

## **The Development of Volunteerism in China: Context, Role of Government and Influences**

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### **Abstract:**

This article attempts to explore the context of the development of volunteerism in China, describe the role of Chinese government in promoting volunteerism and introduce the influences of volunteer service in China by taking the example of Beijing Olympic Games voluntary work. This article argues that under the pressure of social challenges and social risks, the Chinese government gradually realized the importance of voluntary service and created a series of measures to encourage and support the volunteerism development. In fact, volunteer service, especially in Beijing Olympics Games, has profoundly influenced social development in China. The influences on volunteers include encouraging good citizenship. In terms of social development, volunteer service helps optimizing the structure of human resources, expanding public participation, ensuring public security and building a harmonious society. This article concludes that the biggest challenge to Chinese volunteerism is how to integrate more social forces to participate in it.

**Key Words:** Volunteerism in China; Context; Role of government; Influence; Beijing Olympics Games

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Since the 1980s, recognition of volunteering by Chinese government has advanced rapidly. Chinese Government has been encouraging and supporting volunteerism development, which indicates a more active and positive attitude. At the local level, in order to promote and standardize the development of volunteerism, the process of volunteering legislation has quietly started. Twenty-nine provinces and municipalities have promulgated and implemented the local Volunteering Law by the end of 2010. At the national level, the Office of the Spiritual Civilization Development Steering Commission, the Communist Youth League and the Ministry of Civil Affairs have been explored to support the development of volunteerism, through policies, regulations and administrative support. In practice, volunteering has demonstrated the unique value and played a significant role in many aspects such as culturing civism and promoting the democratization process, accumulating social capital, helping to ease social conflicts, promoting social development and increasing social welfare (Mao Lihong 2010, p.1) . Currently, volunteering has become a lifestyle and part of the mainstream culture in China.

What is the context of the development of volunteerism in China? What is the role of Chinese government in promoting volunteerism development? What are the influences of volunteerism development? These are the questions which this paper attempts to answer.

## II. THE CONTEXT OF THE VOLUNTEERISM DEVELOPMENT IN CHINA

Since China implemented its reform and opening-up policies, earthshaking changes have taken place in China. In 1978, China had a GDP of some 13.5 billion dollars and a per capita GDP of 140 dollar. In 2008, however, China's GDP reached around 432.74 billion dollars, increasing by 32 times in 30 years; the per capita GDP was 3266 dollars, 23 times the amount in 1978. China's economy boasts an average annual growth of 9 percent, thus changing China into the second largest economy after America (Hang Kang 2009, p.2).

As shown in Table1, from 1978 to 2007, the per capita disposable income of rural residents increased from 133.6 yuan (\$19.6) to 4140.4 yuan (\$606.2), with an average annual growth of 7.1 percent. The per capita disposable income of urban residents rose from 343.4 yuan (\$50.3) to 13,785.8 yuan (\$2018.4), with an average annual growth of 7.2 percent.

China has also achieved remarkably in housing, transportation, communications, education, and medical care during these years. The per capita living space had more than quadrupled in the rural areas; transportation facility, measured in bus/population ratio, had increased more than three times; measured by motorcycle/household ratio, had increased 5,790 percent between 1990 and 2008 in the rural areas; TV Coverage Rate of the Population, as an indicator of durable good consumption, had increased 286 percent since 1985; The Chinese population has become better educated and healthier. From 1985 to 2001, the ratio of university student to the

population had more than quadrupled and the ratio of hospital beds and doctors to the population had increased modestly (Aimin Chen 2005, p.501).

Table 1 Basic Statistics on People's Living Conditions in China from 1978 to 2008

	1978	1985	1990	1995	2001	2008
Per Capita Annual Disposable Income of Urban Households (yuan)	343.4	739.1	1510.2	4283.0	6280.0	15780.8 13785.8(2007)
Per Capita Annual Net Income of Rural Households (yuan)	133.6	397.6	686.3	1577.7	2253.4	4760.6 4140.4(2007)
Per Capita Living Space in Rural Areas (km <sup>2</sup> )	8.1	14.7	17.8	21.0	24.8(2000)	32.4 0)
Number of Buses Per 100 Rural Households (unit)	3.3	3.9	4.8	7.3	10.1	Na
Number of Motor Cycles Per 100 Rural Households (unit)	Na	Na	0.89	Na	21.94	52.45
TV Coverage Rate of the Population (percent)	Na	68.4	79.4	84.5	94.2	97.0
Number of University Students per 1000 Persons (person)	8.90	16.09	18.04	24.00	56.3	Na
Number of Beds of Hospitals and Health Centers per 10000 Population (bed)	19.28	21.06	22.95	23.41	23.9	28.4
Number of Doctors per 10000 Population (person)	10.73	13.35	15.42	15.84	16.9	15.8

Source: China statistics yearbook 1996-2009.

Such rapid growth, however, has created major challenges. Along with the deepening of reform and opening-up, the transition of the economic system and the transformation of the society are pressing ahead in an overall way. Profound changes have taken place in China's social structure, mainly in terms of population structure, family structure, urban and rural structure and social class structure, and therefore have brought about many social risks (Gong Weibin 2010, p.16).

First, as the population is getting older and families are downsized, pension risk increases. Due to the adoption of the family planning policy, Chinese population's age structure is changed: the ratio of the elderly increases rapidly and the population as a whole is getting older. The publication of preliminary data from China's 2010 population census shows that population in the age group of 60 and over accounted for 13.26 percent, up by 2.93 percentage points, of which population in the age group of 65 and over accounted for 8.87 percent, up by 1.91 percentage points as compared with the 2000 population census.<sup>1</sup> China is still likely to

<sup>1</sup> Data sources: Press Release on Major Figures of the 2010 National Population Census, National Bureau of Statistics of China, April, 28, 2011.

grow old before it gets rich. At the same time, families are downsized in an accelerated way and the nuclear families are in the majority. At the meantime, since people are getting more mobile and single-generation people live alone, the ratio of empty-nest families is on the rise. According to the date released, 49.7 percent of the families of urban old people are “empty-nest families”.<sup>2</sup> The aging society intensifies the risk of pension and medical security. However, either the downsized family or the government can’t afford the responsibility of providing support for the aged.

Second, as urbanization is accelerating, disparities between rural-urban increases and the problems of rural migrant workers are more serious. By 2009, China had an urban population of 622 million and the urbanization rate went up to 46.6 percent from 45.7 percent in 2008.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, the eastern, central and western parts of China differ remarkably in urbanization level. More seriously, along with the urbanization process, hundreds of millions of farmers are flowing to cities and become the important part of urbanization in China. However, because of institutional barriers in household registration and social security, migrant workers cannot enjoy the same treatments as their urban counterparts in employment, medical service, housing, and education for their children, triggering major problems in social management.

Third, as the social class structure changes, the risks in social harmony increase. In the process of accelerated economic restructuring starting from 1978, the structure of social classes of China changes. A career-based new mechanism of social class differentiation has gradually superseded the previous one which based on political, household and administrative identity (Gong Weibin 2010, p.18). Nevertheless, during the process, the social status of farmer and worker declined. In some rural areas, enormous farmland is acquired by government, forcing farmers into the desperate situation of having no land, no job, and no social security. During the reform of state-owned enterprises and collective enterprises, tens of million workers were laid off. They suffer psychological imbalance which easily lead to social contradictions. Most of the mass unexpected incidents stemmed from the grudges and grievances of the frustrated class.

Faced with these challenges and risks, different from the pre-Opening-up era in China, the government realizes the importance of volunteer service. That is because Chinese central planned economy has been transformed towards market economy and the government functions have been changed a lot since the reform and opening-up. In the market economy, the government should not be in charge of all things, and problems such as offside, dislocation and omission shall be eradicated. Thus, there is a growing need for volunteer service, with the hope that it can improve people’s lives, resolve social conflicts, and guarantee social stability and development.

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<sup>2</sup> Data source: China National Committee on Aging ,<http://www.cncaprc.gov.cn/info/3307.html>

<sup>3</sup> Data source: *The Blue Book of Cities in China* released by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, *Social Sciences Academic Press*, 2010.

In 1989, the first definite voluntary organization was set up in the Xinxing community, Heping District, Tianjin. The purpose of the voluntary organization was to help the elderly and lonely people, whose public services provided by government were very weak. After seeing the unique role of volunteerism in remedying the deficiency of government's public service, the Ministry of Civil Affairs took the volunteer work of Xinxing community as a model for a number of other similar community projects in the rest of China. A large number of community volunteer organizations were established to carry on the responsibility of social administration and public service while maintain the harmony and stability of communities. At the end of 2010, there were 289 thousand community volunteer organizations in China, with more than 29 million community volunteers.<sup>4</sup> On December 5, 1994, another important volunteering force, the Chinese Young Volunteers Association (CYVA) was set up. Since its implementation, the young voluntary program has carried out many forms of effective volunteer services focusing on the basic needs of production and people's livelihood, the training of young talents, community construction, poverty-alleviation and development, environmental protection as well as large events and rescue activities. CYVA implemented a number of key projects and set up a fairly complete organizational system, yielding significant successes in better serving the society, educating young people and promoting development. These volunteers organizations guided by the Central Youth League (CYL) now cover most part of China even down to the township city. At the end of 2010, there were 130 thousand youth volunteer organizations in China, with more than 31.2 million young volunteers<sup>5</sup>.

In 2008, this was called the Year of Volunteering in China because of the Wenchuan earthquake and Beijing 2008 Olympics Games. In the Wenchuan earthquake, 49 million volunteers provided help for the relief and reconstruction in the earthquake area, showed the public's perception and wills to participate in volunteer service. Meanwhile, the Beijing 2008 Olympics Games encouraged as many as 17 million volunteers to participate in different ways around the event, making a profound influence on volunteers and social development. The two key events make the government further recognize the influence and social value of volunteerism, and then pay more attention and provide more support to promote volunteerism development. On September 4, 2008, Liu Yunshan, a member of the political bureau and head of the Publicity Department of the Party Central Committee, stressed the significance of spreading the concept of volunteerism, promoting volunteer spirit, and carrying out volunteer service in depth and with perseverance at a symposium on volunteer service.

### III. THE MEASURES TO PROMOTE VOLUNTEERISM DEVELOPMENT IN CHINA

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<sup>4</sup> Data source: the Ministry of Civil Affairs, 2010.

<sup>5</sup> Data source: the CCP Central Youth League, 2010.

Since 1990s, particularly in the past decade, the Chinese government have been explored a series of measures to encourage and support the volunteerism development. The main measures are as follows:

Firstly, the central government has been attached importance to the volunteerism development through state leaders' words and deeds, government policies and a large number of official documents.

In China, the state leaders' words and deeds usually symbolize the attitudes of central government. In the case of volunteerism, the Chinese leaders have been expressed their supportive views and have taken actions in all sorts of formal and informal occasion since 1990s. (See Table 2)

Table 2 .The supportive views and actions of Chinese leaders towards volunteerism

Year	Leader	Actions	Views
1997	President Jiang Zemin	At the end of 1997, Jiang Zemin made a personal inscription of "Chinese Young Volunteers."	On the eve of the second CYVA congress, Jiang pointed out: "The Young Volunteers Program is a noble undertaking of contemporary socialist China; it is highly promising career."
2006	President Jintao	During his trip to Laos, Hu paid a visit to the Chinese volunteers in the country. He extended his appreciation and respect for the volunteers on behalf of the Chinese people.	Hu says young volunteers are a respectful cause. It's an important move of China to help other developing countries. "You left your country and your families, traveled so far to Laos to help the local people. Meanwhile, you have broadened your vision, promoted your talent and improved yourselves. I believe you will prove yourselves eligible for the glorious title of volunteer with your actions."
2008	Liu Yunshan, head of the Publicity Department <sup>6</sup>	On September 4, Liu attended the symposium on volunteer service and urged promotion of volunteering. <sup>7</sup>	Liu stressed the importance of spreading the concept of volunteerism, promoting volunteer spirit, and carrying out volunteer service in depth and with perseverance at a symposium on volunteer service.

<sup>6</sup> As the head of Publicity Department of the Central Committee of CPC and Office of the Spiritual Civilization Development Steering Commission, Liu Yunshan has been in charge of the development of volunteerism since 2008.

<sup>7</sup> The symposium was a milestone, which marked the Chinese government pay more attention to promote volunteerism development.

2009	President Hu Jintao; Vice Premier Li Keqiang	At the coming of the 22nd World AIDS Day, Hu and Li came to the National Convention Center on November 30, 2009, where Beijing volunteers launched a weekly AIDS prevention campaign.	Hu expressed sincere greetings to medical volunteers who had contributed to HIV/AIDS prevention and control. "China still faces a severe AIDS problem and we should mobilize the forces of all social sectors to tackle the problem persistently," he said.
2011	President Hu Jintao	Hu wrote back to 18 volunteers on May 10, after he received a letter from the students who are now teaching in west China's Tibet, Qinghai, Yunnan and Xinjiang.	"Despite hardships and with wholehearted devotion, you have played a positive role in boosting education in the western regions, and you have gained experiences, strengthened mind and improved abilities through grassroots practice," Hu said in the letter. "I am very satisfied with the progress you have made."

Source: News of the Communist Party of China, <http://english.cpc.people.com.cn/>

There is also a national and local policy support framework. *The China's Agenda 21 – White Paper on China's Population, Environment, and Development in the 21st Century* (1993) encouraged public participation to ensure the sustainable progress strategy, which had laid a good foundation for the environmental protection volunteer service. In the national 9<sup>th</sup> *Five-Year Guidelines for National Economy and Social Development* from 1995 to 2000, the 10<sup>th</sup> from 2001 to 2005, the 11<sup>th</sup> from 2006 to 2010, and the 12<sup>th</sup> from 2011 to 2015, the development of volunteerism has been incorporated into national policy.

The government departments and mass organizations, which engaged in mobilizing and organizing social resource in China, have made government policies, rules and official documents to support the development of volunteerism. (See Table 3)

Table 3. The government departments and mass organizations' support to the development of volunteerism

Year	Supportive measures
1994	The Ministry of Civil Affairs, The Chinese Association of Social Workers issued 'Notice on Further Developing' Community Volunteer Services
2001	The All-China Woman's Federation issued an 'Opinion on Developing Woman's Volunteer Groups'
2003	The Communist Youth League of China, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Personnel issued 'Notice on the Implementing the Plan of College Graduates Volunteer Service in Western China'
2005	The Ministry of Civil Affairs, The All China Federation of Trade Unions and other seven organizations jointly issued 'Opinion on Promoting Community Volunteer Services'
2006	The Ministry of Personnel issued 'Notice on Organizing College Graduates to help in Education, Agriculture, Medical Services, and Poverty Alleviation in Rural Areas.'

2006	Ministry of organization of Central Committee of Communist Party of China, Publicity Department and 11 other ministries issued ' <i>Opinion on Extensively Developing Voluntary Services in Rural Areas</i> '
2008	Office of the Spiritual Civilization Development Steering Commission, BOCOG <sup>8</sup> and other four organizations jointly issued ' <i>Specific Implementation Plans on Towards the Olympic Games, Stressing and Fostering New Practices Voluntary Services.</i> '
2008	The Spiritual Civilization Development Steering Commission issued ' <i>Opinions on Deepening Volunteering Activities</i> '
2009	The Ministry of Education issued ' <i>Opinions on Deepening the Volunteering Activities of Students</i> '
2010	Publicity Department, Office of the Spiritual Civilization Development Steering Commission and other 8 organizations jointly issued ' <i>Notice on Towards the Shanghai Expo, Stressing and Fostering New Practices Voluntary Services.</i> '
2010	The Communist Youth League of China issued ' <i>Notice on Deepening Voluntary Service to Children of Rural Migrants</i> '

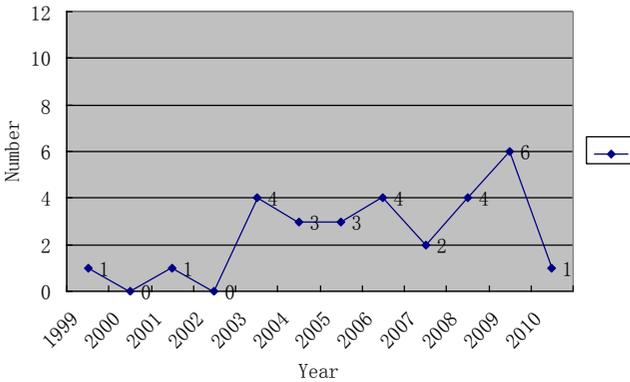
Source: related materials of government departments and mass organization

Secondly, the process of volunteering legislation has quietly started to promote and standardize the development of volunteerism and maintain the volunteers' rights and interests.

*Red Cross Society Law, Donations for Public Welfare Law, Registration of Social Organizations Regulations, and Regulation on the Administration of Foundation* have relevant specifications about Volunteering. On the specific legislation in terms of volunteering, up till now, 29 provinces (autonomous regions) and cities have promulgated and implemented the local Volunteering Law. The first was the *Regulations for Youth Volunteers in Guangdong* in 1999. The other 28 provinces and cities are as follows: Shandong (2001), Ningbo (2003), Fujian (2003), Henan (2003), Heilongjiang (2003), Hangzhou (2004), Fushun (2004), Yinchuan (2004), Chengdu (2005), Shenzhen (2005), Nanjing (2005), Jilin (2006), Ningxia (2006), Hubei (2006), Jinan (2006), Jiangsu (2007), Beijing (2007), Jiangxi (2008), Zhejiang (2008), Tianjin (2008), Qingdao (2008), Guangzhou (2009), Xinjiang (2009), Zibo (2009), Shanghai (2009), Hainan (2009), Sichuan (2009), Tangshan (2010). The progress of legislation of local volunteerism in China accelerated in 2003 and peaked in 2009, which can be seen as the influences of the Beijing Olympic Games Volunteer Work. (See Fig1)

<sup>8</sup> Beijing Organising Committee for the Olympic Games

Figure1.The run chart of the progress of local volunteerism legislation in China



As far as the 29 Volunteering Laws, 20 refer to the extensive participation in volunteer service, while the other 9 only refer to youth participation. The legislative tenet of these laws includes the following aspects: promote and standardize the development of volunteerism, spread volunteer knowledge and advocate the volunteerism, promote socialist ethical and cultural progress, promote the building of a harmonious society, maintain the benefits and interests of volunteers and voluntary associations, which shows that volunteerism develop in the context of Spiritual Civilization and Harmonious Society. In contrast, the essence of Western Volunteering Law lies in the promotion of volunteerism, encouraging citizen participation, cultivating civic spirit, building civil society and improving social welfare (Mao Lihong 2010, p.62).

Currently, a project on national volunteer legislation has been initiated by the Committee for Internal and Judicial Affairs of the National People's Congress, which will further encourage and regulate China's volunteerism development.

Thirdly, the coordinating mechanism has been established to integrate the resources of government and society to promote the development of the volunteerism.

According to Justin Davis Smith (2000), it is possible to identify at least four types of volunteer activities: mutual aid or self help; philanthropy or service to others; participation; advocacy and campaigning. In fact, the ranges and forms of volunteering in China are more complex and diversified. Wei Na (2006, p.21) classified the ranges and forms of volunteering in China as: community volunteer services; volunteer service in western China; environmental protection volunteer services; mass events volunteer services; animal protection volunteer services and overseas volunteer services. However, these kinds of volunteer services are organized by different departments or organizations. The related Government Departments and Party Committees refer to Publicity Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, Office of the Spiritual Civilization Development Steering Commission, Ministry of Civil Affairs, and the Ministry of Education. The related mass organizations refer to

Communist Youth League of China, All-China Woman's Federation, and All China Federation of Trade Unions. Other government departments like the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Personnel, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Finance and government-operated NGOs such as the Chinese Association of Social Workers, the Chinese Young Volunteers Association also involve in the process. The groups of stakeholders prefer to hang separately rather than together. To integrate the resources of government and society, the national voluntary service coordination mechanism was set up in 2008. In the effort of gather different kind of volunteers, *the Opinions on Deepening Volunteering Activities* formulated that the Spiritual Civilization Development Steering Commission was authorized to integrate and coordinate the development volunteerism nation wide.

Fourthly, the governments have been provided financial aid to the development of volunteerism. In 2008, the government of Guangdong province allocated 500 million from the financial funds to support the volunteer activities. In 2009, a national-type foundation, the China Volunteerism Foundation was established. Enterprises and individuals are also encouraged to denote to volunteer service. In Beijing, government purchases of volunteer services also have been come into effect in 2010.

#### IV. THE INFLUENCES OF VOLUNTEERING IN CHINA: TAKE THE OLYMPIC VOLUNTEER WORK AS AN EXAMPLE

The influences of volunteering refer to both volunteers and social development. The influences on volunteers include encouraging good citizenship and personal benefits, and the influences on social development include enhancing social trust, easing social conflicts and building a harmonious society. In this section, we take the Olympic volunteer work as an example to demonstrate the influences of volunteering in China.

Beijing Olympic volunteers, in the broad sense, consist of games-time volunteers, city volunteers, social volunteers, and cheering squad volunteers. Volunteers directly involved in the games amounted to 77,169, with another 44,261 for the Para-Olympics. There were also 4 million city volunteers, and over 10 million social volunteers. After the Games, United Nations Volunteers (UNV), Beijing Volunteers Federation (BVF) and other relevant organizations conducted a research to study the influences of Beijing Olympic Volunteering Service. We are authorized to carry out the Beijing Olympic and Paralympics Volunteer Work Legacy Transformation Research. In the report of the research, we argued that the Beijing Olympic volunteer work had profound influences on volunteers and social development in many ways (Wei Na et al, 2010).

##### **4.1 The Beijing Olympic volunteer work had profound influences on volunteers, especially on young volunteers.**

(1) Enriching volunteers' life experience and speeding up their socialization. The Olympic Games is the largest comprehensive sports event in the world. Its organization and staging are a

complicated systematic undertaking, involving many steps, advanced requirements, and need special attention to the accumulation and transfer of experiences. Through their participation in the service process, volunteers can personally see and experience advanced management practices. For young people, this will prove to be a great asset throughout their life. Li Mingying, a volunteer from Beijing Technology and Business University who served at the Laoshan Venue Cluster said: "The Olympic Games have greatly improved us psychologically. By being a volunteer for it, we have also honed our work abilities and obtained much social work experience." Such experiences and personal reflections are not isolated cases; to a certain extent this represents the feeling of most student volunteers. According to a survey after Beijing Olympic Games<sup>9</sup>, volunteers rated "Enrich your experience and improve your abilities" (89.4% of the total respondents) and "Expand your social networking circles" as their top two benefits of participating in the Olympics.

(2)Improving volunteers' sense of social responsibility. A survey shows that 79.4% of the respondents named "Hope to contribute to the country and society" as one of the main motivations behind their participation in the volunteer service during the Olympic Games. In our informal discussion meetings, many volunteers said that they "improved the understanding of their responsibilities toward the country, and generated great patriotism". Only 9.2% of the volunteers actually took part in the venue competitions during the Olympics. More than 60% provided services far from the venues, or even in communities. Despite their service location and receiving far less welfare benefits than those offered to venue volunteers, they still showed great enthusiasm and perfectly executed their service tasks. In our interviews, many volunteers told us that they did not even get a free bottle of water, but they did not complain. To them, it was a responsibility.

(3)Nurturing volunteers' team awareness. Through the Beijing Olympic Volunteer work, volunteers developed great team awareness. Mo Qiong, a student majoring in public utilities who was enrolled into Beijing Institute of Technology in 2006, still has the habit today of logging on to an online QQ group in his spare time. This QQ group was the home of the former "Wukesong Venue Volunteers". Even one year after the Olympic Volunteer work, the friendship between Mo Qiong and his Olympic volunteer "comrades" has not in any way stopped. On the contrary, it has been growing. A common unforgettable and precious experience binds them closely together and turns them into good friends. A survey shows that 3,635 (73.0%) of the 5,000 volunteers believed that the scenario which most motivated them to work hard was "Volunteers' self-formed team spirit". In our informal discussion meetings,

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<sup>9</sup> In the survey, we use Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing and Computer Assisted Network Interviewing to select samples. To ensure the representativeness of the samples, we choose 77,000 Olympic and Paralympic Games-time volunteers as the sampling frame. According to the volunteers' gender, occupation, education background, we conduct a stratified sampling and send out 8300 questionnaires. 5,000 effective questionnaires are sent back, of which the 1,000 are telephone interviewing questionnaires and the 4000 are online interviewing questionnaires. In the research, unless otherwise specified, the base number for analysis is 5,000 valid samples.

some volunteers said that the Olympic Games made them realize the importance of team cooperation.

(4) Advancing volunteers' career development. As part of the vigorous and comprehensive training system of the Olympic Games, diversified teaching methods and powerful teaching forces were provided, which greatly improved volunteers' abilities in communication, coordination, service, expression and problem-solving. Such professional skills have promoted volunteers' career development. Because of their Olympic volunteer service experience, many volunteers have been able to show greater competitiveness in the job market.

(5) Improving volunteers' self-confidence. Volunteers received considerable publicity throughout the Games, and their contributions were recognized by the whole of society. To the excitement of the volunteers, flowers were presented to them for the first time in Olympic history during the closing ceremonies of both the Olympics and Paralympics. 3,620 out of 4,981 respondents (72.7%) summarized their performance as follows: "The standard of my service was fairly high. I did my best, but there's still room for improvement"; 1,074 of them (21.6%) thought they "did a very good job and were highly praised by society". That is to say, 93.3% of the volunteers were satisfied with their own performance.

## **4.2 The Beijing Olympic volunteer work had a profound influence on social development.**

(1) Saving money on Games preparation and organization. Olympic volunteers are a massive economic asset. According to statistics from BOCOG, Beijing Olympic and Para-Olympics volunteers worked an aggregate of over 200 million hours. According to statistics released by Beijing Statistics Bureau, the average income of employees in Beijing in 2008 was 44, 715 yuan. Thus, the remuneration for 200 million hours of volunteer work would have been as high as 4.275 billion yuan<sup>10</sup>. Moreover, a considerable amount of money was saved by 1,582 volunteers during the preparation of the Games. Every preparation volunteer worked around 380 hours (under normal circumstances, preparation volunteers worked for three months, four days a week, eight hours a day) during the run-up to the Games, making a total of nearly 600,000 working hours. If the same number of paid staff were employed, the total cost in salary would be 11.25 million yuan (calculation based on the salary of paid project assistants whose average income was 18.75 yuan per hour). By contrast, the actual amount of money paid by BOCOG on the Preparation Volunteer Program mainly consisted of meal allowance (20 yuan/head/day, 960 yuan/head/term) and insurance expenses (192 yuan/head/term). At this rate, approximately 1.82 million yuan was saved by hiring 1,582 volunteers for Games preparation operations, and the total preparation costs were cut down by nearly 9.43 million yuan thanks to the services provided by the volunteers.

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<sup>10</sup> According to the calculation method publicized by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, the salary of employees in Beijing averaged 171 yuan/day. Assume that they work eight hours on a daily basis, and then their hourly income is 21.375 yuan.

Games-time volunteer operations led to the formation of a volunteer team consisting of 1.70 million professional and internationalized volunteers, and a group of highly-qualified, competent team leaders, as a result of which the structure of human resources was effectively optimized, and the overall moral standard of the society enhanced.

(2) Increasing greater public participation and recognition of volunteering. Volunteer service for the Games resulted in an expression of willingness to participate in volunteer services in the future. Most volunteers told us that they would continue working as volunteers in some capacity. A survey of 4,976 Olympic volunteers indicates that 68.9% of them were willing to participate in other volunteer activities after the Games; 53.5% would continue to improve their moral standards and social etiquette in the future; and 44.2% said they would continue advertising volunteerism and gathering together more people to get involved in volunteer services. With regard to the organizers of volunteer services, 73.6% of the volunteers were willing to take part in volunteer activities initiated by international organizations; 61.4% were willing to contribute to volunteer activities sponsored by Chinese governmental organizations; and 31.0% were willing to participate in volunteer activities sponsored by Chinese non-governmental organizations. From an activity-specific perspective, 87.3% of the volunteers were willing to participate in major public events such as the Olympic Games and World Expo; 54.3% of them were willing to be involved in everyday volunteer services; 47.9% were willing to take part in environment-related volunteer activities; and 46.8% were willing to participate in normal large-scale volunteer activities.

During community interviews and surveys, we found that the public thought highly of volunteers and their services, and the volunteering spirit was also well-preserved among members of the public. During the interviews, the volunteering spirit was broke down into the following items: voluntary behavior, unpaid services, helping others, caring about the disadvantaged, organized services, mutual-aid between neighbors, and others. Local residents were requested to rate these items by significance (on a scale of 1 to 5), and the results are listed as follows in descending order: helping others, voluntary behavior, caring about the disadvantaged, organized services, unpaid services, mutual-aid between neighbors, others. These results show that the public's interpretation of volunteerism has become more accurate.

(3)Ensuring public security. During the Beijing Olympic and Para-Olympics Games, a diverse range of volunteer services (e.g. information enquiry, translation and interpreting, public order maintenance, environment beautification, emergency aid and community patrol, etc.)were carried out by 400,000 city volunteers and 1,000,000 social volunteers at public places to ensure Games-time public security, contributing significantly to the construction of a harmonious society. And permanent volunteer organizations have been set up at many neighborhoods after the Games for the peace of mind of the local residents.

(4) Changing the lifestyle of local residents and contributing to a harmonious and tolerant social atmosphere. To a greater or lesser degree, neighborhood-based social volunteer services have effected changes in the public's lifestyle. Manifestations of this include the public's

improved awareness of environmental issues: not only do the residents save energy and use environmentally-friendly products at home, but also they started advocating environmentalism in the neighborhoods, keeping a watchful eye on all potential environmental hazards. After the Beijing Games, some of them volunteered to fix broken flowerbeds or clear walls covered in graffiti.

Thanks to Olympic volunteer services, many “couch potatoes” got more involved in outdoor activities, and became more active and willing to communicate with others. After the Games, visits between the neighbors have become more frequent, and people are now more caring about each other. Interpersonal relationships between members of the communities have been improved greatly, contributing to a harmonious and tolerant social atmosphere.

The Beijing Para-Olympics was organized based on the principles of “transcendence, integration, and sharing”. Over 30,000 volunteers received systematic training in services for the disabled. According to the survey, 27.7% of the respondents are willing to participate in volunteer services for the disabled post-Games. In particular, we found that many Para-Olympics volunteers were still actively involved in services for the disabled long after the Beijing Games. An increasing number of people have realized that what the disabled really need are respect, understanding and care, not sympathy.

## V. CONCLUSION

Although the volunteer service had profound influences on both volunteers and social development, volunteerism in China is facing lots of challenges. The biggest one is that more social forces should be mobilized to participate in volunteer services, not just government. There has been a sign of polarization in the overall makeup of Olympic volunteers. Venue volunteers mainly consist of university students, while elderly volunteers from communities make up the majority of social and city volunteers. Though the social backbone force of middle-aged people did participate in some volunteer services during the Olympics Games, it is nevertheless rare to find their traces in volunteer services, especially community volunteer services, again after the Games. Our survey shows that 44.7% of the people who have not taken part in volunteer services say that they “do not have the time”, while 41.4% report that they do know where to provide volunteer services and 22.7% say that they do not know how to provide volunteer services. Currently, the greater public participation and recognition of volunteering, the more people are willing to participate in volunteer services. However, chances are limited for public participation. The public needs more platforms to participate in volunteer services. And these platforms should come from communities, NGOs and enterprises but not only the government departments and government-operated NGOs. Firstly, it is recommended that community-based volunteer service bases should be established. The government should support the establishment of community-based grassroots volunteer organizations, thus gathering the volunteering enthusiasm of communities and turning it into an effective force for community development. Secondly, the role of NGO should be given full play. Due to their

flexible ways of participation, unique public welfare nature and diversified value orientations, NGOs have now become an important carrier to mobilize the public to take part in public life and join in social construction. However, large quantity of NGOs cannot register and lack a stable identity and status. Thus, the government should give NGOs more legal development opportunities and provide resource support to them. Thirdly, enterprises should be encouraged to support volunteer service. Enterprises possess both ample funds and a large number of skillful employees. The government should formulate incentive mechanisms for enterprises, such as tax rebate and tax deduction based on volunteer service hours, to attract more corporate funds into communities and let corporate human resources assist the establishment of social organizations.

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