Experience Sharing on the Development and Maintenance of Volunteer Backbones in Social Organizations

Na'mei Guan*

Guangzhou Yuexiu District Concerned Social Work Service Center, Guangzhou 510000, Guangdong Province, China

*Author to whom correspondence should be addressed.

Abstract: This article explores the experiences and methods of social organizations in the development and maintenance of volunteer backbones. Volunteer backbones play an important role in social organizations. They not only undertake organizational and leadership roles but also can effectively promote the smooth implementation of volunteer service activities. The article expands from the dimensions of the definition, rights and obligations, recruitment and selection, job content, training and incentives of volunteer backbones, combined with the practical cases of the Guangzhou Yuexiu District Concerned Social Work Service Center and other affiliate units, and proposes specific measures such as establishing good communication channels, providing support and resources, respecting and recognizing the contributions of backbones, establishing incentive mechanisms, and strengthening team building, in order to effectively maintain volunteer backbones, stimulate their enthusiasm for participation and service awareness, thereby providing a strong guarantee for the long-term development of social organizations and the smooth progress of volunteer service activities.

Keywords: Social organization; Volunteer backbone; Development; Maintenance; Incentive; Training

1. Introduction

As one of the important and indispensable resources of social organizations, volunteers can be seen everywhere in various activities of different sizes. In the "army" of volunteers, some volunteers will be discovered and entrusted with important responsibilities and developed as the core backbone, playing an important role in large-scale volunteer service activities, public welfare construction activities, comprehensive competitions, and the in-depth cultivation of characteristic volunteer brand projects, to inject a steady stream of fresh blood for matching volunteer services [1–5].

In social organizations, the maintenance of the backbone of volunteers is crucial to the long-term development of the organization and the smooth progress of volunteer service activities.

The importance of a volunteer backbone to social organizations is self-evident. What kind of volunteers can be called the backbone, how to better develop and cultivate volunteers as the backbone, how to maintain volunteers after they become the backbone, etc. The author believes that many social organizations have their own standards, and different organizations will have different ways to develop and maintain a volunteer backbone. In order to ensure that the organization's integration of multi-party resources help the organization to develop its core business and deepen professional direction. In the following, the author will start from the practice of his own institution and brother units, and share the experience and knowledge of social organizations in the development and maintenance of a volunteer backbone, and hopes to discuss and exchange with friends in the same profession to accumulate experience. In order to share more systematically with the "Newbie", the author will focus on the definition of volunteer backbone, volunteer backbone rights and obligations, volunteer backbone recruitment, selection and appointment, volunteer backbone work content, volunteer backbone training, and incentives.

2. Definition of volunteer backbone

It usually refers to volunteers who take on organizational and leadership roles in the volunteering process [6–10]. They not only have the ability and experience to organize and coordinate volunteers, but also enjoy high authority among volunteers and can assist volunteer organizations and managers to carry out their work effectively. Backbone volunteers are usually responsible for conveying the notice of the volunteer management organization to the volunteers and providing timely feedback on the demands and situations of the volunteers to the volunteer management staff to ensure the smooth progress of volunteer services.

According to the actual situation of several social organizations known to the author, backbone volunteers refer to the social organizations who arrange registration, interview, selection, employment and training, and are qualified, and can undertake various activities of social organizations and carry out various management planning and team work, and can assume the role of organization and leadership in the process of volunteer service. For example: professional volunteers (such as shooting and editing, teaching literature and art, etc.); Volunteers with outstanding ability to lead activities; Volunteers with good service consciousness and service attitude; Brand projects and professional volunteers, etc.

Volunteers are free-flowing, and the backbone of volunteers is no exception. Some volunteers (backbone) will "wear multiple roles" and actively shuttle between the activities of different organizations and teams. As for the mobile volunteers, in addition to actively exploring and maintaining, they can also be consciously and systematically cultivated in advance. Taking the affiliate units of the author's work, Guangzhou Yuexiu District Youth Transformers Social Development Center, Haizhu District Youth Volunteer Association and Huangpu District Youth Volunteer Association as examples, they have a clear goal in volunteer backbone cultivation, that is, to build innovative, interesting, activity-driven volunteer core backbone team and create social value, and cultivate Guangzhou volunteer backbone reserve talents. In order to improve the overall level of volunteer service in Guangzhou, write the story of Lei Feng in the new era with practical actions. How do they do it?

2.1. Establish a good communication channel

Keep close communication with the backbone of volunteers, understand their needs and expectations, and timely transfer the latest information and activity arrangement of the organization to ensure the smooth flow of information from both sides.

2.2. Provide necessary support and resources

Provide necessary training, guidance and resources for the volunteer backbone to help them better perform their duties. At the same time, pay attention to the difficulties and problems they encounter in the process of volunteer service, and provide timely help and support.

2.3. Respect and recognize the contribution of the volunteer backbone

The hard work and contribution of the volunteer backbone should be fully respected and recognized, which can be commended by means of commendation, awards, and issuance of certificates [11–15].

2.4. Establish an incentive mechanism

Formulate a reasonable incentive mechanism to encourage the volunteer backbone to actively participate in volunteer service activities. Points are accumulated according to the number of participation, contribution degree, and other factors of the volunteer backbone, and the points can be used to exchange some practical gifts or services.

2.5. Strengthen team building and cultural construction

Through organizing team building activities and cultural salons, strengthen the communication and cooperation between the backbone of volunteers, and enhance the cohesion and centripetal force of the team. At the same time, strengthen the construction of organizational culture, create a positive, united and friendly organizational atmosphere, so that the volunteer backbone can feel the warmth and care of the organization.

2.6. Pay attention to the personal growth of the volunteer backbone

Pay attention to the personal growth and development of the volunteer backbone, and provide them with learning and development opportunities. Invite them to participate in some professional training, seminars, and other activities to help them improve their professional quality and comprehensive abilities.

The implementation of the above measures can effectively maintain the backbone of volunteers, stimulate their enthusiasm for participation and service awareness, and provide a strong guarantee for the long-term development of the organization and the smooth progress of volunteer service activities.

3. Rights and obligations of the volunteer backbone

3.1. Rights

(1) Priority for participation in voluntary service activities; (2) Give priority to participating in the evaluation activities of the organization; (3) Participate in planning related projects and activities of the organization; (4) Obtain the corresponding i volunteer service hours; (5) Carry out backbone group building activities from time to time; (6) Access to high-value professional training and foreign exchange opportunities; (7) Ask organizations to help solve practical difficulties and problems encountered in volunteering activities; (8) Make criticisms, suggestions, and opinions on the organization of the organization and carry out supervision obligations.

3.2. Obligation

(1) Adhere to the leadership of the party, abide by the laws and regulations of the state, and abide by the charter of the league and the regulations on volunteer service; (2) Recognize the relevant system and value concept of the organization, and actively promote the volunteer spirit; (3) Actively participate in relevant volunteer service

activities arranged by institutions and departments; (4) Participate in the training services carried out by the institutions; (5) do not harm the legitimate rights and interests of the service target; (6) Not engage in profit-making or activities contrary to social morality as the backbone of the organization or as volunteers; (7) Actively maintain the reputation and image of the organization and young volunteers.

4. Recruitment, selection, and appointment of backbone volunteers

4.1. Source of backbone volunteers

Mainly recruited in the Guangzhou area, for university students and social personnel who actively participate in institutional volunteer services.

4.2. Recruitment requirements

18–45 years old, have a sense of belonging to a team, leadership skills, organizational planning experience, and flexible time are preferred.

4.3. Recruitment process

Annual regular recruitment, applicants through the official channels of the organization to register, after the preliminary screening, eligible applicants participate in the organization's backbone interview. After the interview is passed, they will register information (including the resources they hope to obtain and can provide) and sign the volunteer service agreement, and carry out a three-month probation period, and become the official backbone of the center after passing the probation period. The institution will hold an appointment ceremony for those who pass the probation period.

4.4. Selection elements

(1) Identify with the values and cultural concepts of the institution, and abide by the policies and rules of the institution; (2) Have registered an i-volunteer account; (3) Can continue to participate in the organization-related volunteer service work for more than 1 year; (4) Good at communication, good organizational management, and adaptability; (5) Love public volunteer service, agree with dedication, fraternity, mutual help, progressive volunteer spirit, good teamwork; (6) Experience in the management of volunteer service projects is preferred; (7) Other requirements according to different projects or functional groups; (8) The following conditions are preferred: Volunteers who often actively participate in the planning, organization, and specific implementation of departmental activities, volunteers who have outstanding performance in volunteer service activities, and who have professional talent are preferred.

4.5. Recruitment

The organization will hold an appointment ceremony for the successful recruits. The term of office shall be one year. After the completion of one year, they may choose to stay on if they pass the assessment. At the general meeting, the appointment certificate is issued to the new backbone, the work summary and work handover of the previous backbone, and the new backbone delivers a speech and work expectations.

4.6. Assessment: Assessment is carried out once a year

(1) Assessment methods include team mutual evaluation, youth Tronics evaluation, etc.; (2) Develop the backbone

growth record form. Take the responsible person of each group to evaluate, the backbone personal self-evaluation to fill in the backbone growth record form; (3) For those who fail to pass one assessment, the head of each group will convene an internal meeting to decide whether to stay or go, and report to the organization for the record; (4) Assessment content: responsibility, enthusiasm, teamwork and collective honor spirit in daily work; Attendance at various meetings and activities; Whether there is any violation of the relevant system of the institution, the results of the two assessments shall be used as the basis for the annual evaluation.

5. Work content of the volunteer backbone

(1) Participate in the operation of volunteer service projects, including the on-site implementation of volunteer service activities, volunteer recruitment, scheduling, training, maintenance, and other service contents, and regularly communicate with volunteers in the group to understand their work and life conditions, relieve their emotions, and solve difficulties. (2) Regularly collect feedback from volunteers and constantly improve the normal operation of volunteer service projects: Regularly understand the overall situation of volunteer work, including difficulties encountered and matters needing coordination and solution, and edit and submit brief information about work to the member management department. (3) Planning, organizing, publicity, and promotion of project theme activities; (4) Establish project community contact: Establish WeChat groups for each group, and carry out daily contact and management through social tools. (5) Conducted various volunteer service activities, training for new volunteers; (6) Emergency feedback: The backbone volunteers contact the emergency outside the scope of their ability, and should be the first to report to the member management department, the member management department to solve it, or, according to the principle of territorial management, contact the relevant district government for a coordinated solution.

6. Volunteer backbone training

Professional training. Relevant experts, scholars and outstanding volunteers will be invited to give special reports and lectures and carry out special training.

Training camps for elites. According to the needs of different scenarios (online and offline), relevant ability training will be carried out in the form of training camps.

(1) Backbone leading team training: To train the backbone on the ability required for offline leading team, improve skills, and cultivate team spirit (Such as the leader's personal basic quality training, organization, coordination, and communication ability, on-site emergency response ability training. After each activity, organize volunteers to review together, summarize and share experience, exchange ideas, and timely summarize and review the problems, experiences, and puzzles of volunteers). (2) Online recruitment management training: Mainly for online work, including but not limited to online recruitment management training for the backbone volunteers. (3) Experiential training. On the basis of sufficient theoretical knowledge training, strengthen the backbone's further understanding of volunteer service work through games and interactive methods. (4) Carry out backbone group building training to enhance the cohesion of the volunteer backbone. (5) Special training for volunteer service projects (For the backbone of service project operation, such as department-related project introduction, department management mode, etc.). (6) Volunteer service publicity and training. (7) General training: relevant knowledge of volunteers, such as the overall introduction of social organizations (concepts, values, project content, etc.); The ability to use relevant platform systems (i-volunteer, Mai Ke form, Jin data, questionnaire star, SMS

platform, graphite document, etc.). (8) Organize volunteers to go out for communication and learning, and promote self-improvement.

7. Encourage the backbone of volunteers

(1) Certificates and cultural products will be given to the outstanding cadres. (2) Annual selection of the annual "Top Ten backbone", annual outstanding backbone, etc., and awarding corresponding honorary titles and commendations. (3) The volunteer backbone with excellent performance may be selected to participate in the selection of outstanding volunteers at or above the district level. (4) Provide a formal volunteer service certificate or social practice certificate; (5) Rely on all kinds of media to vigorously publicize the outstanding backbone of volunteer service work; (6) Outstanding volunteer backbone has the willingness to be given priority to become interns and full-time staff; (7) According to the actual situation of the project, the volunteer backbone will be subsidized according to the actual situation of the project during the participation of volunteers. (8) For the backbone who violates the relevant regulations of the organization, the organization will take reminding, education, and other measures according to the circumstances, and in serious cases, remove the post and cancel the recruitment qualification of the volunteer service activities in the organization.

8. Summary of "thoughtful" tips

To maintain good relationships with volunteer backbones, in addition to the mutual guarantee contents mentioned above, for social organizations, it is more important to be "thoughtful."

(1) There should be a complete backbone management system, and the organization's staff needs to agree with this process, have an awareness of backbone management, and implement it according to the system. (2) It is necessary to meet and contact with the backbones more often to enhance the relationship (very important), which can be in the form of small meetings, mutual assistance, simple training, sharing sessions (or organizing theme speech sharing sessions), outdoor tea parties or salons, etc. (3) Strive for more participation platforms and performance opportunities for the backbones, welfare subsidies, other activity participation opportunities, recommendation and evaluation for excellence, and give timely praise, feedback, and summary (very important for growth). (4) Interview the stories of the backbones and publish tweets. (5) Select outstanding backbones of the quarter and the year. (6) Consider more from the perspective of the backbones about what they need to promote growth. (7) Have a dedicated person manage and send birthday blessings, custom cards, graduation gifts, etc. (8) Recommend them to participate in the training of the Youth League School and various organizations more often, link some self-improvement training courses for them, and link resources. (9) Take good-looking working scene photos for the backbones to facilitate their sharing externally. (10) Interact more in moments and communities. (11) Actively invite them to participate in activities more often, ask questions to the backbone, and respect their small suggestions in daily life. Adopt and affirm the practices of the backbone as much as possible for reasonable suggestions. (12) Match each backbone with exclusive services. Do not disturb those who are not the backbone for exclusive services, unless the backbone mentions it voluntarily, so that the backbone can focus. (13) Send surprises to the backbones irregularly, such as sending a cultural and creative product and a thank-you letter to their school, ordering refreshing drinks for the backbone team in hot weather, chatting with the backbones from time to time, exerting the gossip spirit of "8G" internet surfing, and shortening the distance with the backbones.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

[1] Xin YY, 2025, Innovative Exploration of Service Mode of Social Work Station under the Background of "Five Social Linkages" — Taking C Social Work Station in T City as an Example. Advances in Social Sciences, 14(1): 227–236. https://doi.org/10.12677/ass.2025.141031

[2] Yan XY, 2025, Practical Research on Improving Grassroots Governance Capacity Based on "Five Social Linkages" in Huai'an City. Public Relations World, 2025(6): 130–132.

[3] China Communist Youth League, 2025, Starting from Care and Concern, Striving for Quality and Efficiency, Escort the Growth of Teenagers. China Communist Youth League, 2025(5).

[4] Gao Y, 2024, Research on Cooperative Production of Social Organization Intervention in Cultivating Community Volunteer Service. Frontiers of Social Sciences, 13(1): 140–148.

[5] Zhang LW, 2024, Stimulating the Vitality of Social Organizations and Boosting Effective Rural Governance. Village Committee Director, 2024(7): 215–217.

[6] Huang SY, 2024, Research on "Five Social Linkages" Community Governance in District X of Kunming City, thesis, Yunnan Normal University.

[7] Li X, Huo YR, Song KY, et al., 2024, Exploration of the Development Path of Elderly Sports from the Perspective of Active Aging — Based on the PEST Model. The Second Shaanxi Provincial Sports Science Conference.

[8] Xin YY, 2025, Innovative Exploration of Service Mode of Social Work Station under the Background of "Five Social Linkages" — Taking C Social Work Station in T City as an Example. Advances in Social Sciences, 14(1): 227–236. https://doi.org/10.12677/ass.2025.141031

[9] Wang M, Liu TT, 2024, Construction of the Community of Grassroots Social Governance from the Perspective of Actor Network — Taking H Community in Chengyang District, Qingdao City as an Example. Journal of the Party School of CPC Qingdao Municipal Committee and Qingdao Administration College, 2024(4): 94–99.

[10] Yin ZG, 2010, Cultivation of Social Organizations and Construction of the Institutional Framework for Social Construction — Based on the Investigation of Social Organizations in Xicheng District, Beijing. Journal of Beijing University of Technology: Social Sciences Edition, 2010(5): 11. https://doi.org/CNKI:SUN:BGYS.0.2010-05-003

[11] Liu JY, Liu JX, 2024, Exploring the "Social Worker +" Model to Promote Innovation in Grassroots Governance. Township Forum, 2024(8): 30.

[12] Jiang ZH, 2024, Research on the Governance Practice of "Five-Society Linkage" in L Community of Jingzhou City, thesis, Yangtze University.

[13] Hong RT, Wang LL, Wang XY, 2024, Gathering Multiple Forces to Boost the Success of the Health Fujian Society Consortium. Society, 2024(10).

[14] Cui GZ, 2024, Research on the Construction of Street Social Work Stations Based on the Five-Society Linkage Model, thesis, Heilongjiang University.

[15] Liu Y, 2024, Resource-Based Micro Hub: Community Funds in the "Five-Society Linkage". Journal of Shandong Academy of Governance, 2024(1): 84–91.