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A RESEARCH REPORT ON THE VOLUNTEER WORK LEGACY
TRANSFORMATION OF THE BEIJING 2008 OLYMPIC GAMES AND
PARALYMPIC GAMES

WEI NA

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A Research Report on the Volunteer Work
Legacy Transformation of the Beijing 2008
Olympic Games and Paralympic Games

Wei Na

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The great success of 2008 Beijing Olympics and Paralympics has been a sparkling landmark in the Olympia history, which leaves gorgeous memories and precious treasure for China as well as the world. As the cornerstones of the Olympic movement, volunteer work contributes a considerable part of that treasure. In order that more countries, regions, organizations and individuals might have a better access to sharing the research, Beijing Committee of the Communist Youth League of China (CYLC), Beijing Volunteers Federation, China International Centre for Economic and Technical Exchanges, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Volunteers and other organizations, as participating institutions of UN Volunteering Service Cooperation Project, authorized the Humanistic Olympic Studies Center, Renmin University of China (RUC) to carry out the Beijing Olympic and Paralympics Volunteer Work Legacy Transformation Research. Based on a description and summary of 2008 Beijing Olympic volunteer operations, the research is aimed at developing a Beijing Model of volunteer services, which not only adapts to Chinese actual conditions, but also carries universal reference values. Meanwhile, the research demonstrates values and influence of Beijing Olympic volunteer work and provides advice for the advancement of the volunteer movement in Beijing and the whole country. This book is a final presentation of the research findings.

To begin with, the research focuses on volunteer groups, analysing the personnel structure and sources of Beijing Olympic volunteers, and their role, contribution as well as motivations behind volunteer participation. The report indicates that Beijing Olympic volunteers are not only direct service providers for the Beijing Olympic and Paralympic Games, but also builders of a peaceful Beijing and harmonious Chinese society, ambassadors of cultural exchanges between China and the outside world, and representatives of Beijing and China. Thanks to the dedication of Games-time volunteers, all Games-



time work was satisfactorily completed, laying a solid foundation for the success of the Beijing 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Beijing Olympic volunteers embody in themselves some of the fundamental ideals advocated by volunteerism, i. e. dedication, brotherhood, cooperation, and progress. Additionally, they promoted the volunteer movement of Beijing and the whole country. Opinion polls revealed high overall public satisfaction with the volunteer work of the Beijing Olympic Games. 97.2% of the public believed that the volunteer services were indispensable to the success of the Beijing Olympic Games. Leading Chinese and overseas media, including the Xinhua News Agency, *People's Daily*, China Central Television, BBC and Associated Press, all featured length reports on the volunteer operations of the Beijing Olympic Games, in full acknowledgement of the “great image of China” embodied by Beijing Olympic volunteers.

Next, we describe the organizational system and operating mechanism of Beijing Olympic volunteer work and tasks involved in it from an objective and rational perspective in this book. Referring to a survey in which 5,000 Beijing Olympic volunteers were involved, an overall evaluation is made on the organizational system of Beijing Olympic volunteer work and several aspects of the work operating system including training, advertising, support and incentive. The research finds out that the organizational system of Beijing Olympic volunteer work is under a strong command and well-coordinated. An all-covered work operating system has been formulated, realizing the linkage between superior and subordinate as well as a clear distribution of responsibilities. All involved missions have been accomplished satisfactorily. By integrating strengths in all aspects and social mobilization, the organizational system and operating mechanism of Beijing Olympic volunteer work support the success of the big event. Survey statistics show that volunteers were generally satisfied with the organizational and operating mechanism of Beijing Olympic volunteer work. This fully proves that Beijing Olympic volunteer work is scientific and highly effective.

Besides, values and influence of Beijing Olympic volunteer work are deeply analyzed and summarized in the book. Beijing Olympic volunteer work creates noticeable economic benefits, social benefits, cultural benefits and spiritual benefits. Moreover, it has a profound influence on volunteers, volunteer organizations and the public. In respect of economic benefits, a cost of as high as RMB 4.275 billion was saved by volunteer work. In addition, volunteer operation led to the formation of a volunteer force consisting of 1.7 million professional volunteers and a group of highly-qualified team

leaders. This provides a more solid human resources base to capitalize on for future social and economic development of Beijing. In respect of social benefits, volunteer work enhances the public's perception of the volunteering spirit, promotes the social values of the public's attitude towards fraternity and mutual assistance, improves the overall standard of civility and helps achieve the goal of ensuring public security during the Games. In respect of cultural benefits, volunteer services of the Beijing Games highlighted the concept of "human orientation". As a result, cultural integration was promoted. And volunteers realized the boost of their physical and mental growth. As to benefits to the spirit, the "Beijing Olympics volunteer spirit" was gradually formed, which focuses on "sobriety and determination, readiness for challenges, open-mindedness and self-confidence, unity and friendship, excellence, self-sacrifice, and social harmony". Smile Beijing, a theme activity as part of the "smile" movement, was organized throughout Beijing, making volunteers' smiles a symbolic expression of the city.

The research shows that Beijing Olympic volunteer work has made a long-lasting impact on volunteers as well. There has been a boost in the self confidence of the volunteers resulting from the public's recognition of their services. Furthermore, participation in the Olympics influenced volunteers' value orientation and greatly increased their willingness to take part in future volunteer activities. Results of the survey indicated, among the 4,976 volunteers responded, 68.9% of them were willing to participate in other volunteer activities after the Games. Olympic volunteer work also has had a major impact on the development of volunteer organizations. The survey indicated that the volunteer operations of the Beijing Olympic and Paralympic Games had a major influence on the development of volunteer organizations. The policy environment for volunteer organizations has been improved, a stable social atmosphere has been created, and the administration system for volunteer organization has been established. Beijing Olympic volunteer services have established a platform for cooperation between volunteer organizations and formed a complete system for the training of volunteer organizations. Benefiting from participation in volunteer services, volunteer organizations' social mobilization capabilities are strengthened, their service fields and projects were expanded. Additionally, Beijing Olympic volunteer work has an important influence on the public, which is reflected by remarkable enhancement of the public's sense of social responsibility, greater public willingness to participate in community volunteer activities, changes in local residents' lifestyle and increased interaction among neighbors.



Last but not the least, based on a comparison of volunteer work among previous Olympic Games, the book draws upon the experiences of Beijing Olympic volunteer work. They are listed as follows: (1) Complying with international practice and Olympic rules, (2) Strengthening international cooperation, (3) Maximizing the role of CYLC organizations and higher education institutions through volunteer services, (4) Establishing city volunteer and social volunteer programs for the first time in Olympic history, (5) Forming scientific and effective volunteer management mechanisms, (6) “Two games, equal splendor” —paralympic volunteer services are given the same level of importance, (7) Building a platform for extensive public participation in the Olympic Games, (8) Remaining human orientation, and promoting the all-round development of volunteers.

Three features of this book, which I believe, are worth mentioning here.

Firstly, our research is based on authoritative and reliable sources. In terms of data collection, we have collected vast amount of first-hand data on volunteer service and Beijing Olympic volunteer work research, with the help of former volunteers department of Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games (BOCOG), UN Volunteering Service Cooperation Project Office and Beijing Volunteer Service Development Research Association. In consequence, the data collection ensures the authority of the research. On the other hand, we arranged 15 in-depth interviews on 35 respondents including staffs working in the former volunteer department of BOCOG and venue staffing managers, spectator service managers as well as representatives of volunteers of Beijing Olympic and Paralympic Games. The research center in School of Statistics, RUC is authorized to conduct a series of interviews and surveys for our research. Telephone interviews on 1,000 Beijing Olympic volunteers, online surveys on 4,000 Beijing Olympic volunteers and questionnaires distributed to 500 volunteer organizations and 600 community residents are included. All the surveys and interviews lay a valid foundation for the research.

Secondly, the research is carried out with great preciseness throughout each stage. Authorized by Beijing Volunteer Association and UN Volunteering Service Cooperation Project Office, a professional and earnest research team is built to take on the specific research work and I was elected the Presiding Investigator. In the initial stage of the research, our team members had a full discussion on research ideas and methods. In the next stage, several external experts including professor Lu Shizhen, former dean of China Youth University for Political Sciences and professor Ding Yuanzhu, from Chi-

nese Academy of Governance formed a consultant expert group, offering opinions and proposal for our research. The report was delivered to authorities and experts of former volunteer department of BOCOG upon its accomplishment. Based on the feedback from them, we then revised the report for several times.

Thirdly, the research draws an objective and valid conclusion, which is highly appraised by UN Volunteering Service Cooperation Project and Beijing Volunteer Association. As a gift presented to the upcoming 24th International Volunteer Day, the unveiling ceremony of Beijing 2008 Olympics and Paralympics Volunteer Work report was co-sponsored by Beijing Committee of CYLC, Beijing Volunteer Federation and other concerned organizations on December 4th, 2009 in the Bird Nest, a place of special significance. Representatives attending the ceremony appraised the conclusion of the report as objective, comprehensive and in-depth. From their point of views, the research conclusion conveys high academic and practical reference values. Chinese and overseas media published feature length reports on the research result and generally have a high opinion of it, leaving extensive social influence.

In consideration of structure and text length, the book is divided into two parts. Part One conveys the main content of the book, namely the detailed descriptions, analysis, summaries and evaluations of Beijing Olympic volunteer work. It is divided into seven chapters. Part Two consists of three research reports. Since the book is written on the basis of former research report, sincere gratitude will be expressed in the post-script to thank all who have contributed to the relevant research work. The specific division of the responsibility is listed as follows, professor Wei Na, presiding investigator, took on the work of setting research goal, making research plan and organizing the implementation of the program. Meanwhile, she composed the first, the third, and the seventh chapter, the third section of the fifth chapter and the data report on volunteers. She also integrated and revised the whole content of the book. Associate professor Zhang Xiaohong undertook a large amount of communicating and coordinating work. She also composed the second chapter, the first two sections of the sixth chapter and the report on volunteer organizations. Cui Yukai composed the fourth chapter and the first two sections of the fifth chapter. Na La, Dong Qiang and Zhai Yan composed the third section of the sixth chapter and report on the public. In addition, Cui Yukai, Yuan Bo and Lei Shangqing contributed a lot hard work to the data report on volunteers.

Volunteer service in China has just taken its first step. The devotion would be



significant if our efforts could contribute to the promotion of volunteer movement in China. We are looking forward to the bright future of the Chinese volunteer movement.

Wei Na

Humanistic Olympic Studies Center, RUC

November 5th, 2010



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Overview of Beijing Olympic Volunteers

Volunteers are one of the cornerstones of the Olympic Movement. During the Beijing Olympic Games and the Paralympic Games, a total of 1.7 million Olympic volunteers took part and served in the games themselves, within the city and throughout society, and in social and cheering squad roles, providing smiles, warmth, care and painstaking voluntary services. Carrying forward the “I Participate, I Contribute, I Enjoy” philosophy, and with their beautiful smiles, warmth and professional services both inside and outside the game venues, Beijing Olympic volunteers showcased the fine traditions of good manners, unity, friendliness and hospitality of the Chinese nation, as well as the spirit of tolerance, openness and self-confidence of the Chinese people. Their outstanding services drew praise from the athletes and distinguished guests of all countries, as well as from people in all walks of life.

1.1 Personnel Structure of the Beijing Olympic Volunteers

In the broadest sense, “Beijing Olympic Volunteers” include the following: All those assigned to help out with the preparation of the Beijing Organizing Committee of the Olympic Games (BOCOG); volunteers actually assisting within the Beijing Olympics and Paralympics Games themselves; volunteers throughout the city and society; and those in cheering squad roles. In the narrowest sense, “Beijing Olympic Volunteers” refer to volunteers working only on the Beijing Olympics and Paralympics games. In this report, however, “Beijing Olympic Volunteers” will be used in the broadest sense. ^①

^① Data in this section is quoted from *Olympic Pioneers*, compiled by the Beijing Olympics Volunteer Coordinating Group, Beijing, Renmin Press, 2009.



1. 1. 1 BOCOG Preparation Volunteers

“BOCOG preparation Volunteers” refer to those volunteers who were selected and recruited to take part in BOCOG’s daily work or special activities, and served BOCOG on a voluntary basis during the preparatory stages of the Olympic Games.

The BOCOG Preparation Volunteers’ Program was launched in March 2004. 1,582 volunteers were recruited in 14 phases. 80% of them were on-campus students from more than 100 Chinese and foreign universities. The rest were teachers, company employees and community residents.

BOCOG preparation volunteers worked in 26 BOCOG divisions and 6 Olympic venues for a combined total of nearly 600,000 hours. Their services addressed a wide variety of needs, including administrative assistance, handling telephone enquiries, replying to mails, caring for Olympic intellectual property protection, publicizing the “Green Olympics”, language services and data translation, data input, conference services and technical support.

► Volunteer’s Story

Chen Tingjun, male and a retired Major General in the Second Artillery of the Chinese People’s Liberation Army, was a BOCOG preparation volunteer and a special expert in BOCOG’s Volunteer Department.

Right from the start of Beijing’s successful bid for the Olympic Games on July 13, 2001, Major General Chen Tingjun longed to do something for the Beijing Olympics. The opportunity finally arrived in 2005, when he retired from his political commissar post at the PLA Second Artillery. In July that year, a newspaper item reporting on the Beijing Olympic Games volunteer recruitment launch ceremony immediately caught his attention. Upon learning that there was no age limit for Olympic volunteers, he immediately sent in an application to BOCOG. Following an interview and subsequent training, Chen Tingjun formally took up his post as an Olympic volunteer on July 27.

His first assignment at BOCOG involved working along with 3 college student volunteers to handle 3 inquiry phone lines, answering questions about Olympic volunteers, replying to E-mails and letters from both home and abroad, collecting information about pre-Games volunteers, and carrying out certificate and meal coupon management duties. Despite his mental preparedness as a volunteer, Chen Tingjun nevertheless at the start met with many difficulties. For example, he was slow at computer typing and could not send E-mails or chat in English. He even had to learn to be comfortable with working in a centralized office environment. But nothing could deter him. He humbly learned from young people and was soon proficient

with operating a computer. To overcome the English obstacle, he spent his evenings attending the English training classes organized by BOCOG. Despite his slow memory, he managed to grasp some simple everyday phrases. So, when there were calls from foreigners, he could say hello to them first and then pass them on to college student volunteers to handle.

In January 2006, BOCOG moved its new office to the Olympic Building. At the same time, Chen Tingjun also changed from being a volunteer himself to having a volunteer management role. He was appointed as a special expert with duties for the Pre-Games Volunteers' Program. In the process, he and his colleagues recruited 1,580 pre-Games volunteers. Over a spell of 3 years or so, they greeted one group after another of volunteers to BOCOG—and saw them off back to their schools and society. In recognition of his enthusiastic work and outstanding performance, Chen Tingjun was named as BOCOG's Outstanding Staff Worker for 2 consecutive years.^①

1. 1. 2 Beijing Olympics and Paralympics Venue Volunteers

“Beijing Olympics and Paralympics venue volunteers” are volunteers who were recruited and managed by BOCOG to prepare and distribute Olympics and Paralympics accreditation cards, assume certain Games-time responsibilities, and voluntarily serve the Beijing Olympics and Paralympics Games at posts and times designated by BOCOG.

A total of 77,169 Beijing Olympics venue volunteers were recruited. Among them, 44,978 were non-specialized volunteers who were mainly from higher education institutions in Beijing and other provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the Central Government, and 32,141 specialized volunteers who could be broadly classified into 10 categories, namely: VIP accompaniment and language services; media operations; vehicle operators; security inspection; accommodation services; exhibition and awards ceremonies; competition organization; medical services; technical support; and religious services. Of the 77,169 venue volunteers, 51,507 were from higher education institutions in Beijing; 10,516 were from the various districts and counties of Beijing; 5,363 were from other parts of China (that is, from provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the Central Government); 8,348 were from the armed forces, and 1,435 were from Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan and overseas (see Figure 1.1).

^① www.chinamil.com.cn, “Retired Second Artillery Major General Applied to Serve as an Olympic Volunteer for 3 years”, reprinted in http://www.ourzg.com/bbs/read.php?fid=63&tid=46594&toread=1&skinco=wind_red.

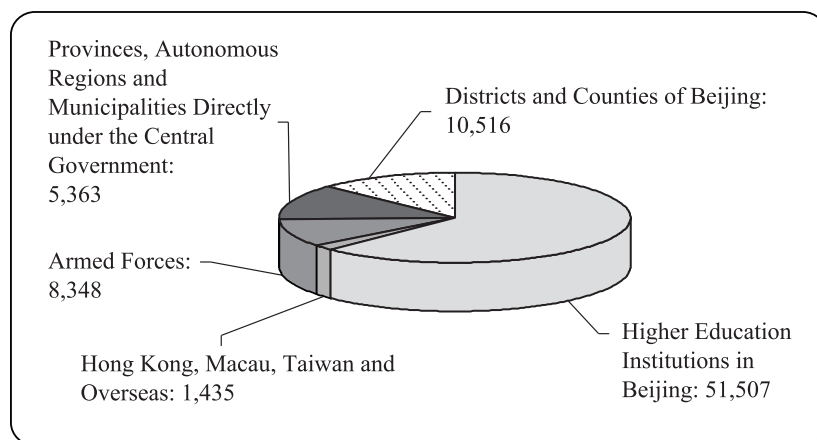


Figure 1.1 Sources of Beijing Olympic Venue Volunteers^①

► Volunteer's Story

Xu Xiaobo, male and a student from Beijing Sport University, was a beach volleyball volunteer for the Beijing Olympic Games.

Sand raking was his work. He started his first voluntary service when the first Olympic beach volleyball competition was held on the morning of August 11, 2008. "The Olympic Games requires sand to be raked ready within 30 minutes. We are on hand throughout the competitions." He was often soaked in sweat after just one match. "When we see athletes competing on the sand we have leveled, we know our work is worthwhile and we do not feel tired," he said, "and whenever the referee gives us a gesture, we immediately rise and take our rake out onto the court." Whilst wiping sweat off his body, Xu Xiaobo, who had just left the court, did not forget to remind another volunteer: "Mind the TV relay cables on the ground. There are also some sand pits in the middle, so please be extra careful!" To Xu Xiaobo, "sand raking is a skilled work." The sand rake usually weighs 2 or 3 kilograms, and is basically the same as an ordinary iron rake. Xu Xiaobo has his secret: do not apply too much force when raking sand. Do it slowly and at a small angle, an acute angle. He noted that raking the sand into a minor undulating form has the best effect.^②

For the Beijing Paralympics, a total of 44,261 venue volunteers were recruited,

① Sources: *Olympic Pioneers*, compiled by the Beijing Olympics Volunteer Coordinating Group, Beijing, Renmin Press, 2009 (As in Fig. 1. 2).

② *Volunteers*, Total Issue 22, p7.