

A Study on the Supply-Demand Mismatch In Youth Volunteer Service

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Abstract: Supply-demand mismatch is one of the significant bottlenecks that restrict the high-quality development of youth volunteer services. The reason is that there is a structural mismatch between supply and demand, that is, between volunteer service supply and grassroots demands, resulting in volunteer service trapped in the low-efficiency state of "supply without demand" and "demand without supply." Drawing on demand-oriented theory, this paper builds a three-dimensional supply-demand match model of "needs identification-project design-resource allocation" and expounds on the connotation and expression forms of supply-demand mismatch in youth volunteer service. The results show that the supply-demand mismatch of youth volunteer service is mainly reflected in the contradiction between uniform service content and diverse needs, the conflict between short supply of service and long-term needs, and the gap between single service supply and bidirectional needs. The deep reason is the lack of needs identification, administrative operating logic of volunteer organizations, imperfect professional expertise, and distorted evaluation system. Therefore, this paper puts forward corresponding optimization paths: realize supply-demand matching through professional needs identification, improve service supply quality through project-based operation, and build a long-term service supply mechanism through institutional guarantees, to enable the development of youth volunteer service to shift from "extensive supply" to "targeted service."

Keywords: Youth Volunteer Service; Supply-Demand Mismatch; Demand Orientation; Targeted Supply

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

Volunteer service is a significant emblem of modern social civilization. "Improving the system and working mechanism of volunteer service" was clearly put forward in the report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, and volunteer service was included in the strategic layout of national governance modernization. In recent years, volunteer service among Chinese youth has continued to flourish. By the end of 2023, there were 232 million registered youth volunteers across the country, and the number of volunteer service projects exceeded 11.27 million. Youths have participated in rural revitalization, community governance, major event service, emergency rescue and many other aspects, and have become a major contributor to promoting harmonious social development.

However, with the explosive growth of volunteers, another problem that cannot be ignored, even more prominent is: many volunteer services fall into the trap of "ritualized participation." Volunteers rush into communities and nursing homes full of passion, but the services performed by volunteers are often not necessarily needed by the service recipients. On the one hand, supply-side services are bloated and even duplicated; on the other hand, there are still many supply-side services that are unable to meet the needs of the people. Looking back at the past development of volunteer service in China, we can see that it has progressed from "whether it exists" to "whether it is enough" to "whether it is good." In the primary stage of volunteer service development, the prominent contradiction was that volunteers are not enough and volunteering is not popularized. During the stage of rapid development of volunteer service, the key contradiction evolves into needing more projects and types of service. Now that the number of registered volunteers has surpassed 200 million, the focus of the contradiction should evolve from "whether it is enough" to "whether it is good" - whether volunteer services can meet the needs of the served populations and

whether they have delivered tangible social value. The imbalance of supply and demand is exactly the focus of the bottleneck that has appeared in this stage.

1.2 Research Questions

"Supply-demand mismatch means that there is a structural inconsistency between volunteers' service supply and grassroots residents' true needs in terms of service content, form, time, and continuity. There are four levels to understanding supply-demand mismatch. Service content mismatch is when what is supplied does not match what recipients need. Time mismatch is when the timing of supply does not match the rhythms of service recipients' daily life. Mode mismatch is when methods of service supply are too single-way and formalistic. Continuity mismatch is when supply is short-term but recipients need long-term and stable support.

The paper mainly discusses three questions: What does the supply-demand mismatch in youth volunteer service look like? What are its root causes? How can we accurately connect supply and demand through institutional building and professional assistance?

1.3 Research Significance and Literature Review

At the theoretical level, existing studies have mostly examined participation motivation, capacity improvement, and related issues from the perspective of volunteers, while paying less attention to service effectiveness from the perspective of "supply-demand relations." Dong Kai found that not understanding the needs of service recipients before service, arbitrary project design, and monotonous and repetitive service content are important causes of insufficient effectiveness, and proposed a linked service system of "school + social work + volunteers" 4. Han Lu pointed out that youth volunteer service faces problems such as fragmented organizational management and structural imbalance in resource supply¹. Zhang Shiyi, through practical research, found that insufficient volunteer capacity prevents service supply from effectively connecting with needs⁵. From the perspective of community self-organization, Yang Xueran proposed empowerment strategies at the individual, organizational, and community levels⁶. Tan Jianguang systematically reviewed the

development process of volunteer service in China and argued that the key to the socialization of volunteer service lies in building a collaborative pattern³. Chen Shuqiang emphasized that professionalization is an important support for improving service effectiveness². These studies provide important references for this paper, but specialized and systematic research on the issue of "supply-demand mismatch" remains relatively limited. At the practical level, resolving supply-demand mismatch is directly related to improving the social benefits of volunteer service and realizing the goal of high-quality development.

1.4 Research Logic and Methods

The structure of this paper is that of "problem presentation-causal analysis-countermeasure construction." Based on literature review and conceptual clarification, we build a three-dimensional analytical framework of supply-demand mismatch. Through comprehensive application of multiple methods such as literature review, field observation, and in-depth interviews, this paper analyzes the manifestations and deep causes of supply-demand mismatch and finally puts forward ideas for achieving targeted supply. Methodologically, the paper mainly uses qualitative analysis and highlights the mining and interpretation of the deeper logic behind issues. The data used in this paper come from three aspects: literature review of existing research conclusions and policy documents; the author's field observations and accumulation in various volunteer service programs; in-depth interviews with some volunteers, volunteer service organization leaders, etc.

2. Conceptual Definition and Analytical Framework

2.1 Definition of Core Concepts

Youth volunteer service is defined as the service that young people aged between 14 and 35 provide to others, the community, or society voluntarily, without pay, and for the purpose of public welfare. Distinct from other types of volunteer service, youth volunteer service is marked by younger ages of volunteers, concentrated efforts in organization and mobilization, varied areas of service, and dual objectives working in tandem. Youth volunteer service values not only the virtue of serving

others but also takes on the role of educating youth.

Supply-demand mismatch is an economic term that describes the divergence between what suppliers are providing and what demanders truly need. When applied to volunteer service, supply-demand mismatch takes on a unique meaning: because volunteer service aims to fulfill public welfare needs and lacks a price-based adjustment system, regulation of supply and demand is based more on organizational ability and structure. Moreover, needs in the field of volunteer service are multi-faceted and include not only stated needs that service users explicitly ask for but also unstated needs that they may not know they have, and lastly, public needs that must be satisfied for the community to thrive.

Demand orientation is a service concept that takes demand as both the starting point and the endpoint. Volunteer service organizations shall conduct scientific needs assessment before service implementation, dynamically adjust service plans according to the needs changes in the process of implementation, and realize effect evaluation after completion according to the degree of meeting needs. Demand orientation is thinking about and improving the traditional "supply-oriented" logic of "whatever the organization has in resources and volunteers have in ability determines what service should be provided." Once it deviates into that kind of logic, supply and demand are prone to fall out of sync, making "what we can do" take the place of "what they need".

2.2 Theoretical Foundations

Maslow's hierarchy of human needs (from low to high) are physiological needs, safety needs, belonging and love needs, esteem needs and self-actualization needs. The implication for volunteer service is that recipients' needs also fall into categories: survival needs, developmental needs, and value needs. There are gaps between different groups' level of needs and structure of needs. Effective volunteer service should be able to discern needs at different levels and respond appropriately. Bradshaw further classified needs into four types: normative need, felt need, expressed need, and comparative need. This serves as a reminder that the needs of service recipients that are vocalized represent only a portion of their needs. Truly effective needs should integrate multiple

methods of identification.

From the viewpoint of service management theory, Parasuraman and his colleagues developed a service quality model named SERVQUAL that assesses service quality from five dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Of these five dimensions, "empathy," defined as individualized care provided to service recipients stands out as applicable to supply-demand matching. On the other hand, the needs assessment theory of social work integrates core concepts such as "person-in-environment," the strengths perspective, and participatory assessment with requirements that needs of service recipients must be measured within their web of social relationships. The former theories will serve as multidimensional analysis tools in this study.

2.3 Analytical Framework

Based on the above theories, this paper constructs a three-dimensional analytical framework of "needs identification, project design-resource allocation."

Needs identification is the first rational step in supply-demand matching. It focuses on whether service organizations know the real needs of service recipients, how they know them and how well they know them. Needs identification should have three characteristics: scientificity refers to the use of professional methods to obtain and analyze information; comprehensiveness refers to paying attention to both apparent and deep-level needs; and dynamism refers to keeping information up to date with changes in circumstances.

Project design refers to converting needs into specific service plans. It should adhere to the principle of "establishing projects according to needs" instead of "establishing projects according to resources" or "establishing projects according to convenience". Service goals should be determined according to needs, service content should point to needs, and service mode and frequency should be compatible with the service recipients' actual situation. The key is to change the starting point of decision-making: our starting point cannot be "what we can provide", but "what problems need to be solved." Resource allocation is the basis for serving plans into action. Appropriation of resources must adhere to the principle of "resources follow needs", instead of "needs follow resources".

Projects that are "easy to do" and "easy to demonstrate" are given priority for resources in reality, while real needs are difficult to get support from resources.

The three links are interrelated and successively connected. Need identification guides the direction of plan design; Plan design converts needs into actionable items; Resource allocation is the premise for serving actionable items. An issue in one link may lead to supply-demand mismatch in the end. If the three links can each fulfill their respective roles and coordinate with each other, we can build a benign cycle of "correct needs identification-rational plan design-scientific resource allocation"..

3. Manifestations of Supply-Demand Mismatch in Youth Volunteer Service

3.1 the Contradiction between Homogenized Service Content and Diversified Needs

3.1.1. The "clustering" phenomenon on the supply side

At present, the content of youth volunteer service is relatively concentrated and tends toward homogeneity. As for elderly services, trimming nails, combing hair, and doing performances in nursing homes have become the "three regular services". Especially around the Double Ninth Festival, multiple groups of volunteers will come to the same nursing home. As a result, the older adults have to watch the performances repeatedly and receive condolence over and over again. These service items have low thresholds, easy operations, and are also photogenic and good for publicity. They have become our "habitual choice": as an organizer, we will obediently copy what we have done in the past and seldom ask ourselves if the activities are truly beneficial to the receivers.

However, there are also negative aspects of this "clustered" mode of service supply. First, it leads to a serious waste of volunteer service resources. Great human and material resources are poured into hyper-concentrated and highly similar activities, the marginal value of which approaches zero. Second, the repeated recipient tends to feel a "sense of burden." An older adult in a nursing home said: "It's good that the young people come. Singing and dancing are fine. But they come every weekend. Sometimes I just want to take it easy, and then another group shows up. Some popular songs are also difficult for us to understand. Sitting there forcing

ourselves to listen is a little tedious."

Temporal and spatial mismatch between supply and demand is most obvious during festivals. Masses of volunteer teams "cluster" around well-known nursing homes or welfare institutions before and after festivals like Learn from Lei Feng Day and the Double Ninth Festival. The volunteer service supply activity will reach a peak, creating an embarrassing "queuing to offer love" phenomenon. However, volunteer services are significantly neglected at ordinary times and the daily supply of volunteer service is far from enough. This "tidal" pattern of volunteer service supply not only leads to highly uneven supply, but it also greatly interferes with the daily lives of the recipients.

3.1.2 the Diversity of Demand-side Needs Is Ignored

Unlike the unique supply, the actual demand of service objects is still far from saturated. For example, the needs of older adults in communities with different ages, physical health and family situations are not completely the same. Young old and healthy and lively aging people need places to learn and venues to gather; they want someone to teach them how to use smartphones and coordinate chess, card and health lecture activities. Semi-disabled older adults need daily living assistance and rehabilitation training. They need someone to help them with shopping, accompany them to review their medications, and do some simple rehabilitation training. Elderly people with empty nests who live alone the most need care and chat. Sometimes they don't need volunteers to "do" things for them. If you can carefully listen to them, their loneliness can be greatly relieved.

Left-behind children also have differentiated needs. Some children need academic tutoring as they are falling behind in school. Others suffer psychological damage due to parental absence and need emotional support. Others lead tedious lives after school and crave organized sports and art programs. Children's needs cannot be met if we simply provide "uniform" consolation visits and games for all. Moreover, the preferences of left-behind children of different ages and genders may vary greatly. Teenage left-behind children may not feel as willing to join in "organized" group games. They may need an older "brother" or "sister" to talk to instead.

3.2 The Conflict between Short-Term Service

Supply and Continuing Needs

3.2.1 the Prevalence of "one-off" Services

One notable phenomenon in youth volunteer service is discontinuity. Many projects have a "one-off" feel to them: participating organizations intensely devote time and effort at certain points in time, after which they pack up and leave. Volunteers and those they help have little opportunity to develop long-lasting and stable relationships. According to questionnaires, over half of volunteers served only once or twice at the project they were serving.

There are various causes behind this phenomenon. From the volunteer's point of view, college students move around a lot. Academic stress, turnover of student leaders, and graduation all lead to high turnover. From the organizer's point of view, volunteer service associations always "keep developing new sites to do service at", because they think that having many sites is fresher than returning to the same place to do service. A volunteer leader said, "We'll serve at one nursing home at most twice a semester. If we went more than twice it'd be boring wondering what to do there. There's no reason to go back again." Embedded in this mindset is the implicit philosophy that doing volunteer service is "finishing a job" rather than "meeting a need". From the school's management point of view, volunteer service has long been tied to overall quality assessment, awards, honors, and excellent units appraisals; students worry more about whether they hit a certain quota of "service hours" than about continuity of service.

3.2.2 Service Recipients' Expectations for Continuity

Short-term service can hardly bring about meaningful assistance, and may even create negative effects. An elderly man living alone told me, "A young lady college student talked with me twice. After that she never came back. I didn't want to bother her by asking. Perhaps she was busy with her schedule." His words carried a passive feeling of loss. For left-behind children, sporadic companionship can even bring about secondary injury: if your expectations are disappointed once, you'll learn not to expect anything in the future. For people with disabilities, patients with chronic illnesses, and others that need our help, their needs are generally long-term and consistent. While one instance of short-term service may take care of an immediate problem, its impact will be short-

lived if there are no follow-up or long-term mechanisms in place. For instance, there have been volunteer teams that conduct home accessibility renovations for families with disabilities. However, without regular check-ins and workers to fix things should they break, those damaged facilities may can not be repaired for long periods of time, creating new problems for those they're meant to be helping.

3.3 the Gap between One-Way Service Delivery and Interactive Needs

3.3.1 the Supply Logic of "you Accept Whatever I Provide"

One-way delivery pattern is still prevalent in many volunteer services today. The volunteer service agency/volunteers determine what to offer, how to offer and when to offer. The recipients of the service merely consume the services they receive. During the needs identification phase of many volunteer services, instead of doing direct needs assessment research on service recipients, many volunteers or agencies skip this step and substitute it by asking the nursing home/community directors, "What do you need us to do?" As a result, a phenomenon occurs that merits our attention: service recipients' "needs" of volunteer service are replaced with the volunteer services that "managers" of service recipients feel that they need. During the planning phase of service, volunteers meet and make decisions about what service to provide and how to provide them, and then carry out the service according to the plan with little change made from feedback given at the implementation site.

3.3.2 Service Recipients' Expectation to Be Respected and Involved

What service recipients want is material assistance accompanied by respect, understanding, and empowerment. "The volunteers are all very kind. But I feel like that I am just a 'target' that needs to be helped. They organize whatever they want and I follow their arrangement. No one has ever asked me if I want it this way... Some of the activities aren't things I want to do, but I feel too shy to refuse. I'm afraid that they will think I don't know how to receive charity." When volunteer service is long in a "top-down" attitude, objectively reinforces the recipients' recognition as "the disadvantaged", which is not conducive to enhancing their self-confidence and autonomy. Respectful, equal, interactive services are the ideal state: service

recipients can express their views and demands, participate in the design or adjustment of service plans, and even, where possible, transform from "service recipients" into "helpers". For example, those elderly who are in good physical condition can join in community patrols, the organization of cultural activities and other volunteer services, experience their own value and ability in serving others..

4. Deeper Causes of Supply-Demand Mismatch

4.1 Absence of Needs Assessment: Collective Unawareness of "Whom We Serve"

A major reason for the mismatch between supply and demand is the overall lack of needs assessment. Volunteer service projects often fail to undertake objective research into the actual needs of the people they hope to serve when they are designing their projects. Instead, many projects originate from "improvised" decisions by organizers or key members. They decide seniors need companionship, so they provide volunteer service at nursing homes. They decide kids need tutoring, so they provide teaching support. Projects designed around subjective judgments instead of objective research are bound to experience some level of disconnect between what they provide and what is actually needed.

Another reason is that in the culture of volunteer service at present, there is not yet such a "needs first" consciousness. Volunteers often understand the narrative of volunteer service as "what I have done" instead of "what the service recipients have benefited from." Volunteers praise each other's "dedication" and "contribution," but seldom discuss "effect" and "impact." A university student volunteer once told me: "When our association is looking for activities to do, we basically 'think them up.' We all sit together and think of what we can do, and then find a place that allows us to go and do it. About whether the older adults need it... well, it's not that we don't want to know. We just have never thought of asking that question. Frankly speaking, we have always felt that as long as we are doing something, it must be good." This kind of plain understanding that "as long as we do it, it is good" is extremely typical. It echoes another kind of thinking inertia: volunteers equate the moral goodwill of the behavior of service with the real realization of service effect. They omit

the intermediate link of supply-demand matching. In such a culture, the needs of service recipients are in a certain sense hyper-texted. They are seen as "receivers" of volunteer service through which volunteers satisfy their compassion, rather than as independent willing subjects with their own needs.

4.2 Administrative Organizational Logic: The "Task Orientation" of Project Design

Volunteer service at universities has a certain strong administrative nature. It is integrated into indicator systems such as comprehensive quality evaluation, awards and honors, recommendation for excellence and Party membership recommendation. It becomes students' "tasks" that must be completed and the "capital" that must be accumulated. Under such institutional design, volunteer service may no longer take the needs of the served as the main motivation, but turn into utilitarian considerations such as completing assessment indicators. Once "because someone needs it" is replaced by "because the school asks me to" in answering the question of "why volunteer service", the confusion between supply and demand is already rooted in ideas.

Administrative logic intervenes in projects at many levels. In terms of project design, organizers choose projects that are operable, that can produce visible results quickly, and that can be easily publicized. Putting on a performance at a nursing home can be done within a morning. There are many people involved. Photos turn out well. And it's easy to write an exciting news article about "Double Ninth Festival volunteer activity". Individually understanding the needs of older adults, creating differentiated design plans, and carrying out long-term follow-up evaluations require more time and do not produce immediate visible results. Thus, they are not sufficiently motivated by administrative assessment. In terms of service modes, administrative logic favors "big scenes" and "high frequency" over "fine service" and "true effect." In terms of evaluation mechanisms, evaluation tends to focus on "outputs": How many activities did you run? How many people participated? How many hours of service were provided? Whether the services were truly needed, and how much of an impact they made are often left out of evaluations because they are hard to measure. Such an evaluation structure inherently incentive's quantity and facade over

quality and efficacy.

4.3 Insufficient Professional Competence: Being "Willing but Unable" in Needs Identification

On the other hand, although some organizations understand the importance of needs assessment, they still encounter professional capacity bottleneck during their actual operation. Needs assessment is not casual work. It needs professional knowledge and systematic methods. How can we design survey questionnaires scientifically to ensure that every question is valid and reliable? How can we master the skills of in-depth interview to effectively guide the service recipients to open up and express their true needs? How should we analyze and process the collected qualitative and quantitative data? How can we differentiate and rank the needs of different levels and types? How can we excavate the "unspeakable needs" of service recipients—real needs that are unable to be articulated due to learned helplessness, communication barriers or cultural shame?

The above questions require a certain level of professional training to answer. However, most leaders and core members of youth volunteer service organizations do not major in related disciplines (like social work or sociology) in college and lack systematic investigation and research training. They are skilled in organizing activities, but at the professional link of needs identification, they are often "willing but unable" and can only stay at the level of intuitive understanding or subjective sentiment. If they do carry out questionnaire surveys, there may be issues with insufficient samples or unscientific questionnaire design, and even if the data has been collected, the analysis will be shallow. This is why needs assessment often struggles to fulfill its expected role.

4.4 Bias in Evaluation Mechanisms: Equating "Having Done It" with "Having Done It Well"

Evaluation mechanism defects are mainly manifested at three levels. The first is the problem of evaluation indicators that focus on "outputs." Output indicators report "what has been done," such as how many activities were carried out, how many people were involved, and how many hours of service were provided. Outcome indicators report "what has changed," such as whether service recipients were satisfied

with the service, whether their needs were met, and whether their lives have materially improved as a result of the service. Evaluation mechanisms currently focus on outputs rather than outcomes. When there is quantitative prosperity in public-welfare activities but a lack of substantive effects, evaluation mechanisms will not accurately find problems and guide rectification. The second is that evaluation subjects focus on service organizations or volunteers themselves rather than service recipients. Many organizations like to do a "summary" after an activity, but these summaries are more "reviews" of whether the process went smoothly and how volunteers performed instead of asking service recipients to evaluate. Service recipients' voices are missing from evaluations, severing the feedback loop on the effectiveness of services. The third is that in practice, the orientation of the evaluation is towards "reporting upward" and "external publicity." News reports and WeChat public accounts have become the main ways for outsiders to see if a project is "successful." To a certain extent, "being reported" is equivalent to "being well done", and service effects are replaced by publicity effects as the axis of evaluation, making it impossible to identify and correct supply-demand mismatch.

5. Targeted Supply: Multidimensional Pathways for Resolving Supply-Demand Mismatch

5.1 Establishing a Professionalized Needs Assessment Mechanism

5.1.1 Introducing Professional Methods for Needs Research

Refer to social work practice, when conducting needs assessment, volunteer service agencies should obtain and understand the information of service recipients' needs through questionnaire surveys, in-depth interviews, focus groups, participatory observation and other methods. Among them, questionnaire surveys are applicable to large samples and can map the quantitative needs of service recipients. In-depth interviews can help explore the needs and life experiences of individual service recipients in depth. Focus groups can collect the consensual needs of a certain group of service recipients and the differences in their opinions. Participatory observation can record the needs that occur in service in real time, which is beneficial to understand the needs of service recipients with

poor communication and expression abilities.

When conducting needs assessment, in addition to focusing on the problems that service recipients encounter, we should also pay attention to their strengths and resources, so as to prevent service recipients from being "problematic". That is, service recipients are defined as having disadvantages but no abilities. Moreover, we should also pay attention to the community environment, interpersonal relationships and cultural background in which service recipients exist. For example, when understanding the needs of older adults living alone, we should not only ask "what he or she lacks", but also ask about the support of family members, the relationship with neighbors, the community support resources, and his or her understanding and attitude toward older adults.

The experience of the volunteer service team of a certain university at the operational level can also serve as a reference. Before going to an old residential community to do a service, this volunteer service team did two weeks of needs research. They communicated with the residents' committee and understood the overall situation of the community and the older adults and special groups in it. Then they designed a questionnaire on needs including daily care, health management, social activity, psychological status and other dimensions and carried out door-to-door survey by volunteers. If the older adults were unable to complete the questionnaire, the volunteers would interview them face to face to ask questions and record answers on their behalf. After completing the research, the team discovered that the biggest need of older adults in this community was not "daily care" as they originally thought, but "digital skills training". A lot of older adults had the impression of being marginalized by digital society as they couldn't use smartphones to make medical appointments or scan codes to pay. Afterwards, this volunteer service team started to focus on providing service of smartphone training classes for older adults according to their research results, which were well received by the older adults. This experience fully illustrates that scientific needs research can help correct subjective perception and find the real "pain points" of needs.

5.1.2 Establishing Dynamically Updated Needs Files

Service needs are not static. The health status of recipients may worsen due to illness. Families

may have more or less mouths to feed due to childbirth by children or migration for work by other family members. Friend circles may become thinner due to the death of old friends. All these changes may cause follow-up changes in service needs. Volunteer service organizations should set up files on the needs of service recipients and monitor them regularly and update them in a timely manner to ensure that "targeted service" does not degenerate into "outdated service." Meanwhile, the files on the needs of service recipients also provide informational support for connecting various volunteer service projects. If one volunteer team hands over to another team to conduct services, the latter can understand the situation of the service recipients by reading the files, quickly realize service connection, and avoid rebuilding everything. Some places have started pilot work on digital platforms for volunteer service needs. Volunteers can inquire about the needs files of service recipients through mobile terminals, and the feedback and evaluation information after service can be updated in real time into the needs files to build a dynamic needs management system.

5.2 Advancing Project-Based Operation to Improve the Quality and Continuity of Service Supply

5.2.1 Shifting from "activity Thinking" to "project Thinking"

An "activity" is a one-time and short-cycle arrangement for action, and people care about "how well this activity was held." A "project" is an action system with goals, plans, systematic approach, and a long-term cycle. People care about "how well this problem was solved." Volunteer service organizations should have project awareness and condense scattered activities into demand-oriented and outcome-oriented service projects. When designing projects, we need to clearly answer four questions: Whom does this project serve? What problem does it solve? What services does it provide? What effects can it produce? Only when each of these questions has clear answers supported by evidence can a project start.

5.2.2 Establishing a Needs Justification Mechanism for Service Plans

Needs justification should take place prior to approval of a volunteer service project: Based on what needs assessment findings does the project fulfill? How does the project plan specifically

address these needs? By what criteria will the level of need fulfillment be evaluated? The reviewing committee may either be an internal board with specialization in project evaluation, or may contract outside specialists to sit on the committee. Ideally, the practical purpose of needs justification is two-fold. It allows outside parties to confirm the "need" for the project and hinders cookie-cutter projects completed just for the sake of completion from being approved.

5.2.3 Promoting Longer-term and More Stable Service Cycles

On an organizational level, annual planning should separate longer-term projects and shorter-term actions: guaranteed resources should be provided to the former, and only supplements should go towards the latter. On an institutional level, universities could create incentive programs that promote service of the long-term variety. Volunteers continually dedicating themselves to the same project for over a semester, for instance, could earn special recognition/extras when it comes to award/excellence appraisal.

5.3 Strengthening Professional Empowerment through Social Work

Volunteer service and social work have common roots, but social work is more professional. Social workers have received formal system training on needs assessment, design, process, and effect evaluation, which are exactly where volunteers are most lacking. Introducing social work can make up for volunteers' lack of professionalism. For example, you can invite social workers to be responsible for supervising projects to help volunteers conduct needs research and design services. You can establish long-term cooperation between social work departments and university volunteer organizations, let social work departments provide professional guidance and training for volunteers, and volunteer organizations provide human resources support. Universities can also inject practical content of volunteer service management into social work teaching.

"Social workers + volunteers" linkage model has also produced some successful experiences in some places. Social workers take care of the professional technology such as needs assessment, planning design, process supervision, and effect evaluation, and volunteers are responsible for the direct services. This model of division of labor can not only bring full play to

the advantages of volunteers' scale and enthusiasm, but also make up for their lack of professionalism, thus realizing precise docking of supply and demand and continuous improvement of service quality..

5.4 Improving Incentive and Evaluation Mechanisms

5.4.1 Establishing an Evaluation System Centered on Service Outcomes

Volunteer service evaluation should be changed from "output orientation" to "outcome orientation". Satisfaction of service recipients, extent of satisfaction of needs and extent of improvement of problems should be added to evaluation indicators as outcome indicators. The weight of purely output indicators such as number of sessions, number of participants and hours of service should be lowered. Evaluation by service recipients should be the main basis for evaluation. Satisfaction surveys, follow-up visits and service recipient forums should be conducted to obtain authentic feedback, changing the evaluation focus from "what we have done" to "what service recipients have gained."

5.4.2 Linking Evaluation Results with Resource Allocation and Incentives

Connecting evaluation with the input of subsequent resources is also an important means to motivate organizations from the outside to enhance service quality. Projects and organizations that have strong needs research ability, scientific service plan and major service achievements should enjoy priority in funding, honor recognition and connection of resources; projects that are ceremony-driven, have serious disconnection with needs and low satisfaction evaluation from service receivers should be required to make improvements within a deadline. Rewards for volunteers shall not be measured solely by service hours, but needs to study deeply on their substantive response to service receivers' needs through the establishment of incentive system, so as to drive volunteer service towards a demand-oriented transformation at the level of mechanisms..

6. Conclusion

Supply-demand mismatch is not only an outstanding contradiction but also the key bottleneck at present in youth volunteer service, and also a checkpoint that volunteer service must go through during its process from "whether it

exists" to "whether it is good". The substance of supply-demand mismatch is that the logic of volunteer service supply is different from the logic of needs: the logic of supply adheres to an action rationality of "organizational convenience" and "task orientation", while the logic of needs is based on the multi-dimensional and dynamically changing real life-worlds of those in need of service. Volunteer service will not be able to progress from "busy" to "beneficial" if these two logics cannot coordinate with and penetrate into each other.

Supply-demand mismatch can and should be resolved at multiple levels. Ideationally, we need to consciously build consensus with the service recipients at the center; transform the demand orientation from a catchphrase to a working principle and daily practice, so that it becomes the "default" instead of the "extra" of volunteer service. The key to this idea change is to rethink the goal of volunteer service: it is not to finish a certain task or have a certain posture, but to truly serve social needs. Methodologically, we should introduce professionalized needs assessment approaches to constantly improve the scientific and precise nature of project designing and service supplying, so that volunteers are not only "willing to serve", but also able to "serve correctly". Mechanistically, we should adjust evaluation and incentive mechanisms so that serving effect becomes the standard for evaluating the value of volunteer service, and give institutional guarantees for precise matching of supply with demand.

Supply-demand mismatch can be viewed from a larger perspective, which concerns whether youth volunteer service can truly fulfill its proper role in social governance. If volunteer service can effectively meet the real needs of society, rather than being a supplemental "good deed", it will become an important means to

solve social problems, enhance the well-being of the people and promote fairness in society. Changing from "extensive supply" to "targeted service", from "I am doing something" to "I have truly helped", from being content with "I have a clear conscience" to seeking "the other party has truly benefited"-this is the path youth volunteer service must take to achieve high-quality development, and also the key to unlocking its value..

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