support volunteering, the current methods of co-ordination and likely future developments.

3.3.1 Youth Volunteering

The top-to-bottom structure of decision making systems in China, and the bottom-to-top social movement create a multi-dimensional system which is reflected in the CCP Communist Youth League (CYL). CYL committees exist in all provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities, down to the township level. 2007 CYL publicized that the voluntary service network has basically formed, mainly composed by China Youth Volunteer Association, 35 provincial volunteer associations, more than 2/3 of the volunteer associations in municipalities and townships, over 2000 university volunteer associations and over 190,000 voluntary service stations. In almost all provinces

and municipalities, they have established special voluntary service departments to provide guidance for youth volunteering. These volunteers associations led by the CYL now cover China even down to the township city, and a provincial and city versions of the China Volunteer's Association now form a national system. Under this, grassroots youth league organizations in schools, companies, communities and rural areas have been established. They all have their own youth volunteering group. Finally, the mobilization capacity of CYL has been enhanced with help from all kinds of youth organizations, interests group, grassroots organizations and the other organizations led by youth league committee at all levels, especially volunteers association and grassroots youth volunteers group. This presents a rich network for the development of voluntary work, across all levels of society, and throughout China.

But with the development of voluntary service, volunteerism has spread beyond youth groups. The Beijing 2008 Olympics serves as a good example of this, with the youth volunteering system, taking CYL, Beijing

Youth League and Beijing Volunteers Association as model, providing important guidance and coordination for the whole volunteering effort of the games. After the games, based on what was achieved, Beijing government and the municipal party committee reformed the Beijing Volunteers Association into the Beijing Volunteers Federation, making it a hub connecting all volunteering departments, organizations and fields in Beijing. The CYL voluntary service system remains the widest and the strongest mobilizing network, and has built an effective mechanism in terms of publicity, recruitment, mobilization, training, administration, assessment, program operation and fundraising. It has also become a major factor in institutionalizing the voluntary service in China. In the CYL system, the youth volunteer organizations in higher education institution are the most special and powerful ones, which also cultivate college students.

3.3.2 Community Based Mutual Aid Volunteering

As China has reformed and opened up, and developed its economy, another network of volunteering organizations, of which the core is the community resident's committee and village neighborhood committees, has been established and developed. The genesis of this in the district committee in Tianjin was mentioned above. But China has a national network of such committees, at both urban and rural level. Because of the needs of urban communities and rural areas, where the focus was on poverty reduction, maintaining security, and developing cultural activities, some organizations were established from the bottom up. Examples of these kinds of organizations include the Volunteer Association of Xin Xing Jie Community, Heping District, Tianjin and the Volunteer Association of Tian Tong Yuan Community, Changping District, Beijing, both of which are grassroots organizations or interest groups. Because of the supports from MOCA, the Chinese Association of Social Workers (CASW), the Working Committee on Volunteers, and local civil administration departments, a great amount of volunteer associations and service sites were established from top to bottom, carrying on the

responsibility of social administration and public service from the government while maintaining the harmony and stability of communities. For example, Zhongshan initiated the community-based volunteering service in 2005 and planned to select more than 60 communities as pilot sites. Unexpectedly, because every community greeted this initiative with such enthusiasm, 118 communities established their volunteering service sites and volunteer groups. The community plays the role of coordinating and supporting the development of volunteer service teams. Community residents, especially retired people, serve as volunteer team leaders and provide services for resident in the neighborhood, especially for those people in difficult situations. Up to now, community voluntary service organizations, volunteer federations or community volunteer service stations helped by the government now cover most of the streets and communities of cities in China.

Because of its closeness and convenience to people, the coverage of community volunteer services is wider and the level of service, according to surveys, is rated higher, with greater focus on the needs of those receiving help. Currently, the percentage of community residents participating in community volunteer service is 10%¹⁸. The community volunteers are from different social classes, including communist party members, youth league members, civil servants, professional technical people, teachers, teenagers, celebrities, charitable entrepreneurs and healthy retired people. The focal areas includes job creation, poverty reduction, legal aid and rights protection, teenager education, health education, security protection, leisure activity, and environmental protection.

Due to the wide range of the participants and the very broad service areas, the community volunteer service organization network is also very diverse. One ordinary community in Xiamen, Fujian Province illustrates this. This community has women in an exercise volunteer team, seniors in a security and public stability volunteer team, communist party members in a help matching volunteer team, children in a singing volunteer team, high school students in a friends-making volunteer team and a hobby volunteer team, along with a community

beautifying and planning team. This kind of situation exists in mature communities in different cities. The diversity of the volunteer service network helps the residents to choose to participate or form the team according to their own interests, and it enables most of the residents to be volunteers, helping each other and spreading the trend.

3.3.3 Grassroots Volunteering

More space has been given to the development of grassroots organizations since 2001, due to the forces of globalization and because central and local government took this as an urgent and effective remedying solution to make up for the lack of public resources in local areas. Grassroots organizations have focused on the areas of poverty relief, environmental protection, education, health and caring for the disabled. They have a natural connection with voluntary services both in terms of the way they are structured and their values. Few voluntary services exist in China now without the engagement of grassroots organizations. They are the oxygen running through the whole system.

In the last decade, new types of grassroots organizations have emerged. Traditionally, volunteers were recruited to fill in specific service provision roles. Increasingly, there are now 'volunteer service support' organizations which play a supporting role as well as grassroots alliances and federations which functions as a network to share information on volunteer demands and needs. Such establishment of such support organizations and networks are a new trend in the last ten years which have helped to cultivate and support volunteer organizations in areas such as volunteer management, programme management, fundraising, resource mobilization and other capacity needs.

Shanghai Pudong non-profit Incubator (NPI), a public organization, was established in Pudong, Shanghai in January 2006. Since its founding, this group has adopted the slogan 'create social innovation, cultivate public talents', aiming to provide real support to primary and small-and-medium public organizations. The idea of 'non-profit incubators' was created in Shanghai (Puxi), Beijing,

Chengdu, Shenzhen and many other places. About 30 public organizations have been set up every year in China by NPI, which provides them with capacity building, venue facilities, small grants and registration status. During this process, NPI has accumulated and developed many training courses and cases suitable for the local situation. It has become an important center of national capacity building and research.

Up to now, the public investment into NPI has exceeded 50 million CNY, with the number of supported public programs reaching nearly 300. At present, each business sector under NPI has formed an administrative style characterized as "independent registration, brand sharing, resource integration and complementary business".

3.4 Volunteering Co-ordination Mechanism

From the current volunteering system as it exists in China, including the Youth League system (including universities), the community-based mutual aid system, the grassroots organizations system, the private sector system, the international volunteer system are all gradually improving its volunteer service method and the content of what it does. Meanwhile, different volunteering organizations have begun to cooperate and coordinate with each other. Based on current trends, the future co-ordination models are likely to include the following: nominating a social co-ordination entity, civil society organization coordination, or a voluntary alliance focused on specific locations or on certain types of service. These will be discussed below.

3.4.1 Volunteer Co-ordination Organization/ Federation

With about 30 million registered Volunteers the Chinese Youth League plays a fundamental role in the coordination of volunteerism in China. It is a youth organization structured on the pattern of the Communist Party of China. Its national leading organ is the National Representative Conferences and the Central Committee, elected by the Conferences. In addition to the Central Committee, there are the General Affairs Committees, which oversee the

daily affairs of the League and lead the fundamental organizations in 31 provincial level administrative areas of the country.

In 2009, the Beijing Municipality appointed Beijing Volunteer Federation (BVF) as the focal point organization for the capital's volunteer work, bringing together volunteer-involving departments from various government organizations. Beijing Voluntary Service Guidance Center (BVSGC), established in July 2003, serves as the secretariat of BVF and is responsible for planning, coordinating and promoting Beijing volunteers' work. It is placed under the supervision of the Beijing Youth League and consists of 5 departments, Administration Dept, Research & Training Dept, Communications & Strategy Dept, Membership Dept, Project Development Dept, and its major functions are: to formulate and implement the city's volunteer work development plan and annual work plan; to recruit and build volunteer teams; to foster the growth of Beijing grassroots volunteering, and assist relevant departments in developing volunteer human resources; to research and implement voluntary service programs, and provide guidance to all kinds of volunteer organizations in carrying out daily voluntary service activities; to build and promote a culture of volunteering and a theoretical framework for volunteerism; to conduct research on volunteerism and participate in policy formulation, implementation and supervision of the city's volunteer sector; to promote exchange and cooperation between BVF and volunteer organizations domestically and internationally. BVSGC has adopted the "one center, three bodies" structure, with BVF as the main body, and Beijing Volunteer Service Fund (BVSF) and Beijing Voluntary Service Research & Development Institute (BVSRI) as the "two wings" complementing BVSGC.

At the national level, a new coordinating agency has been established. Indeed, the foundation of the China Volunteers Association (CVA) on April 26th 2011 marked a milestone in the organizational structure of the Chinese volunteer sector. As an umbrella organization CVA is voluntarily composed by volunteers and those organizations that offer substantive supports and pay close concerns to volunteerism, undertaking kinds of

¹⁸Yuan Yuan and Tan Jianguang, 2011.



Spring Shoots Program kicked off

in 2009 by BVF with the purpose to improve volunteer management capacity in Beijing. The programme offers volunteer project management training classes targeted at community based volunteer managers and core volunteers, both from the sub-district level of the BVF/BYL system and from grassroots organizations. In addition, a team of 19 BVF in-house trainers was formed through a professional Training of Trainers (ToT) course focused on international standard project management and a series of trainer skills workshops. The new trainers will in turn deliver training for local volunteer leaders in the 16 Beijing Districts. Some have already conducted sessions on the essentials of volunteer project management for approximately 100 trainees in Dongcheng and Chaoyang Districts. They will continue to provide training under the newly established “Shining Steps Training Programme”, an enlarged, updated version of the “Spring Shoots Training Programme”.

activities nationally and philanthropically for the purpose of social charity in compliance with the legal regulations. CVA is under the operational guidance, supervision and management of the Ministry of Civil Affairs and the National Social Organization Registration Authority, receive guidance as well from the Office of the Central Spiritual Civilization Development Steering Commission. CVA will coordinate the volunteer sector at the national level by providing resource management support to the government, implementing related laws, regulations and policies, conducting research to formulate further policy recommendations, and protecting the volunteer's rights by serving as their legal representative. Approved by related governmental agencies, CVA will hold a supervisory role and provide support to volunteers and voluntary service organizations by implementing awarding activities and training measures, enhancing capacity building and promoting international cooperation and exchanges.

3.4.2 Volunteer and Civil Society Service Centers

During the last decade, civil society organizations have been growing rapidly. Up to now there are more than 40 million registered civil society organizations and more than 4 million non-registered civil society organizations. In 2008, the Huizeren Volunteering Development Center proposed the idea to establish local volunteer centers which shall form the volunteering infrastructure and link the existing domestic volunteer organizations. The functions of these centers include: volunteerism information and matching services; volunteer service promotion and fundraising; certification of volunteer management standards and further development of volunteer services; capacity building and organizational development; development of best practice on volunteerism; research, sector development planning and policy advocacy.

Recently, the Huizeren Volunteering Development Center has begun to implement their plan by establishing a support centre for “specialist volunteer” service in Beijing. The centre provides capacity building and promotes social innovation for civil society organizations by mobilizing and organizing professionals from the private and civil sectors in China. There is no doubt that the Volunteer Support Centers will be an important platform supporting local non-governmental organizations involved in volunteerism to promote the healthy development of volunteerism in China.

Progress in capacity building delivery by a city-level organization like Beijing Volunteer Federation can be seen in the case of the “Spring Shoots Training Programme”. This programme was within the UNDP/UNV supported “Strengthening Volunteerism for Development in China through the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games” project held



3.4.3 Volunteering Alliance focused on specific locations

In the same location, different volunteer organizations maximize their total efficiency through integrating resources. In 2008, this trend occurred during the Wenchuan earthquake. 5.12 Civil Aid Center was established just three days after the Wenchuan earthquake by more than 20 grassroots voluntary organizations. Supported by the Communist Youth League of Sichuan Province, the Department of Civil Affairs and other government departments, along with the Narada Foundation, it served as an information platform, providing the latest news about human resources and demand for voluntary services. The Center played an important role in the coordination, integration and allocation of information. Just a month after its establishment, the 5.12 Civil Aid Center had reached cooperation agreements with 21 organizations including voluntary organizations in Beijing, Guizhou, Shaanxi and Guangzhou. Up to June 2009, there have been 41 organizations who have signed cooperation agreements with 5.12. Its partners accounted for more than half of all the organizations participating in the Wenchuan Earthquake Relief Work. Up to August 2010, it had established long-term cooperation with more than 110 voluntary organizations nationwide. More volunteers came to do disaster relief work in Zun Dao town, Mianzhu, a city that had suffered heavily in the disaster, as a result of its work. Because of this, Mianzhu established a joint liaison institution for post-disaster reconstruction, headed by the local Volunteer Association and the China Social Entrepreneur Foundation, and supported by the local People's Government, Communist Youth League, and the Department of Civil Affairs. This joint meeting will unite various organizations together, including government departments, community service centers, academic institutions and non-governmental voluntary organizations, in order to communicate and share information resources, and discuss post-disaster reconstruction and community volunteer service development plans. This kind of mechanism can integrate the other social resource in an effective way with the aim of coordinating different voluntary groups, and will almost certainly continue to play

its role in disaster relief work or other areas of voluntary service.

3.4.4 Specialized Volunteering focused on specific social issues

This is one of the least understood co-ordination methods. With the increasing number of civil organizations in China, they have focused on different areas and specialism, including environmental protection, poverty reduction, education, health (AIDS), disability, migrant workers, and care for the old people. The appearance of alliances has helped resolve the small scale nature of some organizations, giving enhanced strength through cooperation. On another hand, it also promoted the unified act in a relevant large scale to have more impact.

3.5 Role of Government / Policy Context

One of the most notable features of volunteerism in China is that it has promoted a cooperative relationship between government and volunteer organizations. Over the past three decades, China has been continuously reforming and opening up. The functions of the government are also changing, due to senior leaders discussions about the necessity for innovation in government functions. The government is withdrawing from many areas, leaving more room for volunteer organizations to conduct operations, which will help these organizations providing services for the poor, the disabled, the marginalized, the young, the elderly and other vulnerable groups.

A new mechanism, the "service purchase by the government" is increasingly gaining ground, and it also includes volunteer services. For example, according to national regulations, voluntary organizations in Shanghai can sign service contracts with the local government by bidding. The government functions are changing from the original predominance of political and economic guidance to that of public service delivery, and also from the original "government centrality" to "cooperation between the government, civil society and companies". In the past, in addition to policy support (see above), the central and provincial government also organized most of China's

large-scale volunteer activities. However, since 2007, the central government implemented the "Harmonious Society and People Oriented" policy which enhanced the sense of inclusiveness, enabling volunteer organizations to take an active role in providing services. Volunteer organizations have been seeking new ways to partner with the government, rather than avoiding government's participation, as in the case of the Guangzhou Zhiqi Services Team and Beijing Caozuozhe Club. They try to establish volunteer-involving projects in areas of public services managed by the government, to expand their networks and management structures and to focus more on the needs of the beneficiaries than on the interest of the providers.¹⁹

Beijing is also gradually launching a new mechanism called a government purchasing service, within which voluntary services are included.



¹⁹Tan and Wang, 2009



Forum of Experts and Leaders from the GAGOC, Kai Chi Service Team and BVF

3.6 Potential Economic Contribution of Volunteering

The economic impact of volunteering has been one of the most significant understated factors. According to a study of volunteering in Australia, Peter Mayer argues that the contribution of voluntary work to GDP growth is seriously underestimated.²⁰ One estimate of the direct economic benefit of the voluntary work during the Beijing Olympics was 200 million hours of work saving 4.275 billion CNY in wages.²¹ So far, no systematic assessment of volunteering in China and its contribution to GDP growth has been made. GDP is simply a measure of productivity, and things without a market value are not picked up.²² Based on the model used in other countries, volunteering's contribution is likely to be in the order of 1 to 2% of GDP growth. But its contribution to building social capital and social cohesion is universally accepted, even though it has proved very difficult to encapsulate this in economic growth models.



Smiling Guides of Kai Chi Service Team

Volunteerism in Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) was recognized in the 1999 report (see below) as offering one of the key partnerships and models for voluntary groups initially in Guangzhou and Shenzhen. According to a report in 2009 by Joel Hanson, Hong Kong created the social atmosphere of volunteerism with the Hong Kong Council of Volunteers, formed in 1998, hoping to coordinate all volunteer organizations, with its secretariat set in Hong Kong Welfare Agency. The Agency for Voluntary Services formed in 1970 works with 350 charities, 1,300 individuals and 90 corporate members.²³

A public survey of voluntary services was undertaken in 2001, and then a fresh track survey held in 2009. This gives evidence for the change in the role, perceptions and development of volunteerism in the SAR. In 2001, 22.4% of those surveyed said they took part in organized volunteering. This rose to 35.9% in 2009. Of those who volunteered, there had been a substantial increase in hours given, rising from 34.8 in 2001 to 87.4 in 2009. Volunteers were shown to be younger than the average population, better educated, to have a higher income than the median, and to have more professionals and managers. There was a higher involvement of females over 40, with an estimated economic value of the contribution of volunteering activities to GDP growth rising from HK\$ 1.8 billion in 2001 to HK\$ 5.5 billion in 2009.²⁴

Box 8. Volunteerism in Hong Kong

²⁰Mayer Peter, 2003

²¹Olympics and Volunteering Report, 2009

²²Interview, Beijing, August 2010

²³Hanson Joel, 2009

²⁴Agency for Volunteer Service, 2010 and Agency for Volunteer Service, 2002

4. The Achievements, Opportunities and Challenges of Volunteerism in China

4.1 Achievements

It has been over 30 years since China's reform and opening up, and 20 years since encouragement for volunteerism development really began. As this report has shown, particularly in the last decade, volunteering has been advocated throughout society, and there have been a number of achievements, ranging from the Olympics to the response to the disaster in Wenchuan. The key generic areas which have seen the greatest advances have been:

Public Participation and Recognition of Volunteering:

At the early stage of China's volunteerism development, the top-down and bottom-up participation channels were separated, thus people lacked independent opportunities to take part in voluntary service. After the initiation of activities for the IYV in China, the central state and local governments eased restriction and started to provide more favourable conditions to stimulate people's participation in voluntary service. Especially the volunteering services of Beijing Olympic Games and the Wenchuan Earthquake exerted extensive influence nationwide. From the survey data after the Beijing Olympic Games, the public thought that the social influence of the volunteering service was extensive.

Valuation Statements	Average Value
Increasing the sense of national pride and self-confidence	8.72
Making 'volunteers' more widely known	8.71
Beneficial for the development of the young	8.61
Enhancing understanding between different cultures and societies	8.55
Enhancing the regular development of voluntary service	8.51
Providing relevant management experience for government	8.47
Presenting an opportunity for building an harmonious society	8.36
Promoting Chinese traditional virtues	8.35
Increasing feelings of social trust	8.33
Gradually embedding the volunteering service concept into people's mind	8.31
Motivating more people to pay attention to environmental protection and disadvantaged groups	7.88
Improving the social atmosphere	7.86
Abating conflicts between different social groups	7.39

Box 9. Evaluation of Olympic volunteers social influence
(Score: 1-10, 1 means strongly disagree, 10 means strongly agree)

Notice: Among all the interviewed volunteers, the average score for agreeing with the evaluation sentence 'Every family knows what volunteerism is' was 8.71. More than half of the volunteers (2503 persons, 50.3%) strongly agreed with this sentence, and 17.1% volunteers reached a score of 8.



Disabled volunteer during the Beijing 2008 Paralympics

There is now a new trend where the public understand volunteer service and participate more widely in it. Community volunteer organizations supported by MOCA and the youth volunteer organizations of the CYL while mobilizing participation from above have also helped accelerate the openness of society to volunteering, so as to attract people from all walks of life to take part. Beijing Volunteers Association increased its group membership from dozens to over three hundred after it was reformed as the Beijing Volunteer Federation. These groups included a large number of semi-official and non-governmental volunteer organizations. Meanwhile, bottom-up volunteer organizations have steadily grown, at the same time as increases in public recognition of the value of volunteerism and the increasingly spontaneous formation of volunteer organizations. The Government not only now accepts non-governmental volunteer organizations, but also explores ways to provide support and aid. Hangzhou Public Youth Self-organization Service Center was established with the

precise aim of linking various non-governmental volunteer organizations in the city and offering policy support, funding, resources, communication and other assistance. At present, with the opening of both top-down and bottom-up participation channels, more than 50 million Chinese people have registered in different volunteer organizations and over 120 million have participated in volunteer activities.

Government Recognition and Support

Over the last two decades, the Chinese government has evolved from allowing volunteer organizations' to be established to encouraging and supporting volunteerism development. This indicates a more active and enthusiastic attitude. Almost all those interviewed in official and semi-official positions for this report saw the value of volunteering in building social capital and creating harmony in society. Influenced by the Government's attitudinal shift, non state and state enterprises, communities and

citizens have also experienced changes in the perception of volunteerism. They have travelled from unfamiliarity to having a far better understanding, and now they are willing to participate in volunteer service and provide support for it. According to research by the Institute of Youth Studies of Guangdong YLC in 2009, the Beijing 2008 Olympics and the Wenchuan Earthquake had a profound influence on volunteerism recognition amongst officials in China. The services of volunteers not only made the athletes, spectators and journalists around the world experience the volunteerism atmosphere in China, but also showed the positive benefits of volunteerism to officials. This situation prompted national and local governments to reconsider the influence and social value of volunteer service. The increase in volunteerism recognition among Chinese officials is critical for gaining more attention and support from the whole of society. MOCA for instance is working on a five year plan for volunteerism and its contribution to development in society.²⁵ Chinese corporations are participating in different kinds of volunteer service and offering financial and material support more widely. Meanwhile, the establishment of corporate volunteer teams is also attracting employees to become more involved in volunteer activities. A large number of multi-national corporations and foreign-invested companies have taken the lead here. These volunteer teams often offer services in nearby communities or in the remote mountain areas. In addition, the non profit organizations and civil society groups have also formed volunteer teams in recent years, encouraging their members to offer free services.

Co-ordination between Social Organizations

With the rapid development of volunteerism and people's enthusiasm for volunteer activities, approaches at different levels have been explored to coordinate and support its healthy development.

First, coordinating mechanisms have been established to gather different kinds of volunteers and realize better social benefits. Currently, there are coordinating organizations formed by different means at the national and local levels.

Secondly, regulations have been formulated to facilitate volunteerism development and ensure the volunteers'

rights and benefits. There is a growing need for legal protection to promote and regulate volunteerism. Over the last ten years provincial and municipal volunteer regulations have been formulated, with 29 provinces and cities having enacted separate iterations of these. In 2007, Beijing Volunteer Regulations was examined and approved by the Standing Committee of the Municipal People's Congress. This is much more complete in terms of volunteer service protection and regulation. In 2010, the drafting process of the national volunteerism legislation was initiated by the Committee for Internal and Judicial Affairs of the NPC. Experts across the country have been involved in this, with wide canvassing of public opinion, particularly suggestions from volunteers, in order to formulate a law that can promote and regulate indigenous volunteerism development.

Thirdly, a large number of official documents have been issued to provide support for policies and systems that promote volunteerism development. 'Views on further developing volunteer service' have been issued by the state at the national and at the local level of government, Beijing, Guangdong and Sichuan also issued documents including awarding measures and preferential policies in schools and job promotion benefits for outstanding volunteers as a means of motivating more volunteers.

Fourthly, volunteerism foundations have been set up to provide financial and resource support. In 2007, Guangdong Volunteers Development Foundation was established, being the first such entity. Up to now, the foundation has subsidized over 900 volunteer activities and acquired significant social influence. In 2009, the China Volunteerism Foundation was established with 5 million CNY as start up capital, funding "Voluntary service to millions of empty nest elderly volunteers", "Building love home for migrant workers", and received appreciation by the mass. In May 2010, Changsha in Hunan Province donated and started the first economic housing program. The "Xingfucun" farmer's economic housing community is as large as 50000 sqm². In addition, Beijing Voluntary Service Foundation has also established in 2008. The government invested 10 million CNY start-up capital into it, and also absorbed aid from banks and Mengniu Group

and other corporate donors, providing capital guarantee to voluntary training, management and project operation. Currently, there are many municipal volunteerism foundations. Even in some counties and towns, special volunteer funds have been formed relying on foundations like the China Youth Development Foundation and the Chinese Red Cross Foundation, so as to support and ensure volunteerism development.

Above and beyond this, the wider dissemination of information about the whole culture of volunteerism and what it might contribute to society means that volunteer service has gradually become an essential component in people's life. More and more experts, scholars and specialists have intervened in this field and provided intellectual support, from theoretical research, scientific evaluation, training and counseling. The publication of a series of works, including "Study of voluntary service in China", "Rural development report on voluntary service

in China", "Study of Beijing Olympic Games voluntary service", "Study of Beijing voluntary service model", "Study of voluntary service system", has reference value for the whole country. In recent years, the Research institutions such as Civil Society Studies Center of Peking University, China Humanistic Olympic Studies Center of Renmin University, the Information Center of the China Youth Volunteers Association, the Working Committee on Volunteers at CASW, Beijing Voluntary Service Development Study Center, Beijing Volunteer Research Association, Voluntary Research Center in Beijing Normal University, Voluntary Research Institute of Guangdong Youth College, Voluntary Service and Social Policy Research Center in Zhongshan University and other special research organizations have emerged, thus deepening the development of volunteerism through deeper knowledge of its impact on society, giving new frameworks within which to see and understand it.



Social workers and volunteers from south of Zhongshan are exchanging ideas

²⁵Interview, Beijing, August 2010

4.2 Challenges

Despite all this, volunteerism in China is facing lots of challenges, regardless of the developmental opportunities. These challenging factors are diverse and complicated due to internal and external issues. They can be grouped into four major areas:

Government Strengthening its Effort on Promoting Volunteer Service Development

The government attaches importance to and supports volunteerism development, as this report has already shown. All the voluntary organizations supported by the government have contributed to China's development, creating social cohesion, and improving the meeting of its development goals from 2001. Even so, the question remains of how best government can guide the development of voluntary organizations, and how it can make full use of the positive influences of volunteering. In particular, more attention should be given to the following areas: governmental provision of a system guaranteeing for the expansion of voluntary organizations; provision for better basic conditions for operating volunteer services; provisions of rewards; and preferential policies for volunteer development. In addition, while inspiring people's participation in volunteer service, opportunities must also be created for volunteers to share their services and their experiences. It is difficult to maintain the volunteers' enthusiasm in a long time without paying attention to the benefits of sharing.

Legal Development of Registration System

Currently, through the wide spread of volunteerism, more and more citizens are willing to participate in volunteer organizations and volunteer services. However, due to the lack of legally registered voluntary organizations in China, actual volunteering opportunities in which citizens can participate are limited. On the one hand, registered voluntary organizations are mainly large-scale 'official' ones. They are homogenous and lack flexibility. On the other, a large quantity of NGOs cannot register, thus lacking a stable identity and status. Therefore, it is difficult for people to choose volunteer organizations

according to their own interests and abilities. There is now a disconnection between increasing public demand for volunteering and the small number of registered volunteer organizations. Moreover, surveys have found that there are problems concerning the volunteer registration system itself. Currently, there are two registration systems-- the 'Volunteer registration system in China' and the 'Chinese community volunteer registration system'. Each of these is separate from the other and it is difficult to make them mutually compatible. At the local level, the volunteer registration system in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangdong Province are relatively complete, but they still have the problem of being complicated and time-consuming to work through.

Lack of Resources

China is experiencing a wave of volunteering. It has become a social trend to volunteer in communities, in schools and in corporations. However, the lack of sufficient resources, including financial, intellectual and institutional support, is having a negative effect on the sustainable development of volunteerism. In spite of the establishment of different kinds of volunteerism foundations, funding is still limited, especially at the early stage. Even for the funds that have been used in the service projects, there are still problems in absorbing new capital. There is a lack of funding among and from organizations, corporations and other entities. There is a preference to only subsidize important events. There are limited experts and scholars involved in volunteer research and insufficient research achievements to understand the impact of volunteering on society, the amount of resources needed and how best to structure it. A better regulatory environment and more support concerning finance and regulation can promote the sustainable development and prosperity of volunteerism, helping it become an important force in the realization of social stability and growth.

Volunteer Management Standards and Quality

While it is clear that more people in China are willing to participate in voluntary service activities, they lack professional guidance and training. This means that some effects of service activities are not good. Some volunteers

can only engage in simple and non-professional services, and cannot adjust to the specific needs of service targets; some volunteers can only undertake superficial activities, giving no practical help to people's life. A prominent example are volunteering activities conducted during main holidays and festivals which are mainly single events with a lack of strategic sustainable planning and development focus. Thus, the service quality of volunteers should be improved, including holding service activities of different forms and content in accordance with targets' needs, and adjusting service delivery methods. Meanwhile, the capacity of volunteer organizations should be improved, creating some new service projects according to the needs of different groups (old people, children, migrant worker, disabled people and poor people), trying to really improve their lives. In recent years, with the rise of environmental protection activity, internet service, cultural service, amongst other things, the demands on volunteer capacity is increasing. Volunteer quality needs to be improved, along with the voluntary service quality.

4.3 Opportunities

Moving into the second decade of the 21st century, China has a new opportunity for greater social and economic development. Both the peaceful global environment and the developmental demands of other countries provide good opportunities for China's steady progress and for more international cooperation. As a new social phenomenon, volunteer service has gained attention and support from the government and civil society, as has been shown above, and it now enjoys an unprecedentedly good environment to go even further.

Volunteerism as a Development Tool

China's reform and opening up policies have improved the poverty-stricken and backward condition that existed before 1978, and seen great achievements in social and economic construction. China's total economic development volume now ranks second in the world. However, with the increasing desire for a happier life and the strengthening awareness of individual interests, people tend to place greater expectations on the government and their demands have increased. Therefore, attention

has been shifting from the pursuit of economic growth on its own to more equitable development. The Chinese government has talked of the 'people-oriented' scientific outlook on development and the target of building a harmonious society, with the aim of promoting people's well-being. Thus, there is a growing need for volunteer service in the whole country, with the hope that volunteer services can promote citizen participation, improve people's lives, resolve social conflicts, and guarantee stability and development. This is exemplified by Guicheng Street, Nanhai District in Foshan, where the activity of "loving Guicheng" is promoted so as to encourage officials, staff and teachers to take part in volunteer service and help improve lives of the poor and the disabled. Many central corporations in Beijing also promoted their employees to participate in community service and voluntary service. This kind of activity, being promoted by the government to improve people's lives, has been followed by many other districts, creating opportunities for the volunteers to display their talents and offer services.

Volunteerism Supported by Traditional Chinese Culture

China's modern volunteer service has had significant influence from Europe and North America and then developed in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and other big cities. After reform and opening up, China learned from foreign countries. This set off the volunteerism development boom that has been happening, particularly in the last five years since 2005. Meanwhile, traditional Chinese culture, mentioned at the start of this report, with its strong emphasis on family and community, has a far-reaching influence on volunteers. Ancient Chinese philosophers from the time of Mencius in the 4th century BC advocated the ideas of 'benevolence', 'neighborhood' and 'social ideals'. There is a direct link between these and the concepts of modern volunteerism. After the founding of the PRC in 1949, the ideas of 'serving the people' and 'learning from Lei Feng and doing good deeds' were precursors to the idea of modern volunteerism. Therefore, volunteerism in China not only gains strength and credibility from modern, imported ideas, but also draws on the essence of traditional culture, carrying forward the practice of 'serving the people'.

The Rise of Different Types of Social Groups

The Chinese central government is undertaking reform of the social management system and encouraging civil society to become involved in the delivery of social services. This stimulates the rapid development of NGOs. Increasing numbers of non-governmental organizations are emerging, apart from official ones like the youth volunteer and community volunteer one. The 'Spring Shoots Training Programme' is a project initiated by UNV and BVF, aiming to train and support the volunteer organizations and to improve their capacity. There are many other organizations for the coordinating and subsidizing of volunteerism development in many parts in China. These gather volunteer teams together to promote volunteerism development. It can be predicted that volunteers in NGOs will develop rapidly and play a more active role in the diversity and abundance of Chinese voluntary services in the coming years.

International Co-operation

Through drawing on foreign experiences and making integration and innovation, the contemporary volunteer service in China has evolved in a unique way. In the 21st

century, with China more open to the world and more international cooperation in social and economic areas, volunteer organizations will have more opportunities for international communication. For example, in partnership with Chinese organizations, UNV has supported projects for the children of migrant workers, and promoted the capacity building of non-governmental organizations. UNV, cooperating with BVF, initiated a project of 'Strengthening Volunteerism for Development in China through the Beijing 2008 Olympics'. In 2010, UNDP, UNV, BVF, CICETE and the Volunteer Department of the Guangzhou Asian Games Organizing Committee cooperated together on an international forum on volunteerism for development, held in Beijing, as well as on the 'Guangzhou Citizens Participating in Volunteer Service' campaign. In addition, leading volunteering organizations in China are currently developing programmes aiming to send Chinese volunteers overseas as part of the international cooperation. Under the influence of international cooperation, Chinese volunteer organizations are increasing their global networks and gaining new forms of knowledge on how volunteering can be developed, managed, and expanded.

5. Strategic Recommendations

- A national volunteering management system needs to be established to further strengthen volunteer management and coordination. Based on the Voluntary Service Working Office of the Central Spiritual Civilization Office, it can act as a link between more departments and agencies, attracting social organizations and social groups, building a more influential national voluntary service development network. It can coordinate the work between voluntary organizations, and serve as an information platform for satisfying service providers' needs, and support different forms of voluntary activities including large-scale events and at the grass-roots, enhancing the institutionalization of voluntary service in China.
- National volunteerism legislation needs to be drafted and passed. After referring to volunteerism legislations in different countries and examining local cities' experience of establishing voluntarism regulation, the process of enacting a national volunteerism legislation needs to be accelerated. Key objectives should promote and regulate volunteering activities, protecting the legal rights of volunteers, volunteering organizations and volunteering targets, and enhancing voluntary service development and social civilization progress through legislation.
- The whole of society needs to be encouraged to support volunteering. Government should include volunteering programme resources into their financial budgeting, providing greater financial support. This would also help in encouraging national enterprises and private-owned enterprises to support and contribute to volunteering

- activities. Enterprises should support the development of volunteerism through corporate social responsibility.
- More should be done to promote the development of specific areas like environment protection, low-carbon, and climate change. National and local government should provide special support for those voluntary organizations working in these areas, which are important for the very future of the human race, and encouraging volunteers to participate in more awareness raising activities.
- Rural volunteering development should be enhanced, with people in poor areas encouraged to participate in volunteering, getting volunteers' help and also having the chance to help others, obtaining more developmental opportunities.
- Chinese voluntary organizations and volunteers need to participate more in international volunteering, increasing the volume of overseas volunteering, providing more help for developing countries in partnership with international organizations.
- National and local government should further support volunteering research programmes. Such research includes the impact of volunteering on economic development, analysis of its contribution to enhance social harmony, and analysis of the influence of volunteering on Chinese society, looking at the role of increasing international cooperation on establishing volunteering system and operating volunteer education training programme.

Volunteer training for Guangzhou Asian Games



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Ministry of Civil Affairs
Ministry of Environment
National Disaster Reduction Center of China
China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation
China International Center for Economic and Technical Exchange
China Red Cross
China Young Volunteers Association
Chinese Association of Social Workers
International Poverty Reduction Center in China
All-China Women's Federation
Beijing Youth League
Beijing Volunteers Federation
Shanghai Expo Volunteer Bureau
Xi'an Youth League
Australian Youth Ambassador for Development
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Society
Voluntary Service Overseas
HelpAge International
Japanese International Cooperation Agency
Korea International Cooperation Agency
Bai Shu Lin sub-District Office, Beilin District, Xi'an
Bayer's, China
Beijing Fuping School
Beijing Huizeren Human Service Center
Compassion for Migrant Children
Yinling Programme Office

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