



The CPD innovation in China: training for the grassroots

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Abstract:

“Volunteers Campaign Project in China” is a success story of Library Society of China in the CPD training field, which provides the over 3,000 grassroots librarians with free CPD training since the project started up in 2005. The paper analyses why and how to carry out the project, and the important factors and experiences from this innovation.

[Key Words] CPD Innovation Grassroots Librarians Strategy Leadership

I. Overview of “Volunteers Campaign Project in China”

i. Library society of China and its CPD training strategy

Library Society of China (LCS) is a non-government and non-profit organization established in 1979, which serves libraries, information institutions, librarians and professionals in China, and has more than 10,000 individual members and over 200 institution members.

The CPD training is one of the most important work fields for Library Society of China. Not only for the LSC’s members, also for the librarians and professionals in China Library Community, has the LSC provided with professional training. In the past few years, LSC has tried its best to innovate its CPD training, so that more grassroots librarians and professionals could have more opportunities to develop themselves in their professional lives. “Volunteers Campaign Project in China” is a successful story of LSC in CPD training field and helps many librarians and professional to strengthen their professional ability. In 2005-2010 LSC

Strategy Plan, CPD training for the grassroots is one of the important work fields, which also will be the focus of 2011-2015 LSC Strategy Plan.

ii. Profile of the “Volunteers Campaign Project in China ”

“Volunteers Campaign Project in China” was initiated by Library Society of China in 2006. From 2006 to now, over 3,000 grassroots librarians in grass-level from 26 provinces received free professional training from Library Society of China, and 133 famous librarians, professors and specialist were openly recruited as the volunteers for giving free training service for the grass-roots colleagues, 46 libraries and library associations have worked together promoting the project and help more colleagues to benefit from the project. The campaign has been warmly received within the library community itself and has also won high acclamation from those outside the community, which won the lots of awards, such as “2010 American Library Association Presidential Citation for International Innovation”, “National Library of China Director’s Special Award”, and “2009 Ministry of Culture Innovation Award”.

II. SWOT Analysis of the Project: Why to do

Upon entering the 21st century, with deepening reform and increased opening-up, China has seen remarkable social progress and substantial growth in overall national strength, and with the rapid development of China, Chinese librarianship is gaining more financial support and development opportunities from the government and the society. But it is a fact that China is the big country, so the development levels of the libraries in different area are various. In one side, there are lots of libraries in economic developed area, which have plenty budget to enrich the collection, to update the furniture and equipments, to continue the professional education for the librarians and library staffs, but on the other side, in some economic less-developed area, the librarians and professional in grass-level still need more professional support to strengthen their professional knowledge, to raise their service ability, and to update their concept about modern library. It is necessary for the development of Chinese librarianship to balance the development levels of the libraries in the different areas, and ‘Librarian’ is the crucial factor in the development of librarianship, therefore for balancing the development level of libraries, the first step should be to balance the professional development of librarians.

The above explains why LSC initiated the “Volunteers Campaign Project in China” The follows will explain why the project could be implemented in details.

i. Strengths-What LSC has

No doubt, for a CPD training project, ‘Trainee’ and ‘Trainer’ are the core elements of the project, which are LSC’s strengths. LSC has over 10,000 members from various libraries in different areas, and LSC knows what the grassroots librarians need to learn and know how to help them to continue their professional development. Library Society of China has good relationship with almost all provincial library associations and lots of grassroots public libraries, which could help to organize the grassroots librarians to join the training program.

LSC also has professional committee composed of over 100 famous librarians and professors from library school, which is a strong back-up for selecting of the project trainers.

ii. Weakness- What LSC lacks

Financing is the most important problem for a free CPD training program; of course, lack of project financing is the main weakness of LSC. For solving the financing problem, 4 methods were discussed to carry out: 1. Open recruitment of volunteers as the trainer of the project so that the grassroots librarians could continue their professional development freely without paying for training; 2. Cooperate with the provincial library associations, local government and some big libraries to provide the free training rooms for the grassroots librarians; 3. Cooperate with National Library of China and The National Cultural Information Resource Sharing Center of the Ministry of Culture of the P.R.C. to provide the operation budget for the project; 4. Encourage grassroots librarians to look for financial resources from the local government for their travel expenses. The above 4 methods are solutions for the financial problems. Since 2008, LSC has found a stable and plenty financial support to operate the project.

iii. Opportunities-What the project may take

Obviously once the project is implemented successfully, all-win situation should be expected. Firstly the grass-roots librarians, under the limited training budget control, will gain the free training opportunities to update their knowledge, which will be good for their continuing professional development. Secondly, the project will improve the professional ability of the grass-roots librarians definitely will help to raise the service work of the local grass-roots libraries, so the project is a good opportunity for development of the grass-roots libraries. Thirdly, the project will help the Library Society of China to unite and attract more librarians and libraries, which should be the opportunity for Library Society of China to strengthen the leadership in Chinese library community.

iv. Threat-What LSC has to face

The threat LSC has to face is that with the rapid development of technology and economic, the development of the grassroots library, especially ones in the poor area, which is not only the threat to the LSC, also the threat to the development of the Chinese librarianship. So updating the library knowledge and improving the service ability of the grassroots is an urgent request for Chinese Librarianship and LSC. A CPD project should be carried out for changing the above situation.

III. Aim of “Volunteers Campaign Project in China ”

The one aim of “Volunteers Campaign Project in China” is to provide free training for the librarians from grassroots libraries who have few opportunities and few budgets for the CPD training. Another aim of the project is to strengthen the spirits of “Dedication”, “Fraternity”, “Mutual-aid” and “Progress” existing in the library community, and to unite all librarians in all China together to go through the dilemma.

The project definitely could help to enhance the professional knowledge of the grass-roots librarians, which is obviously good to balance the library development situation between the

less-developed areas and the developed areas, and to break through the bottle neck of the development of grass-roots public libraries, the urgently needs of a healthy and scientific public library system.

IV. Factors of “Volunteers Campaign Project in China ”

i. Target group

For promoting the library development in less-economic developed area, the directors from the grass-roots public libraries and the county libraries are designed as the target group. With its limited resources, it is impossible for the project to provide free training for all librarians and staff in the public libraries. In some degree, the directors of the grass-roots libraries are the leaders of their libraries, and have the strong power to change their library and the librarians in the future. If they could learn the valuable concept about modern library and the service models from LSC CPD training, it is possible for them to provide more CPD knowledge for their librarians and staffs.

ii. Volunteers

In March of 2006, LSC openly recruited the volunteers for the “Volunteers Campaign Project in China”. Before recruiting, some initiators of the CPD project made some qualities description for the volunteers.

1. The volunteers must be professors or associate professors from the Library and Information School, or should be directors or senior librarians having rich work experience, which guarantees the volunteers should be trainers with high professional quality.
2. The volunteers should have the outstanding skill on presentation, and have the deep understanding on what they will present
3. The volunteers should guarantee to respect the training time, and give training without payment.
4. The volunteers should be in good health condition.

Publishing the job description and qualities on the LSC website in March of 2006, lots of professionals showed their interests on the project and applied for the volunteers, in which 26 professionals were selected as the volunteers for 2006 “Volunteers Campaign Project in China”. Most of the volunteers were professors from the LIS schools and directors of public and academic libraries, 3 of volunteers were the LSC deputy presidents. Since 2006 about 160 volunteers at total were selected and joined the project.

iii. CPD Training courses

With publishing recruitment of the volunteers, the initiators of project announced the drafted topics of training,

1. The role of libraries in the countryside construction
2. Practical guidance for chief librarians in grassroots libraries
3. Resource development and services in grassroots-level libraries
4. Automation and increasing the popularity of web usage at grassroots-level libraries;

5. Model lectures for library promotion

In April of 2006, all volunteers, project initiators and LSC leaders worked together and discussed about the implement plan of the project, and the outline of the training courses are finalized

1. The role of libraries in the development of countryside
2. Practical guidance for chief librarians at grassroots-level libraries
3. Resource development and services in grassroots-level libraries
4. Automation and increasing the popularity of web usage at grassroots-level libraries
5. Publicity and promotion of grassroots-level libraries.

The training length of each course is designed as half day. According to the outline of the training courses, textbooks and reference materials were compiled. From 2006 to 2011, just few changes happened on the outline of the training courses, but the details of training knowledge have been updated with the development of the librarianship.

V. Forming and Implement of the Project

The project started up in 2006, but how to develop CPD training in “volunteers” pattern were discussed in 2005. In the summer of 2005, an investigation team comprised by the Information Transmission Institute of Peking University, the Hunan Library and the Hengyang Library carried out a study on the grass-root libraries in Hengyang area, and found that the development conditions of the grassroots libraries are not so good. In Oct of 2006, the 1st Conference of 100 Directors of County Libraries was held, the survival and development of grass-roots libraries are hot topic of the conference. The scholars and the participants of the conference agreed that it was necessary to carry out CPD training for the grassroots librarians for breaking through the bottle neck in the development of Chinese librarianship. Actually, in some degree, the conference enlightened the “Volunteers Campaign Project in China”. The conference raised the attention from the library community, and in November of 2005, the LSC Professional Development Committee presented the proposal of “Volunteers Campaign Project in China”. At the beginning of 2006, LSC made a decision to start up the “Volunteers Campaign Project in China” as the most important plan in LSC CPD training field.

In the past 5 year, LSC cooperated with 46 provincial libraries associations, libraries and local governments to provide the CPD training for over 3000 grass-roots librarians

Year	Provinces involved	participants	volunteers	Training hours
2006	Hunan Shaanxi Heilongjiang	300	26	144
2007	Gansu Hebei Qinghai Shanxi Si Chuan Guangxi	620	40	288
2008	Anhui Guizhou Henan Hubei Jilin Shandong	710	14	288
2009	Chongqing Hainan Jiangxi Ningxia Yunan	700	25	240
2010	Jiangsu Zhejiang Guangdong Fujian Liaoning Guangdong	683	28	288
Total	26 provinces involved in the projects	3013 participants had free CPD training	133 volunteer joined the projects	1248 training hours were provided

In the future plan, “Volunteers Campaign Project in China” will cover not only the public libraries, but also more types of libraries, such as school libraries, more and more librarians and staff from various libraries will gain the free training opportunities from the project.

VI. Good Effect of the CPD Training Project

i. Positive influence to the grass-root librarians

Professional training is very important for librarians’ continuing professional development, and training will help the grass-roots to update their knowledge, especially the knowledge

about the modern library, digital library, and so on, which is a good platform for continuing their career life. Via the project, 3013 librarians from 26 provinces gained the opportunities of CPD training, and many of them think the project will help for their future work.

“We are going to put the experience and knowledge we learned from the training program into everyday practice in our library, and to take the professionals’ and scholars’ thoughts home with us. A patron-centered reader service is our objective! Libraries are the base of mainstream culture. Each chief librarian serves as a torch for culture. His mission is to light the local flame of culture. We become fire when we are together and we are sparkle of fire when we are spread out! Now, I would like to make a wish for all our colleagues in the library community. I wish for us to stand tall, to walk out of hardship, to take every opportunity to lead our libraries’ cause to prosperity. Although we are common people, we are building something of great significance through our ordinary work!”

Quoted from the grass-roots librarian involved in the project

ii. Good strategy for strengthening the leadership of LSC

The strategy of providing free CPD Training for the grass-roots has obviously help to strengthen the leadership of Library Society of China. The development of librarianship depends on the service quality of librarians, and raising the service quality depends on the librarians’ CPD. Via the project, Library Society of China spreads the knowledge and the core value to the trainees, and influences their thought and work which indicates that leadership of Library Society of China is strengthened.

iii. More attention of the Government to librarians’ CPD

It is no doubt that the government plays a very important role in the development of librarianship. With the support of the government, library could gain more budget and better policy which is an advantage for library environment. The volunteer campaign raised the awareness of the Central Government and other local governments to the important role of public libraries, and attracted their attention for joining the project. Some government officials listened to the volunteer professionals’ courses and took part in the discussions with the chief librarians of grassroots libraries. The National Cultural Information Resource Sharing Center of the Ministry of Culture of the P.R.C. actively participated in this campaign. In 2009, the Ministry of Culture conferred the “Innovation of Service Award” to the organizers of the volunteer campaign. According to the statistics, the premise areas, acquisition budgets and the number of computers in county-level libraries have all increased over the past five years.

iv. Recognition from the Chinese and worldwide library community

The project insists on the core value of "Free-of-charge, Non-profit and Altruistic", which is highly recognized by the Chinese library community. Many Chinese librarians, on one side, believe firmly that the spirit and the core value of the project will encourage more volunteers and professionals to join in the project, on the other side, see the outstanding performance of the project. In 2009 the project won the Director’s Special Award of NLC (National Library of China), and won “2010 American Library Association Presidential Citation for

International Innovation”, which meant the project was recognized at home, and even abroad among library communities.

VII. Conclusion

- Free training is the effective way to provide the CPD opportunities for the grassroots.
 - A non-profit CPD project is good for spreading the knowledge of modern library and establishing the positive value in library community
 - An excellent CPD project helps to strengthen the leadership of the library association.
 - A large-scale and non-profit CPD training project depends on the support from the whole library community, including the professionals and librarians as volunteers, and libraries, librarian associations and government as the partners of the project.
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Short biographical statement

Wu Yue

Wu Yue graduated and got the Master Degree from the Lanzhou University in 2004. From then on, she has devoted herself into Library Society of China. In the past 7 years, Wu Yue was not only responsible for the international training projects of Library Society of China, also involved in some projects and programs of CPD in China. She is familiar with almost all training model of Library Society of China, and has rich experience in CPD field. She has strong interested in the training for the grass roots, and work as a team member of 2010 “Volunteers Campaign Project in China” which won the 2010 ALA Presidential Citation for Innovative International Library Projects.

Hao Jinmin

Hao Jinmin graduated and got a Bachelor's degree from the Renmin University in 2003. From then on, he has devoted himself into the work at the National Library of China. He is now the coordinator of the IFLA Chinese Language Center, IFLA PAC China Center both of which are set in the National Library of China and Program Officer of the International Cooperation Division of the National Library of China. In the past years, he was involved in the organization of some major projects like Staff (Librarian) Attachment, International (Librarian) Internship Programs, International Symposiums, etc.