

# Research on Digital Empowerment to Facilitate Quality Development of Volunteerism in New Era

Ran Jiwei\*

*School of Politics and Public Administration, Guangxi Normal University, Yucai Campus, Guilin, 541000, China*

*530931117@qq.com*

*\*Corresponding author*

**Abstract:** *Volunteerism is an important symbol of the progress of social civilisation. Strengthening the system of volunteerism is an effective way to innovate the construction of social governance system in the context of Chinese modernisation and a powerful tool to improve the structure of spiritual civilisation, which is of great significance in cultivating and practising the core values of socialism and forming a good atmosphere for upward mobility in the whole society. At the same time, the digital economy, represented by the Internet and big data, is being integrated into various industries, and the digital empowerment of new sectors and new models has become a significant trend, playing an essential role in promoting the institutionalisation of volunteerism. Local volunteering networks have been built nationwide, providing volunteers with services such as real-name registration, length recording, activity development, training and management, and incentive feedback, significantly promoting the institutionalisation of volunteering.*

**Keywords:** *Digital Empowerment, Volunteerism, High quality development*

## 1. Background of the problem

In recent years, China has been committed to promoting the information operation of volunteer services. To implement the requirements of the Central Government on the informatiinformatisaionteer services and to meet the needs of the development of volunteer services, the Ministry of Civil Affairs completed the construction of the "China Volunteer Services Network" information platform in 2017. The information platform provides services for the public, volunteers, voluntary service organisations, and service management departments. The system allows the public to register as volunteers and participate in volunteer services easily. Volunteers can participate in volunteer groups and projects they are interested in, record, transfer, and continue their volunteer time, also do the decision-making analysis [1]. However, some problems have arisen in the process of operation.

Firstly, the information provided by the platform is not comprehensive enough, and many volunteer teams in China are still not included. Secondly, the volunteer registration system is not standardised, and there are many duplicate registrations and unregistered registrations, which is one of the reasons for the high mobility of volunteers. In addition, many volunteers reflect that their volunteer service is still not recorded by the relevant platforms after participating in volunteer service. This may be caused by the lack of guidance from volunteer service organisations to volunteers and inconsistent recording standards of different platforms. Secondly, the integration of volunteering resources is insufficient. China's voluntary service organisations or teams are relatively loose, with many "islands of information". Different volunteering organisations or groups undertake various volunteering projects, so fragmentation and wastage of volunteering resources often occur. For example, there may be several duplicate volunteer teams in the same community, while some communities need volunteer services but do not have the right team to implement them. In addition, some volunteer teams already have a very mature internal volunteer recruitment mechanism. Still, due to the lack of an external platform to effectively integrate recruitment information, many cannot access recruitment information promptly. They are unable to sign up for volunteer activities. The lack of integration of volunteering resources ultimately results in a waste of resources. Once again, the degree of professionalism in volunteering is low. The target and scope of volunteering services in China have changed significantly. For example, the service targets have been expanded from special groups such as the disabled and left-behind children to all community residents, and the scope has been extended from social assistance and

teaching to legal aid and psychological counselling, etc. These changes have put forward higher requirements on the professionalism of volunteer services. However, many volunteers participate in grassroots volunteering to be enthusiastic about public welfare. In most cases, grassroots volunteers have not undergone professional and systematic training and lack relevant professional knowledge and skills, so the volunteering services provided can hardly achieve the desired effect. In addition, most of the grassroots activities have a relatively short time to recruit volunteers, which leads to the training of volunteers often being a formality, and a significant number of volunteers even start volunteering without training. At the same time, there is also a mismatch between supply and demand for volunteer services. In grassroots volunteering activities, there is a mismatch between the supply and demand of volunteers and the service recipients, and it is difficult to establish an effective information link between the two. The need for volunteer services such as legal aid, psychological counselling, technical guidance, culture and arts, and health care is expanding. However, most grassroots volunteer services remain at the level of community cleanliness and hygiene, resource conservation, healthy diet, scientific medicine, and life care. In contrast, providing volunteer services such as legal aid, psychological counselling, and technical guidance is still insufficient [2].

## **2. The significance of building an information platform for digitally empowered volunteering**

The 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China proposed accelerating the building of a strong network and digital China. In the article "Digital China Construction Overall Layout Plan", issued not long ago, it is mentioned that "by 2025, an integrated pattern of horizontal connectivity, vertical coherence and strong coordination will be formed, and important progress will be made in the construction of digital China" and "by 2035, the level of digital development will be among the By 2035, the level of digital development will reach the forefront of the world, and the construction of digital China will have made significant achievements. Building a digital China is an important engine for promoting Chinese modernisation in the digital era and a powerful support for building a new national competitive advantage. From this new starting point, it is important to enhance the general, systematic and synergistic nature of the construction of digital China, consolidate the "two foundations" of digital infrastructure and data resource systems, and comprehensively empower economic and social development to maximise the magnifying, superimposing and multiplying effects of digital technology on economic growth, and to promote the high-quality product with the construction of digital China [3].

Adhering to the concept of "openness, innovation, sharing and collaboration", it extensively uses digital technology such as big data, cloud computing, Internet net of Things, face recognition and blockchain to empower the traditional volunteer service industry. The "China Volunteer Service Network" fully links and integrates parties and government, groups, universities, enterprises, civil organisations and other social resources to build a "smart public welfare" ecosystem with online interconnection and offline interaction, continuously improving the efficiency of volunteer services and maximising the benefits of volunteerism. This will help maximise the efficiency of volunteering and the benefits of volunteering. The volunteering platform collects, collates and analyses big data and regularly releases extensive data reports on volunteering to guide its work [4]. At the same time, its branch platforms are combined with local party committees and governments to jointly build the City Brain volunteer service system, with multiple terminals connecting information from various parties, such as governments, volunteers and volunteer service organisations, to achieve platform interconnection. The volunteer service information is integrated into the city brain, providing volunteer service ample data support for police, traffic, urban management, cultural tourism, health and other departments. The platform brings together social resources from all sides, collects timely and practical information from different volunteering subjects, efficiently integrates the needs of various social organisations, and provides more specialised and accurate volunteering training and project matching [5]. The platform allows volunteers to check the status of their volunteering activities at any time. At the same time, voluntary organisations can complete the dispatch and management of their volunteering services at any time, thus significantly improving the timeliness and quality of volunteering services. Integrating with the government, senior citizens' enterprises, property companies and charitable organisations, the platform encourages volunteers to provide senior citizens' benefits and encourages volunteers to store their time in exchange for services when they grow old, in line with the development trend of "Internet + Senior Citizens", and serves the cause of socialised mutual aid for senior citizens.

### **3. Digital empowerment to advance the institutionalisation of volunteering**

Digital technology applied to volunteering can significantly improve the effectiveness of the service, and its advantages are reflected in three aspects. Firstly, it can help to personalise and make volunteer services more accurate. With the help of digital technology, grassroots organisations can establish a database of residents' information needs, whereby they can effectively identify the specific needs of each community resident and the key targets that need help in the community, which is conducive to volunteers providing personalised volunteering services to community residents. In addition, grassroots organisations can transmit information on residents' service needs to relevant digital service tools, facilitating the precise matching of volunteer resources to individual communities. These volunteer service systems can effectively solve the problem of volunteer service failure and thus enhance the efficiency of using volunteer service resources. Secondly, it helps to standardise volunteer services. Grassroots organisations can use digital technology to build an interactive platform for volunteer service information. This information interaction platform enables grassroots volunteers to accurately access various volunteer service needs and choose suitable ones by combining their strengths and advantages. At the same time, this information platform can also provide free online training opportunities for volunteers, helping them to deepen their understanding of various volunteering activities, and volunteers registered on this information platform can also share their experiences and practices. The volunteer service information interactive platform is not only conducive to regulating the service behaviour of young volunteers and improving the professionalism of volunteers, but also to enhancing the quality of grassroots volunteer services. Thirdly, it helps to improve the autonomy of volunteers. The traditional registration process for volunteering activities is complicated, which is not conducive to volunteers' timely access to relevant information and does not meet the needs of contemporary young groups. The combination of digital technology and volunteering tools can help volunteers to check out various local volunteering activities at any time and achieve "one-click registration". Therefore, this digital volunteering tool can attract more people and allow them to participate in grassroots volunteering.

### **4. Exploring the construction of a digitally empowered volunteering system**

The main force of civilisational practice in the new era is volunteers, and the primary mode of activity is volunteerism. Constructing a digitally empowered volunteer service system can be explored from four dimensions.

#### ***4.1 Recruiting and registration***

According to the construction needs of the new era civilisation practice centre, "China Volunteer Service Network" has completed the "new era civilisation practice centre cloud platform", which consists of a PC terminal, mobile terminal, offline display terminal and management terminal to form "one cloud and four terminals". It is an ecosystem that uses the Internet and big data to connect the supply and demand sides of civilisation practice services and realise informationization, intelligence and characteristic management. In response to the demand for volunteer services in significant events, the system can provide a large competition service management system project, using information technology to complete online volunteer recruitment, auditing, interviewing, hiring, training, job assignment, service records, volunteer incentives, volunteer service summary and other integrated management, realising online volunteer registration, online auditing, online training, online management and other multi-functional Applications.

#### ***4.2 Training management***

Relying on digital technology, the Information Section integrates volunteer talent resources with the help of the Internet. Through managing the whole set of processes, such as recruitment, selection, training, assessment and protection of rights and interests of talent resources, professional skills training is conducted by opening online training classes, live video lectures and other cloud-based methods. Various online courses can be set up again, including modules on team building, theory learning, service skills and emergency drills. In addition, through the platform's information communication and feedback function, timely advisory services are provided to volunteers to help solve problems promptly. Outstanding volunteers can also share their insights and reflections on the platform and discuss the value of volunteering, etc. The information platform will become a

communication forum for volunteering ideology, morality, technology, policy and culture.

#### ***4.3 Carrying out the activities***

Based on popularising the six-step working method for community volunteering, volunteer service organisations at all levels are guided to establish closed-loop project management and improve the process of "setting up a project - recruiting volunteers - implementing the project - evaluating the effect - optimising the project". According to the actual offline operation of the order distribution service, upgrade the functions of the "Volunteer Zhengzhou" website and management service platform and rely on the "My Help" section to standardise the "order from the public - order from the platform - order received by volunteers - order evaluated by the public -The workflow of "Volunteers receive orders - the public assesses the orders", realising that the public logs on to the platform or small program to order, and the administrators of the headquarter and detachment will dispatch orders according to the location of the public's requests for help and the publicised items announced by the network sites. After receiving the orders, the network sites will dock with the people who have posted their requests for help and organise professional volunteer teams to help them according to their needs. After the people have been helped, the non-registered volunteers will register and re-login to "Volunteer Zhengzhou" for feedback. This has achieved the goal of precisely serving the daily needs of the masses, guiding volunteers and voluntary service organisations to carry out one-to-one and multi-to-one civilisation practice voluntary services, and meeting the personalised and differentiated needs of the groups.

#### ***4.4 Incentives to give back***

In terms of protection measures, with the help of the Internet and through commercial cooperation, local volunteer service platforms purchase insurance for volunteers, strive to solve the difficulties they encounter in their work and life, and effectively protect the interests of volunteers while giving volunteers an electronic business card of their own, retaining volunteer information and volunteer experience in the volunteer database permanently, and effectively solving the problem of volunteer certificates being invalid across regions. Regarding incentive measures, digital technology records volunteer service hours and points and establishes an hourly certification mechanism. In the blockchain data platform for volunteer services, service hours are instantly recorded and exchanged for public welfare points, and volunteers can exchange their points for several preferential treatment benefits.

### **5. Digital Empowerment Strategies for Promoting Quality Volunteerism**

#### ***5.1 Using digital tools to record information about volunteering***

For example, each volunteer's number and length of service can be accurately recorded. The person in charge can take attendance on the digital volunteering tool based on the actual attendance of volunteers, and volunteers with unexplained absences will have their attendance points deducted from the digital tool. In addition, a service quality rating system and a reward and punishment mechanism can also be set up on the digital tool. At the end of the volunteering activities, the people served can score and evaluate the volunteers in the system [6]. Eventually, the digital tool can automatically calculate each volunteer's total service points based on the volunteer's attendance scores, service hours and evaluation scores and then match each volunteer with the corresponding rewards and penalties based on the total points. Businesses can also participate in volunteer activities by providing gift exchange services on the platform. For example, volunteers can exchange their service points for the equivalent value of goods and services in the digital volunteering tool, and the merchants will then deliver the goods according to the information they provide. The platform can also automatically count volunteers' absence from service activities, and when a certain number of times are reached, the system can add the volunteer to the volunteer service blacklist, which is also conducive to regulating the behaviour of young volunteers in this way

#### ***5.2 Using digital tools to match supply and demand with precision***

We can use digital volunteering tools to comprehensively display information on the content, location and time of volunteering services and the remaining places for volunteers to sign up. Volunteers can choose the related volunteering activities by combining their strengths and schedule, effectively matching the supply and demand of volunteering services. Using digital volunteering tools

to improve the automatic registration system for volunteers can effectively save the time and energy of volunteer service organisers and prevent volunteer service registration from exceeding demand [7]. In addition, through the activity information released by the digital tool, volunteers can know which other communities demand volunteering services so that they can sign up precisely. At the same time, we can also use digital tools to serve young volunteers. We can use digital volunteering tools to set up "Volunteer Exchange", "Forum on Volunteering Activities", and "Popularisation of Volunteering Activities" to provide free online training services for volunteers—Training services. For example, webinars on various volunteering topics such as healthy diet, epidemic prevention, technical guidance, medical care, legal aid and psychological counselling can be conducted so that volunteers can receive training online. Seminars on various topics are beneficial for volunteers to learn and consolidate some of the requirements of traditional volunteering and also help them master the knowledge and skills related to new types of volunteering, thus enhancing the professionalism of young volunteers.

### **5.3 Using digital tools to establish risk alert and prevention mechanisms**

For example, a digital tool can push a weather forecast SMS to volunteers the day before they engage in volunteering. Grassroots governance is a basic constituent unit of national governance, of which volunteerism is an important initiative to enhance the effectiveness of grassroots governance [8]. In the digital context, combining modern technological tools such as big data, blockchain and artificial intelligence with volunteering can fully stimulate volunteers' initiative to participate in volunteering activities, promote volunteering towards personalisation, standardisation and precision, bring great convenience to volunteers and organisers of volunteering activities, as well as better services to those in need of volunteering services, and effectively improve grassroots governance.

Therefore, from the perspective of the practical needs of volunteerism and grassroots social governance, digital empowerment has a broad application. On the one hand, the digital license can realise the accurate excavation and matching of volunteer services and grassroots social governance needs; on the other hand, the digital support can discover the deep integration and interactive application of new-generation information technology, serving the whole process of link optimisation, process reengineering and target management, promoting the deep integration and implementation of digitalisation from cutting-edge technology to application scenarios, thus enhancing the high-quality development of volunteer services.

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