

Innovations

Optimizing Mechanisms and Exploring Paths of Elderly Volunteer Services in Urban Communities — A Case Study of Community Y

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Abstract: *In recent years, with the growing aging population, by the end of 2023, the number of elderly people aged 60 and above in China reached 296.97 million, accounting for more than 20% of the total population. According to international standards, China has now entered the category of moderately aging countries. In response to the large 'silver-haired group', the Chinese government proposed the 'Silver Age Action' plan, encouraging retired seniors to return to service as volunteers and contribute to social services and community governance. As a well-developed urban community, Community Yin Beijing has a relatively mature elderly volunteer service organization system, which has to some extent addressed the difficulties retired seniors face during identity transitions. However, due to the short establishment time of the organization, there are certain issues in organizational structure and operational systems. This study selects Community Y as the research subject and, based on the current problems and shortcomings of elderly volunteer service organizations, explores multiple ways to stimulate enthusiasm for service among urban elderly volunteers. These include effective implementation of the government's "Silver Age Action", innovation in elderly volunteer service pathways, the crucial support of grassroots community organizations, and active participation by the 'silver-haired group'. The goal is to promote the long-term development of urban elderly volunteer service*

organizations, facilitate high-quality development of elderly volunteer services and the 'Silver Age Action', and expand the brand influence of the initiative.

Key words: *Urban community, Silver Age Action, Elderly volunteer service, Pathways*

1. Introduction

October 2024, the Ministry of Civil Affairs and the National Working Commission on Aging released the 2023 National Report on the Development of Services for the Elderly. According to the report, by the end of 2023, China had 296.97 million people aged 60 and above, accounting for 21.1% of the total population. The number of people aged 65 and above reached 216.76 million, making up 15.4% of the total population. The old-age dependency ratio for those aged 65 and over was 22.5%. China has now entered the category of moderately aged societies. Among developed countries, China is experiencing the fastest rate of population aging and has the largest elderly population base, but China has few targeted, specific measures currently available for reference.

To actively respond to the challenges of population aging, the government has introduced a range of initiatives, including the establishment of the "9064" home-based elderly care model and the development of a senior care service system that is "home-based, community-supported, and institutionally backed." China is also promoting the growth of the elderly care service industry, along with other related policies and measures.

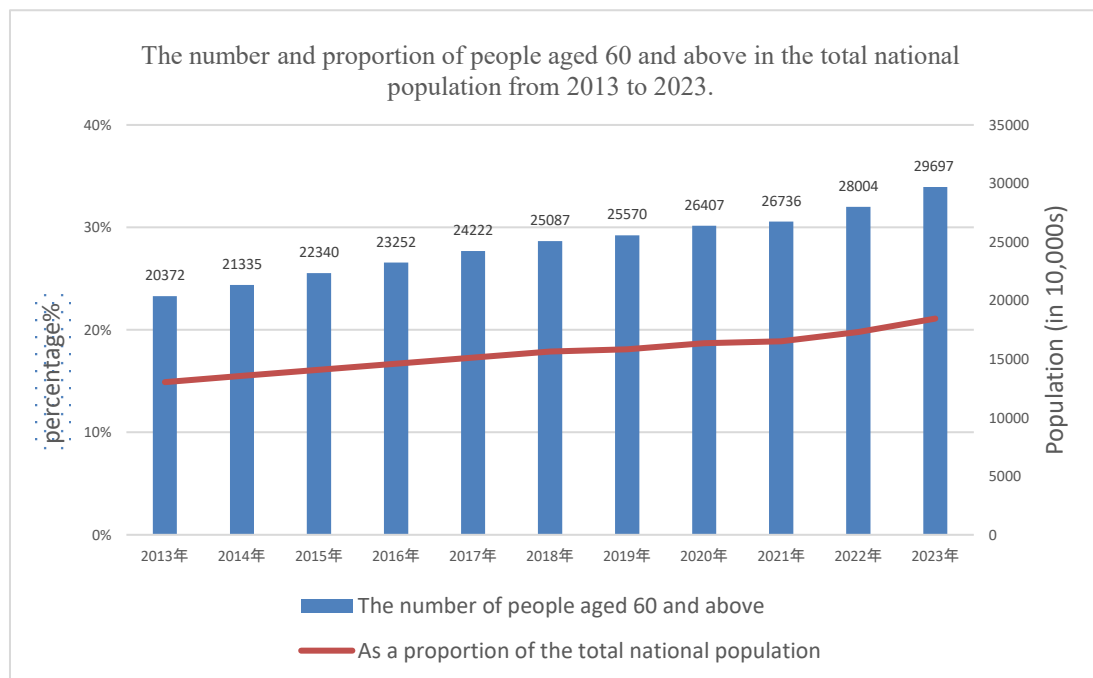


Figure 1. The number and proportion of people aged 60 and above in the total national population from 2013 to 2023.

Source: 2023 National Bulletin on the Development of Aging Services

From an international perspective, developed countries have increasingly recognized the importance of fully tapping into the human resources of the elderly population as they address the challenges of aging. Effectively utilizing the potential of older adults has become a key strategy in the new era of aging societies.

In the United States, a variety of senior volunteer service programs have been established, led both by the federal government and non-governmental organizations. These programs are diverse in form and content, placing strong emphasis on the needs and capabilities of older adults. By incorporating technology and digital tools into the volunteer service system, the U.S. has developed sustainable volunteer organizations that meet the dual needs of both seniors and society (Lili, Xie. & Minqiang, Chen. 2021). In Hong Kong, the government refers to elderly volunteers as “senior volunteers”. With strong and consistent advocacy from the government, nonprofit organizations, and the media, senior volunteers have gained widespread social recognition and respect. Older adults mainly participate in neighborhood volunteering and community services, selecting roles that suit their time, abilities, and interests. Some social work organizations also design volunteer activities specifically tailored to the characteristics of elderly individuals, enhancing their sense of fulfillment and self-worth (Yong, Zhao & Shijiang, Duan & Xinwen, Wang. (2011).

As China enters a new era, the nationwide social security and healthcare systems have expanded their coverage, average life expectancy continues to rise, and the concepts of active aging and healthy retirement are becoming increasingly widespread. Many retirees remain physically fit and full of enthusiasm. Against this backdrop, the establishment of senior volunteer service systems and frameworks has created new opportunities and platforms for fully utilizing the potential of the elderly population. Whether through roles that are well-suited to older adults or those specifically designed for them, the supply and demand of volunteer services are more effectively matched. This not only enhances seniors’ participation in society but also broadens the pathways for them to reengage with their communities.

2. The concept of senior volunteer service

Senior volunteer service is not only a symbol of social progress and civility, but also an important driver of high-quality development in aging-related initiatives

in the new era(Jiehua,Lu.2022).The promotion of senior volunteerism in China centers on the principle of active aging, aiming to fully tap into the strengths of the elderly population, ease the challenges posed by an aging society, and ultimately achieve the social goal of ensuring that older adults are cared for, supported, engaged, and secure. China's large senior population often reaches retirement age while still in good physical health and mental condition, with many expressing a strong desire to reengage with society. Older adults bring a wealth of life experience, knowledge, and flexible time, making senior volunteer service an increasingly popular option after retirement.

The “Silver Age Action” (Yinling Xing dong), launched in 2003 by the China National Committee on Aging, is a large-scale volunteer initiative primarily involving seniors. Guided by the principles of voluntary participation and doing what one is capable of, the initiative focuses on intellectual assistance, grassroots governance, and community services—all aimed at contributing to socioeconomic development through volunteerism (Xinhua News Agency, 2024).According to available data, the program has so far mobilized over 7 million senior volunteer engagements nationwide, launched more than 4,000 assistance projects, and benefited over 400 million people. Senior volunteers participating in the Silver Age Action have actively supported national strategies such as the development of western regions, poverty alleviation, and rural revitalization. By leveraging their intellectual strengths and technical expertise, they have led numerous public service initiatives—including agricultural support, educational assistance, healthcare services, and helping tackle technical challenges. These efforts have made significant contributions to improving living standards and promoting socioeconomic development in underdeveloped areas, while also showcasing the positive spirit of China's elderly population.

In the new era, the “Silver Age Action” has evolved with the times, taking on new characteristics. The scope of participants has expanded from primarily elderly intellectuals to a broader population of older adults. Similarly, the areas of service have grown beyond specialized knowledge and technical fields to include mutual aid in elder care, “shared grandma” programs, community patrols, public safety, and more. These new avenues offer a wider range of older individuals the opportunity to contribute their experience and reengage with society. As a result, senior volunteerism has gained strong momentum across the country, becoming a vibrant social movement.

3. An Investigation into Senior Volunteer Services in Community Y

3.1 General Profile of Community Y

Community Y was formed through the relocation and integration of eight original villages. Approximately 85% of the residents are Hui (ethnic Chinese Muslims) who moved into apartment buildings after the demolition of their village homes. Most of the Hui residents' surrounding relatives are also Hui, creating a culturally cohesive community. The total permanent population—including both local and migrant residents—is around 12,000, of which approximately 9,500 are Hui ethnic minority, all of whom are originally from the area. There are over 3,000 residents aged 60 and above. In 2003, as part of the local urbanization efforts, the community transitioned from single-story homes to apartment living—a process referred to as “Ping fang Shanglou” (moving from bungalows to high-rises). Later, in July 2014, the local farmers officially became urban residents and were enrolled in collective retirement plans, allowing them to receive urban pension benefits. Among the elderly population, about 1,400 residents aged 60 and above are retired farmers. In total, the community has around 5,400 individuals originally classified as farmers. There are also 191 residents aged 80 and above, and 33 residents aged 90 and above.

Additionally, due to the construction of a new airport nearby, many of the community's former village residents have been employed by various township- or collective-run enterprises. These include jobs in property management, commerce, landscaping, cleaning services, and operations companies, offering stable employment opportunities in the surrounding area.

3.2 Composition of Senior Volunteer Service Organizations in Community Y

Community Y transitioned relatively early into an urban community and has a well-developed grassroots organizational structure. Efforts to implement the "9064" elderly care model and the "Silver Age Action" plan are gradually being carried out. Currently, there are five active senior volunteer teams operating within the community: Community Security Patrol Team; Bulletin and Publicity Board Team; Daily Maintenance Team; In-Home Service Team; Cultural and Recreational Activities Team. In total, these five teams consist of 47 members.

Community Security Patrol Team: This team currently consists of 15 members, aged between 62 and 85. The team includes one team leader and two deputy leaders. Their primary responsibility is to conduct routine patrols both inside the community and within a 1-kilometer radius around it. During special periods or events, they assist community staff in maintaining public order. The 15 members are divided into three groups, with five members in each. Patrols are conducted three times daily—morning, afternoon, and evening—along designated routes and checkpoints, each lasting 1 to 2 hours. In case of emergencies, team

members promptly report to community staff, helping to ensure that incidents are handled efficiently and effectively.

Bulletin and Publicity Board Team: This team is composed of 6 members, aged between 60 and 67, including one team leader and one deputy leader. Their main responsibility is to update the community bulletin boards monthly, based on designated themes. The content typically includes elderly health tips, information about health seminars, explanations of relevant national policies, coverage of local events and news, and the posting of various notices. The six volunteers primarily come from professional backgrounds in publicity work at government offices or companies, or are hobbyists skilled in calligraphy and visual arts.

Daily Maintenance Team: This team consists of 10 members, aged between 60 and 70, including one team leader and one deputy leader. Their main duty is to provide basic maintenance services—such as plumbing, electrical repairs, and pipe unclogging—for elderly residents or others in need within the community. Residents can contact team members through the publicly posted contact information on the community bulletin board to schedule a service time. All 10 volunteers previously worked as maintenance technicians or mechanical equipment repair staff before retirement, and they are well-equipped to handle basic repair needs within the community.

In-Home Service Team: This team is composed of 8 members, aged between 65 and 75, including one team leader and two deputy leaders. The team mainly serves elderly residents aged 75 and above. Based on a registry maintained by the community, team members make scheduled monthly home visits to these seniors. Their services include helping them pay utility bills, purchasing daily necessities and medications, and providing companionship and conversation.

Cultural and Recreational Activities Team: This team also consists of 8 members, aged between 60 and 68, including one team leader and one deputy leader. The team works closely with the community to help organize regular cultural and recreational events for seniors, such as calligraphy contests, painting competitions, Chinese chess tournaments, table tennis matches, and square dance competitions. They also coordinate holiday-themed events, including Spring Festival galas, Double Ninth Festival (Senior Citizens Day) gatherings, and Dragon Boat Festival rice dumpling-making activities. Participants range widely in age—from 5 to 80 years old. Team volunteers are responsible for promoting events, collecting registrations, decorating venues, and distributing prizes. All team members are multi-talented and bring a strong sense of creativity and enthusiasm to their work.

All five senior volunteer teams currently operate in an orderly and structured manner. The five team leaders hold regular coordination meetings and maintain

close communication with the community director and party branch secretary to review progress and address issues promptly. This ensures effective problem-solving within volunteer services and helps identify and address community shortcomings, improving the overall implementation of policies and community operations. The community director has spoken highly of the five elder care volunteer teams. Director Liu remarked, “Our community’s senior volunteer teams are composed of highly capable individuals. These volunteers are responsible, passionate, and compassionate. They’ve fostered a spirit of mutual support in the community, helped ease tensions between residents and the community administration, and made our community work more grounded and closely connected to residents. They have become an essential part of our community's success.”

3.3 Status of Volunteer Service Participation among Elderly Residents of Community Y

During a random sample survey of residents in Community Y, 100 residents were selected. The survey primarily focused on volunteer service participation, awareness of volunteer services, willingness to participate, and current issues within the volunteer service system.

In Community Y, about 20% of residents participate in volunteer services (Figure 2). Some volunteers hold multiple positions and engage in several volunteer activities. Among the volunteers, the most common participation is in community security patrols and cultural/sports activities. Volunteers reported that security patrols require no special technical skills, making it relatively easy to get involved. Additionally, many seniors regularly go out for walks, so participating in security patrols provides an opportunity to combine physical exercise with community service.

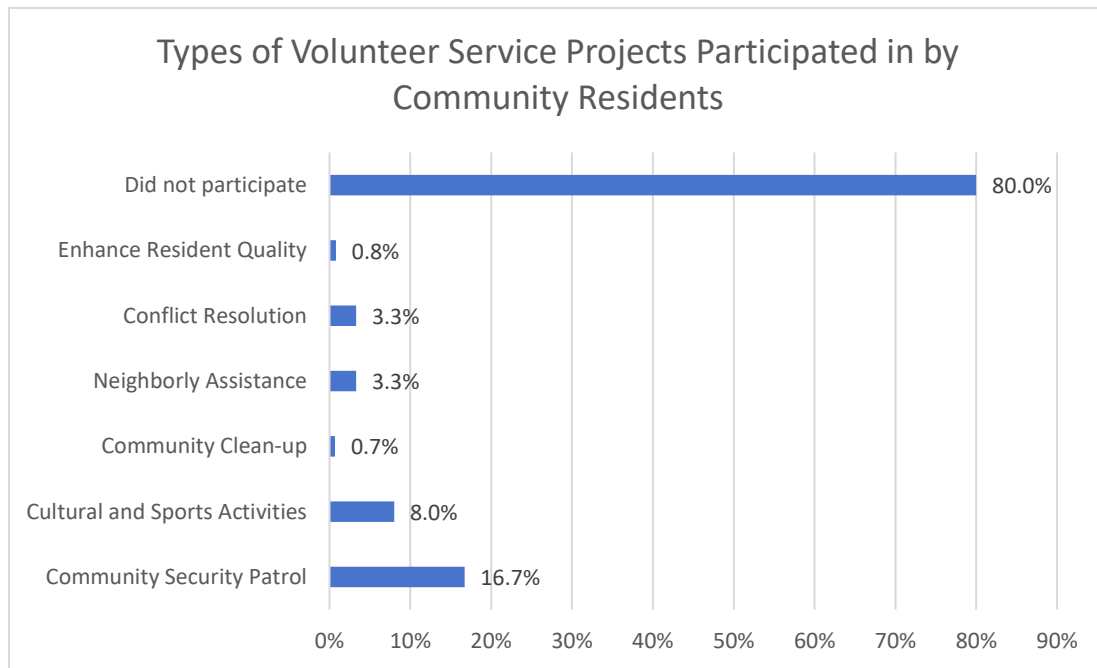


Figure 2. Types of Volunteer Activities Participated in b Community Y Residents

Among the volunteers participating in service activities, 40% joined through organized recruitment by the community residents' committee (Figure 3). Additionally, 32.1% participated on their own initiative, while 26.7% joined through referrals from friends. Some volunteers learned about the opportunities through multiple channels. This indicates that grassroots community organizations in Community Y play a key role in volunteer service activities. The community's dual function—as a political organizer and a cultural-social hub—provides effective support and assurance for volunteer service efforts, helping to enhance the credibility and sustainability of these activities.

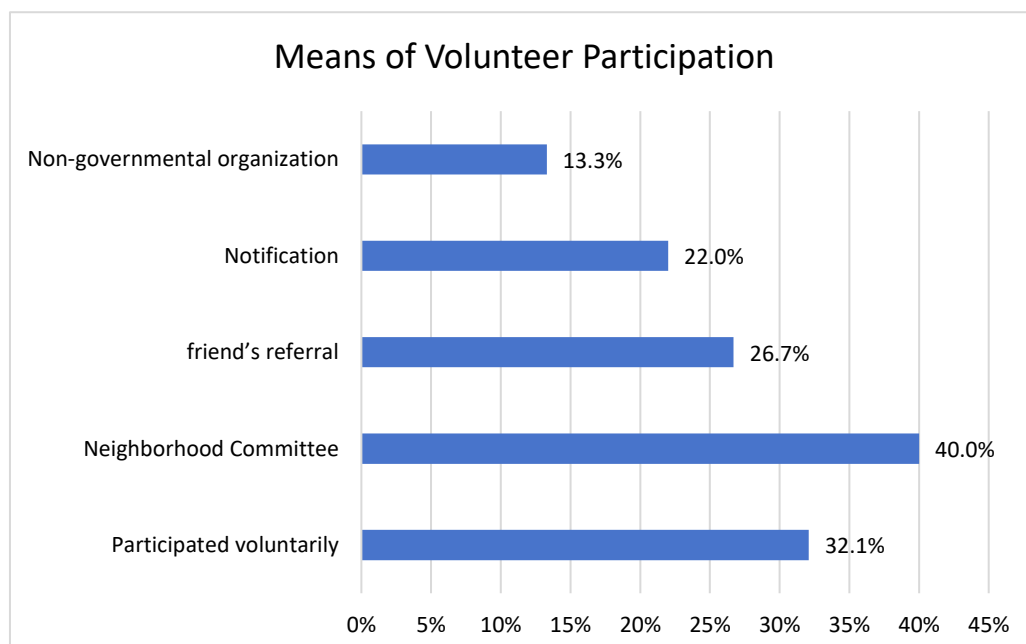
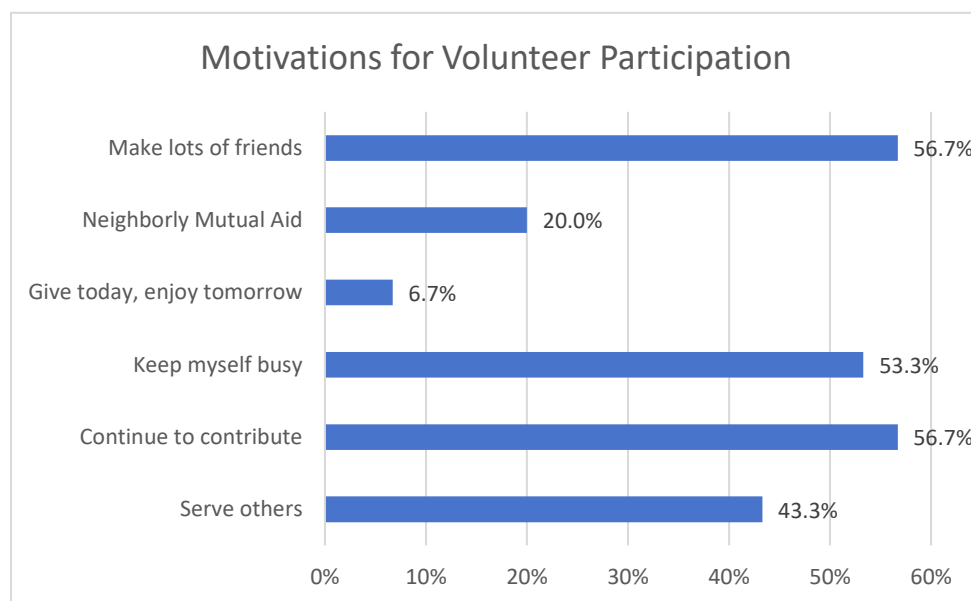


Figure 3. Means of Volunteer Participation

The primary reasons volunteers participate in community service activities include: the desire to make new friends (56.7%), the wish to stay active and contribute their remaining energy (56.7%), the need to keep busy during their free time (53.3%), and the willingness to offer help to those in need within their capacity (43.3%) (Figure 4). This suggests that senior citizens can better manage the transition from employment to retirement by engaging in volunteer service. Such participation helps ease feelings of loneliness and isolation after retirement. On one hand, involvement in community volunteer activities increases social engagement, enhances seniors' sense of happiness and fulfillment, highlights the value of their human capital, meets their emotional needs, and enriches their daily lives. On the other hand, community volunteer service acts as a bridge and platform that strengthens the connection between seniors and society, promoting a unified approach to community governance and social participation.

**Figure 4. Motivations for Volunteer Participation**

As shown in Figure 2, only a small proportion of seniors in the community are involved in volunteer service, with 80% of respondents indicating that they have not participated in any volunteer work. Interviews with those who have not participated reveal three main reasons: unwillingness to participate (37.6%), lack of access or opportunities (34.2%), and lack of time (21.4%) (Figure 5). Respondents who cited lack of access explained that while they were very willing to participate, they didn't know how to sign up or had never been recommended for an opportunity. Additionally, 15.4% of respondents reported health-related limitations, such as being unable to stand or walk for long periods,

which made it difficult for them to engage in volunteer activities. For seniors who are interested in volunteering but face barriers, targeted outreach and support in the future could help expand the volunteer team and increase participation.

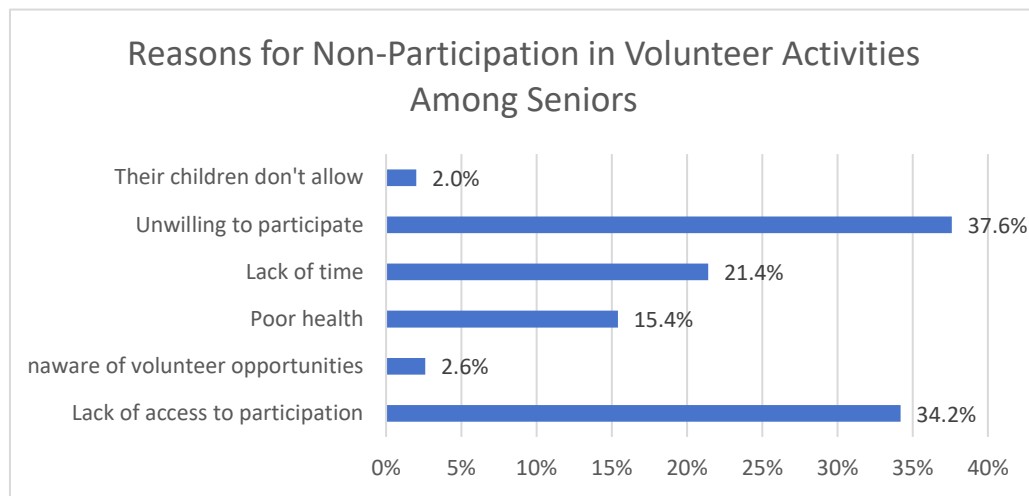


Figure 5. Reasons for Non-Participation in Volunteer Activities among Seniors

When asked whether they were willing to receive services provided by volunteers, 41.9% of respondents indicated indifference, 40.2% said they did not need them, and only 17.9% expressed a desire for such services (Figure 6). This suggests that approximately 80% of seniors who have not participated in volunteer service are unfamiliar with the content of volunteer work, the recruitment process, types of services, and how those services are delivered. Volunteer efforts have yet to reach the entire community, and current promotional efforts by the community remain insufficient. Only when residents witness the volunteer services firsthand, experience the benefits themselves, and truly understand the value of senior volunteer work will they be motivated to join on their own. This, in turn, will help grow the volunteer team and promote the true value of volunteerism within the community.

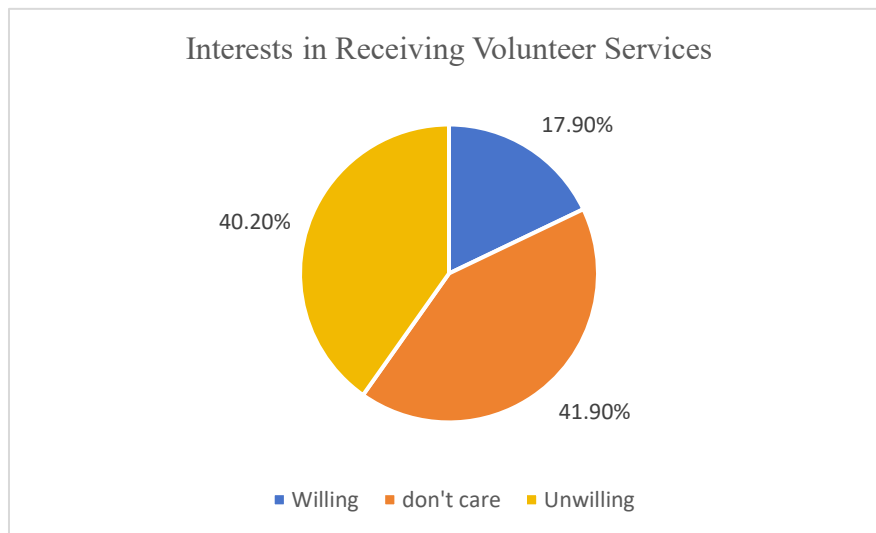


Figure 6. Interest in Receiving Volunteer Services

3.4 Challenges in Senior Volunteer Services in Y Community

Although senior volunteer services in Community Y have been running smoothly and are on track, there are still some issues. To address the current problems with senior volunteer services in Y Community, a survey was conducted among the elderly participants in volunteer activities. Among the respondents, 47.4% believed that the reward mechanism was inadequate, as they received no material or spiritual feedback after completing volunteer work. 31.6% felt that there was a lack of promotion, and many people were unaware of volunteer work, even harboring hostility toward it. 26.3% thought that the current activities were too monotonous, mostly involving home services and community patrols, which failed to attract elderly people to join (Figure 7).

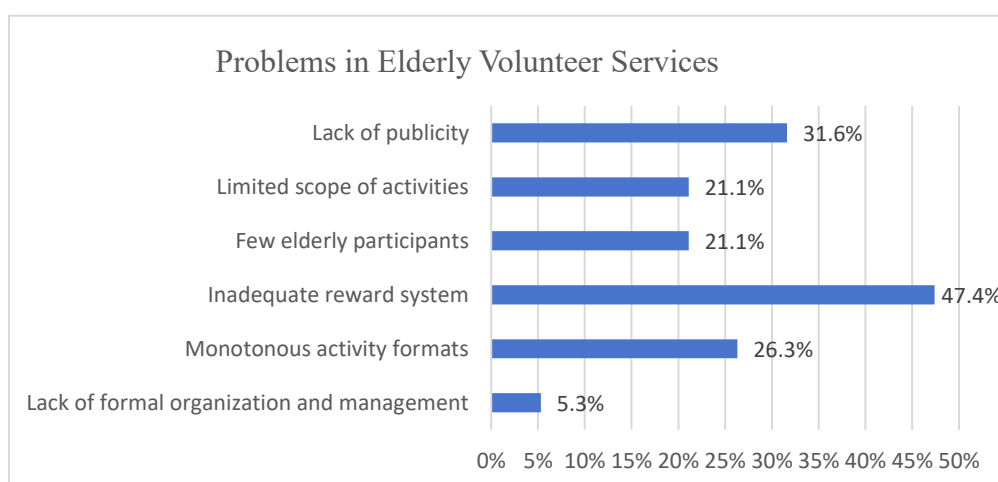


Figure 7. Problems in Elderly Volunteer Services

Regarding the issue of the reward mechanism, during an interview with Director Liu from Y Community, it was revealed that the funding for senior volunteer services is allocated from the community budget. This funding is used to purchase uniforms for volunteer patrols, office supplies for promotional boards, basic repair tools for the daily maintenance service team, and necessary items for organizing cultural events. Due to limited funds, there has not yet been a designated budget for awarding prizes to volunteers. Secretary Yang from Community Y mentioned that through multiple communication meetings with the volunteer team leaders, this issue was acknowledged. The community is currently gathering the basic materials of the volunteer teams and reporting to higher authorities in an effort to secure more funding for the volunteers. Additionally, they are working on improving the volunteer reward system, organizing regular debriefing and recognition meetings, and awarding certificates to outstanding volunteers.

Regarding the issue of "lack of promotion," Uncle Zhang, the leader of the community patrol team, explained that many people don't understand the content of our volunteer services and think we are meddling in things that aren't our business. Sometimes, when we see young people illegally parking shared bikes at the subway entrance, we try to advise them, but young people often don't understand, and sometimes even say, "What's it to you?" This makes our work difficult. Although we try to comfort ourselves, over time, it can somewhat dampen the enthusiasm of the volunteers.

4. Pathways to Promote the Development of Elderly Volunteer Services

4.1 Strengthen Policy Guidance

Ensuring the orderly development of elderly volunteer services requires not only the support of various departments at all levels but also the active promotion and guidance from the entire society. On one hand, it is important to strengthen the promotion of positive aging and healthy aging concepts, creating a favorable social atmosphere that supports and respects the elderly. The "Silver Age Action" initiative launched by the government serves as policy support to advance elderly volunteer services. On the other hand, the general public must have a correct understanding of the content and key knowledge of elderly volunteer services, acknowledging and supporting the work, which will foster a positive interaction and contribute to the long-term, orderly development of volunteer services.

The "Silver Age Action" started in 2003, initially with five pilot provinces. It has since expanded to cover all 31 provinces, forming a cooperative effort among national, provincial, municipal, and county-level governments to mobilize senior

experts from various fields to engage in public welfare actions such as supporting agriculture, education, and health services. This initiative has had a significant impact across society and has received widespread praise.

In the new era, the "Silver Age Action" has seen an expansion in both the groups involved and the scope of its activities. In 2021, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council issued the 《Opinions on Strengthening Work on Aging in the New Era》 which clearly emphasized encouraging elderly individuals to actively participate in grassroots democratic supervision, social customs reform, dispute mediation, and cultural, educational, and health-related activities through volunteer service. The implementation of the "Silver Age Action" aims to improve the elderly care service system, strengthen the health support system for seniors, promote social participation among the elderly, and focus on building an age-friendly society. It also emphasizes the need to reinforce safeguards for aging-related work. To ensure the effective advancement of "Silver Age Action" initiatives in the new era, the government has proposed policies, systems, and standards for elderly care services. These efforts include increasing fiscal investment, strengthening the coordinating role of the National Working Committee on Aging, promoting the integration of medical care and elderly care, leveraging the efforts of departments across society, and publicizing exemplary cases of elderly volunteer service.

Under the guidance of the "Silver Age Action," in 2023, the Ministry of Education and nine other departments issued the 《National Silver-Age Teachers Action Plan》, which encourages retired "silver-haired teachers" to continue contributing to national education in areas where they are needed. Currently, the nationwide silver-age teacher workforce has grown to around 120,000. A more comprehensive service system has been established to support education at all levels, enhancing service capacity and effectively alleviating educational challenges in underdeveloped and impoverished regions.

4.2 Innovation in New Models of Elderly Volunteer Services

As a product of the new era derived from the concept of active aging, elderly volunteer service activities still largely follow the traditional content and institutional models of volunteerism. As a result, some systems and service offerings do not align well with the current needs of elderly populations across different regions. This mismatch has led to frequent conflicts between volunteers and non-volunteers, as well as tensions between community organizations and residents. To address these issues, it is essential to further develop the scope of elderly volunteer services in the new era, enrich the implementation strategies of the "Silver Age Action," and fully leverage the technical expertise of experienced

older adults. The pathways for elderly volunteer service activities must be continuously expanded and innovatively explored to better meet evolving societal and individual needs.

Among the broad elderly population, there are many individuals from various professions, including both specialists and general workers. Those with professional knowledge and technical backgrounds can be rehired to continue contributing their expertise. For example, "Silver-Age Teachers" can run after-school programs in their communities, where students whose parents work late can complete their homework under supervision. The recently popular concept of "Shared Grandmas" is a creative form of elderly volunteer service, where senior volunteers collectively pick up children from school and bring them back to the community. This not only fulfills the emotional need of seniors to care for and nurture children but also alleviates the burden on families who are unable to pick up their kids. Similarly, "Silver-Age Doctors" can hold regular health lectures and free clinics in the community. These gatherings offer seniors opportunities for social interaction and wellness sharing while allowing retired doctors to put their skills to continued use. For exemplary seniors known as "Silver Role Models," the community can organize regular themed forums and experience-sharing events—such as those promoting family values, food conservation, and acts of civic bravery. By sharing their own stories and experiences, these role models help foster a positive social atmosphere, promote inspiring real-life examples, and guide the community toward healthier and more admirable norms.

4.3 Give full play to the functions of grassroots community organizations.

Experience from elderly volunteer services around the world shows that without government support and safeguards, it is difficult for such programs to operate smoothly. As the most fundamental unit of daily life, communities serve as a vital bridge between municipal governments and local residents. With their political, service, social security, and cultural functions, urban communities are well-equipped to meet the basic needs of their residents, allowing them to directly benefit from the implementation of government policies.

The successful and orderly operation of the four volunteer service teams in Community Y is largely attributed to the crucial role played by grassroots community organizations. Throughout the volunteer service process, the community director and party branch secretary maintain close communication with the five team leaders, regularly discussing and resolving challenges encountered during volunteer activities. The community takes charge of volunteer recruitment and provides venues and financial support for the services.

Director Liu of the community remarked, "Elderly volunteer service allows seniors to find a sense of value through giving back, and to experience joy through group participation. That in itself shows the significance of this work, and it also gives us, as community workers, a sense of purpose. We are currently exploring ways to address some existing challenges, with the aim of developing a large-scale volunteer organization." Looking ahead, the community plans to establish a set of rules and evaluation systems for elderly volunteer service, as well as to create individual records for each volunteer. Additionally, they are preparing to issue certificates and small gifts to outstanding volunteers in the name of the community, hoping to boost morale and engagement. Thanks to the ongoing support and guidance of the grassroots community organization, the volunteer service teams have been able to grow steadily, gradually improving their organizational structure and reward mechanisms, and attracting more and more elderly individuals to participate.

The community is the most direct promoter of encouraging, supporting, and advocating for the well-being of elderly residents. How a community guides seniors toward "social participation and stepping out of their homes" is a question that deserves thoughtful consideration. Given the community's political and foundational characteristics, it is well-positioned to flexibly formulate and refine relevant policies. By identifying specific issues within the community, it can propose targeted strategies to address them effectively.

4.4 Active Participation of the "Silver Generation"

In Shanghai's Yangpu District, there is an invisible symbol known as the "Old Yang Tree," which stands as a silent witness to the city's profound transformations and embodies both hope and strength. Beneath this symbolic tree lies the "Old Yang Tree Speakers' Forum," a gathering of retired officials, veteran experts, former teachers, model citizens, and war veterans who have long lived in Yangpu. These elders share their personal experiences with younger generations, recounting the dramatic changes in their hometown and conveying a spirit of perseverance, integrity, and aspiration. Figures like Baomei, Huang, Jianhua, Hao, and Defu, Jiang —respected as living "Old Yang Trees"—pass on historical insights through live streams, public talks, and storytelling events. Through these engagements, these senior figures not only relive and share their life journeys, but also rediscover a sense of personal fulfillment and earn deep respect from the youth.

On January 1, 2025, the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, along with two other departments, issued the *Interim Measures for the Implementation of a Flexible Retirement System*. The policy allows employees who have met the

minimum required years of contributions to the basic pension system to voluntarily opt for early retirement. The earliest retirement can be up to three years before the statutory retirement age. However, retirement ages must not fall below the previously mandated limits: 50 or 55 years old for female employees (depending on their job category) and 60 years old for male employees.

The flexible retirement system offers the “silver generation” across society a range of options. Depending on their health and availability, older adults can choose to remain in the workforce, retire and enjoy family life, or, under the guidance of initiatives like the new-era “Silver Age Action,” reintegrate into society and enhance their social participation. This system empowers seniors to start new chapters—whether by continuing professional work, engaging in volunteer service, or contributing to their communities in meaningful ways.

To actively address the challenges of an aging population, several measures should be taken. First, expand the availability of educational resources for seniors by leveraging various platforms to support lifelong learning and meet their diverse needs. Second, improve the quality of cultural and sports services for the elderly by enhancing community facilities and creating more opportunities for participation. Additionally, encourage seniors to continue contributing to society by exploring flexible employment models suitable for older adults across different industries. Finally, promote their active role in family education and the passing down of family values and traditions.

5. The Practical Value of Developing Elderly Volunteer Services

In 1993, Adams proposed that leisure activities provide a setting for older adults to engage in social interactions. These activities are conducive to developing and maintaining friendships, serving as important venues for emotional, behavioral, and cognitive processes. In leisure activities, seniors often engage in frequent social interactions, expressing affection, sharing information, and exchanging resources. Through these actions, they are able to convey their emotions and strengthen their connections with others.

Surveys of older adults reveal that while they can relatively easily adapt to physical decline, psychological aging and the loss of social roles require effort from both the individuals and society as a whole. Society should proactively help seniors find roles that align with their aging process, providing avenues for them to transition into these roles. Additionally, new means of economic support should be offered to encourage seniors to independently navigate this role transition, thereby maintaining social stability. The solution to elderly care should be based on the principle of integration, rather than isolation or detachment.

The full participation of older adults in community volunteer activities is an important factor in enhancing their sense of happiness. Psychological health has a significant impact on physical health, and therefore, more attention should be given to addressing the mental well-being of seniors. Moreover, the quality of life for older adults can be compared to the "barrel effect," where the shortest plank determines whether the overall quality of life can reach a certain height. Thus, while focusing on meeting the material needs of seniors, it is equally important to emphasize other aspects of their lives. Any deficiencies in one area can hinder overall improvements in quality of life. The government bears the responsibility of providing services to the elderly and should gradually recognize their real needs. By understanding these needs, it can tailor its services and improve the quality of service provision, ensuring that seniors lead fulfilling, healthy lives.

Elderly volunteer service, as a public welfare activity, is an important manifestation of active aging. Community volunteer services for seniors, as a form of public welfare activity, help fill the gap in the community's provision of spiritual support for aging individuals. Focusing on elderly cultural volunteer services can, on one hand, motivate seniors to continue contributing their expertise, actively engage in social benefits, and smoothly transition from work to retirement, thereby maximizing their self-worth. These volunteer activities, which primarily target older adults, create excellent opportunities for them to participate in society. The community plays a key role in organizing and creating platforms for these activities, but the seniors themselves spontaneously organize, implement, and handle the specifics of the events, providing a platform for elderly individuals with diverse talents to continue contributing. On the other hand, volunteer service is an activity that is actively promoted across all age groups in China. Whether in museums, art galleries, libraries, or other public welfare venues, volunteer service reflects the public welfare spirit that society as a whole encourages. Among the elderly, under the "9064" community-based elderly care model, the combination of volunteer service and active aging is beneficial for exploring elder care activities that better align with China's aging population and address the spiritual needs of seniors.

Volunteer service activities, as one of the most direct means for seniors to enter society and achieve social participation through the community, are also an important way for elderly individuals to realize their social value. In the future, as basic living needs are met, older adults are likely to increasingly seek fulfillment in terms of spiritual and emotional support. Participating in volunteer services not only allows seniors to realize their own value but also helps foster community cohesion and contribute to social stability. Through active engagement, seniors can build stronger connections with others, promote a sense of purpose, and

make meaningful contributions to the broader society, thereby enhancing both their well-being and the community's overall harmony.

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