

## International Disability Assistance Volunteer Service with Chinese Characteristics: Models, Practices, and Effectiveness

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**ABSTRACT:** Against the backdrop of deepening global cooperation in disability affairs and the growing international influence of China, this study aims to systematically analyze the core models, specific practices, defining characteristics, and comprehensive effectiveness of international disability assistance volunteer service with Chinese characteristics. Employing qualitative research methodology, including in-depth multi-case analysis and policy document review, the research examines the current state of China's international disability assistance volunteer service. The findings reveal that China's international disability assistance volunteer service manifests primarily in three models: the Government-Led Strategic Service Model, the Specialized Skill-Based Technical Assistance Model, and the Social Force-Driven Supplementary Exploration Model. Its "Chinese characteristics" are prominently reflected in high-level national strategic coordination, the pivotal role of official institutions (e.g., China Disabled Persons' Federation - CDPF), reliance on practical technology and collective action, and inherent connections with Chinese cultural values. Specific practices demonstrate diverse pathways ranging from large-scale medical assistance and rehabilitation technology training to localized capacity building. In terms of effectiveness, such volunteer services have yielded positive outcomes in improving the well-being of beneficiary populations, promoting local capacity building, and enhancing China's international image. However, challenges persist in sustainability, deep cultural adaptation, substantive participation of beneficiaries, and systematic effectiveness evaluation. This study deepens the understanding of international volunteer service models within specific national contexts and provides practical policy recommendations for optimizing the top-level design of China's international disability assistance volunteer service and enhancing project quality and sustainable effectiveness.

**Keywords:** international disability assistance volunteer service; Chinese characteristics; practice pathways; effectiveness analysis; disability affairs

## I. INTRODUCTION

In the context of globalization, international cooperation on disability affairs has become increasingly important and frequent, with its trends and challenges constantly evolving. As a responsible major country, China has consistently been an active participant in global governance affairs, demonstrating proactive engagement in international development cooperation, including volunteer services. The Outline of the 14th Five-Year Plan for the Development of Persons with Disabilities explicitly states that the cause of persons with disabilities is an integral part of the socialist cause with Chinese characteristics, and supporting persons with disabilities is a significant indicator of social civilization and progress. On the new journey towards comprehensively building a modern socialist country, China must not leave persons with disabilities behind. It emphasizes the need to continue accelerating the development of the cause of persons with disabilities, enabling persons with disabilities to join the entire population in actively participating in the great practice of building a modern socialist country in all respects, jointly creating and sharing a happier and better life. This provides a solid policy foundation and developmental direction for China's international disability assistance volunteer service.

However, current academic research on China's international disability assistance volunteer service system is relatively scarce, particularly lacking in-depth analysis of its "characteristics," specific operations, and actual effectiveness. This study aims to enrich the theory of international volunteer service, provide empirical support for discussions on the "Chinese model" or "Chinese experience" in this specific field, and promote the development of comparative volunteer service research. Simultaneously, it seeks to offer references for Chinese government departments, the CDPF system, NGOs, enterprises, and other stakeholders to optimize the design of international disability assistance volunteer service projects, enhance management levels and practical outcomes, and provide valuable experience for developing countries undertaking similar initiatives. It explores how to balance national strategic needs with humanitarian and developmental goals, genuinely achieving a person with disability-centered approach.

The development of the cause of persons with disabilities is not only a crucial domestic issue for China but also an integral component of global sustainable development. The Outline of the 14th Five-Year Plan for the Development of Persons with Disabilities sets out major goals for 2025 and 2035, including consolidating and expanding the achievements in poverty alleviation among persons with disabilities, improving their quality of life, and enhancing their well-being. The Outline also emphasizes key tasks such as improving the social security system for persons with disabilities, assisting urban and rural persons with disabilities in employment and entrepreneurship, and perfecting the care service system for persons with disabilities. The implementation of these goals and tasks not only elevates the quality of life and well-being of persons with disabilities within China but also provides a rich reservoir of experience and practical foundation for China's international disability assistance volunteer service, thereby boosting China's influence in international disability affairs<sup>[1]</sup>.

This paper will focus on the aforementioned core issues. Subsequent sections will delve into model identification and practice analysis, effectiveness analysis, and discussion. Finally, conclusions will be drawn and policy recommendations proposed, aiming to provide theoretical support and practical guidance for the further development of China's international disability assistance volunteer service.

## II. MODEL IDENTIFICATION AND PRACTICE ANALYSIS OF INTERNATIONAL DISABILITY ASSISTANCE VOLUNTEER SERVICE WITH CHINESE CHARACTERISTICS

### 1. Model 1: Government-led strategic service model

Within the framework of international disability assistance volunteer service with Chinese characteristics, the Government-Led Strategic Service Model distinctly highlights its "Chinese characteristics." The Party and the government play pivotal roles in this model. It is closely aligned with national diplomatic strategies, such as actively organizing international disability assistance volunteer services under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and South-South Cooperation frameworks. These services serve as crucial instruments for demonstrating China's responsibility as a major country and fostering people-to-people bonds. Official institutions like the China Disabled Persons' Federation (CDPF) act as core hubs, coordinating diverse resources and ensuring the smooth implementation of projects. Simultaneously, this model exemplifies the spirit of collectivism and leverages the socialist institutional advantage of mobilizing resources for major undertakings. This enables the rapid integration of professional expertise from various fields such as healthcare, education, and rehabilitation, generating significant scale effects.

At the practical level, large-scale medical assistance projects are typical representatives of the Government-Led Strategic Service Model. The "Brightness Action" project stands as an exemplary case. Taking the Cameroon "Brightness Action" project as an example: On June 1, 2016, the Chinese government initiated this project for the first time in Cameroon, planning to perform 500 sight-restoring cataract surgeries for local patients. During implementation, Chinese medical experts conducted surgeries simultaneously at two sites, including the Mbalmayo Hospital in the Centre Region of Cameroon. All surgeries utilized Chinese equipment. China also donated ophthalmic medical equipment and medicines to two local hospitals. Following the project, three Cameroonian ophthalmologists were invited to China for training. This project was led by the Chinese government, coordinated by the Chinese Embassy in Cameroon, and specifically implemented by an expert team from the Shanxi Eye Hospital, with the cooperation of Cameroonian health authorities. Funding primarily came from Chinese government aid. Through intergovernmental cooperation and coordination, the project not only restored sight to Cameroonian cataract patients but also strengthened China-Cameroon cooperation in the healthcare sector and enhanced friendship between the two peoples<sup>[2]</sup>.

### 2. Model 2: Specialized skill-based technical assistance model

Within China's international disability assistance volunteer service, the Specialized Skill-Based Technical Assistance Model demonstrates unique "Chinese characteristics." Its core lies in fully leveraging the professional and technical strengths of China's public medical, educational, and rehabilitation institutions. By sharing practical technologies and experiences with recipient countries, it aims to enhance local capacity in disability assistance services. Furthermore, it employs a "master-apprentice" training approach to facilitate the cultivation of local talent within recipient countries, striving to build a locally-rooted, sustainable professional disability assistance workforce.

Chinese Medical Teams (CMTs) stationed abroad are paragons of this model. Deployed long-term in numerous countries across Africa and Asia, they not only directly provide diagnostic and treatment services to local persons with disabilities (e.g., cataract surgery, orthopedic correction) but, more crucially, conduct technical demonstrations, surgical mentoring, and systematic training. For instance, in multiple African countries, CMTs have consistently implemented acupuncture therapy services and training programs. Chinese doctors use acupuncture to alleviate pain and treat illnesses for local patients, including many persons with

disabilities. More importantly, they provide hands-on training for local medical staff to master acupuncture techniques, cultivating batches of independently practicing acupuncturists locally. This allows this distinctive Chinese medical technology to take root and continue serving the local population, including persons with disabilities<sup>[3]</sup>. This "teaching to fish" approach significantly enhances the rehabilitation service capacity of primary healthcare institutions in recipient countries, bringing tangible benefits.

China's specialized skill output extends beyond healthcare. In the fields of special education and rehabilitation, China actively shares its experience and technology with developing countries. For example, the CDPF and related organizations conduct overseas training programs for special education teachers, dispatching experts to recipient countries (e.g., in Southeast Asia, Africa) to deliver lectures. They teach educational methodologies and curriculum design concepts tailored to children with different types of disabilities (e.g., visual impairment, hearing impairment, intellectual disability) and assist in training local special education teachers. Regarding rehabilitation technology, Chinese teams overseas (e.g., in Cambodia, Laos) not only directly provide rehabilitation assessments and training for persons with disabilities but also impart practical rehabilitation techniques, knowledge of assistive device fitting, and methods for making simple assistive devices to local rehabilitation center staff. This helps them establish or enhance localized rehabilitation service systems<sup>[4]</sup>. These projects emphasize the applicability of technologies and the cultivation of local talent, striving to achieve "going in and staying."

Although China's achievements in research and development (R&D) of assistive rehabilitation technologies are currently undergoing clinical trials and applications primarily domestically, their successful experiences and technological concepts lay the groundwork for future international cooperation and transfer of more advanced rehabilitation technologies. For example, among the innovative technology-assisted disability cases released by the CDPF, the wireless minimally invasive implantable brain-computer interface technology developed by the team of Li Xiaoguang from Beihang University and Capital Medical University has completed long-term implantation clinical trials on three cases, helping patients with high-level paraplegia regain hand movement<sup>[5]</sup>. Additionally, the "brain glue" technology for treating stroke, developed by the Beijing Institute for Brain Disorders and Jianda Jiuzhou (Beijing) Biotechnology Co., Ltd., utilizes self-developed bioactive materials. In animal experiments, it successfully achieved the generation of new neurons, neural network reconstruction, and vascular regeneration within the stroke cavity, offering new hope for stroke patient rehabilitation<sup>[6]</sup>. These technological achievements not only demonstrate China's professional strength in the field of assistive rehabilitation technology but also reflect its active efforts in promoting technology transfer and localized application within international disability assistance volunteer service. Relevant departments and institutions are actively exploring how to make these cutting-edge technologies benefit persons with disabilities in more developing countries through international cooperation projects, while fully considering cost, applicability, and ethical implications.

### 3. Model 3: Social force-driven supplementary exploration model

Within China's international disability assistance volunteer service, the Social Force-Driven Supplementary Exploration Model exhibits "distinctive Chinese characteristics." Guided and regulated by the government, this model encourages social forces—including social organizations (NGOs, foundations) and enterprises—to actively "go global." It emphasizes social responsibility and humanistic care, aligns with the development stage of domestic philanthropy, and injects new vitality and innovative momentum into international disability assistance volunteer service.

Social organizations play a significant role. For instance, the "World Full of Sounds and Smiles" project, jointly implemented by the Beijing Aier Foundation and Starkey Hearing Foundation, provides free hearing aid fittings and rehabilitation support for hearing-impaired individuals in places like Gansu, China. Having helped tens of thousands regain their hearing, its influence is gradually expanding overseas, becoming a model for international disability cooperation<sup>[7]</sup>. Furthermore, the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation (CFPA), in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), implemented a disability assistance and poverty reduction project in Turkmenistan. Through online training courses, it promoted equal employment rights for persons with disabilities in Turkmenistan and advanced the development of local disability affairs<sup>[8]</sup>.

Enterprises are also actively involved. For example, the Tencent Foundation launched the "Global Accessibility Initiative," collaborating with international disability organizations. Leveraging internet technology, it provides online education, employment training, and other services for persons with disabilities globally, helping them better integrate into society and enhance their development capabilities<sup>[9]</sup>.

These cases illustrate the significant potential and value of the Social Force-Driven Supplementary Exploration Model within China's international disability assistance volunteer service. The active participation of social forces like social organizations and enterprises not only enriches the content and forms of disability assistance volunteer service but also provides more diversified and specialized services for persons with disabilities in recipient countries. It drives the development of local disability affairs and injects new vitality and momentum into the evolution of China's international disability assistance volunteer service.

#### 4. Interactions and evolutionary trends among the models

Within the framework of international disability assistance volunteer service with Chinese characteristics, the Government-Led Strategic Service Model, the Specialized Skill-Based Technical Assistance Model, and the Social Force-Driven Supplementary Exploration Model are interconnected and mutually reinforcing, collectively driving the development of disability assistance volunteer service.

The Government-Led Strategic Service Model provides policy support and resource guarantees for the other models. For instance, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the South-South Cooperation framework offer strategic guidance and financial support for large-scale medical assistance projects like "Brightness Action." Simultaneously, they create a favorable external environment for projects under the Specialized Skill-Based Technical Assistance Model, such as the dispatch of medical teams and special education teacher training programs. Government guidance and regulation enable social forces—such as social organizations and enterprises—within the Social Force-Driven Supplementary Exploration Model to participate in disability assistance volunteer service in an orderly and rule-based manner.

The Specialized Skill-Based Technical Assistance Model, with its focus on professionalism and technical expertise, provides concrete implementation pathways and methods for the Government-Led Strategic Service Model. For example, dispatching medical teams to conduct surgical demonstrations and technical guidance not only directly improves the health status of persons with disabilities in recipient countries but also enhances local medical standards through technology transfer<sup>[10]</sup>. Furthermore, the cultivation of local talent within the Specialized Skill-Based Technical Assistance Model provides personnel support for projects under the Social Force-Driven Supplementary Exploration Model, such as community-based rehabilitation programs, enabling social forces to operate more effectively<sup>[11]</sup>.

The Social Force-Driven Supplementary Exploration Model, characterized by its flexibility and innovation, provides valuable supplementation to both the Government-Led Strategic Service Model and the Specialized Skill-Based Technical Assistance Model. The participation of social forces like social organizations and enterprises not only offers diversified services for persons with disabilities in recipient countries but also provides more practical scenarios and innovative ideas for government-led and skill-based technical assistance projects.

Regarding future development directions, the models are expected to undergo further integration and synergistic development.

**Strengthening Synergy between Social Forces and the Government-Led Model.** The government can further refine the policy support system, providing social organizations, universities, and enterprises with more opportunities and resources for participation. This encourages them to undertake more innovative and flexible disability assistance volunteer service projects within the government-led framework.

**Promoting the Integration of Specialized Skills and Social Forces.** Projects under the Specialized Skill-Based Technical Assistance Model can be combined with those under the Social Force-Driven Supplementary Exploration Model. For example, social organizations can collaborate with professional medical teams to deliver rehabilitation services, or universities can partner with enterprises for assistive device R&D and promotion, achieving complementary advantages.

**Driving Model Integration and Innovation.** New types of disability assistance volunteer service models that integrate elements of government leadership, specialized skills, and social forces are likely to emerge. For instance, the government could provide policy support and funding guidance; social organizations could be responsible for project implementation and management; professional institutions could offer technical support and training; and enterprises could participate in investment and resource development. This would form a new pattern of multi-stakeholder collaborative cooperation in disability assistance volunteer service.

**Enhancing International Cooperation and Exchange.** China can share its models and experiences in international disability assistance volunteer service with other countries, while also learning from international best practices to elevate the internationalization level of China's disability assistance volunteer service<sup>[12]</sup>. Simultaneously, China should actively participate in the formulation of international standards and rules for disability assistance volunteer service, contributing more "Chinese wisdom" and "Chinese solutions" to the global development of the cause of persons with disabilities.

### **III. EFFECTIVENESS ANALYSIS OF INTERNATIONAL DISABILITY AID VOLUNTEER SERVICE WITH CHINESE CHARACTERISTICS**

#### **1. Major achievements and positive effectiveness**

The international disability aid volunteer service with Chinese characteristics has demonstrated multifaceted achievements and positive effectiveness. In terms of improving livelihood and well-being, the "Brightness Action" project, a key initiative led by the China Disabled Persons' Federation (CDPF), has restored sight to numerous cataract patients in recipient countries. These patients experienced significant improvements in vision, enhanced self-care abilities, and a greatly increased possibility of reintegrating into society. The acupuncture training programs conducted by Chinese medical teams in Africa not only provided effective treatment for local patients but also ensured the transmission and development of acupuncture techniques in Africa by training local doctors, injecting new vitality into the local healthcare system. Furthermore, surgical demonstrations and technical guidance provided by Chinese medical teams overseas directly enhanced local medical standards, benefiting more patients. These cases indicate that China's international disability aid

volunteer service has yielded significant results in improving the livelihood and well-being of recipient countries, not only enhancing patients' quality of life but also boosting their confidence and courage in facing life's challenges.

Regarding promoting capacity building, the acupuncture training programs by Chinese medical teams in Africa, through an "apprenticeship model," cultivated a cohort of professional acupuncturists locally. After training, these acupuncturists continued to apply their acquired skills in local medical practice, providing treatment for patients and effectively elevating local healthcare standards. Additionally, community-based rehabilitation (CBR) projects implemented by China overseas, through collaboration with local community workers and understanding local cultural contexts and the living conditions of persons with disabilities, developed service plans aligned with local cultural characteristics, thereby enhancing the service capabilities of local community workers. These projects not only upgraded the professional skills of local personnel in recipient countries but also strengthened the service capacity of local institutions, laying the foundation for the sustainable development of disability affairs in these countries.

In terms of enhancing international friendship and elevating the national image, large-scale medical aid projects like "Brightness Action" not only improved the living conditions of persons with disabilities in recipient countries but also strengthened friendly relations between the nations. China demonstrated to the world its commitment and care for disability affairs, enhancing its international recognition and reputation. The acupuncture training programs by Chinese medical teams in Africa, through exchanges and cooperation with local medical personnel, fostered medical collaboration and cultural exchange between China and Africa, deepening the friendship between the peoples. Moreover, China's disability aid volunteer service overseas emphasizes integration with local cultures, respecting local customs and religious beliefs, which facilitates greater recognition and acceptance of Chinese volunteers by local residents, further elevating China's national image.

Concerning promoting the dissemination of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) principles, China's international disability aid volunteer service projects fully embody CRPD principles in their design and implementation. For example, the "Brightness Action" project, by providing free cataract surgeries, promoted the right of persons with disabilities to enjoy the highest attainable standard of health, reflecting the principles of inclusion and accessibility in the CRPD. The acupuncture training programs by Chinese medical teams in Africa, by training local doctors, improved local medical standards and promoted equal access to healthcare opportunities for persons with disabilities, embodying the principles of empowerment and participation in the CRPD. Furthermore, CBR projects conducted overseas, through collaboration with local community workers to develop culturally appropriate service plans, respected and safeguarded the cultural rights of persons with disabilities, reflecting the human rights model of the CRPD. Through concrete actions and outcomes, these projects demonstrate China's practice and promotion of CRPD principles to the world, contributing "China's strength" and "China's wisdom" to the global development of disability affairs.

In summary, China's international disability aid volunteer service has achieved significant accomplishments in improving livelihood and well-being, promoting capacity building, enhancing international friendship and the national image, and advancing the dissemination of CRPD principles, demonstrating its positive effectiveness. These achievements have not only brought tangible benefits to persons with disabilities in recipient countries but have also made positive contributions to the global development of disability affairs.

## 2. Challenges and constraints to enhancing effectiveness

Despite numerous achievements, the international disability aid volunteer service with Chinese

characteristics also faces several challenges and constraints to enhancing its effectiveness, detailed as follows.

**Sustainability Challenges:** Some current projects are overly reliant on external funding and personnel support, lacking sufficient self-sustainability capacity ("self-hematopoietic ability"). Once external resources are withdrawn, the continuity of these projects is questionable. Concurrently, the exit mechanisms for some projects are unclear, with relatively deficient follow-up and long-term impact safeguarding measures post-project completion, making it difficult to ensure long-term effectiveness. For instance, some overseas CBR projects, primarily dependent on external funding and professional personnel deployment, achieved certain results during implementation. However, after project completion, the lack of corresponding local resources and capacity to continue such projects led to difficulties in sustaining the project outcomes.

**Cultural Adaptation and Communication Barriers:** Differences in language, culture, and customs among different countries and regions pose challenges to China's international disability aid volunteer service. Volunteers may encounter cultural misunderstandings or communication difficulties during interactions with local residents and project execution, potentially leading to deviations in project implementation and affecting service effectiveness. For example, when implementing disability aid projects in certain countries, insufficient understanding of local cultural customs might lead volunteers' actions or project arrangements to inadvertently offend local residents, causing misunderstandings and resistance, thereby hindering the smooth progress of projects.

**Insufficient Needs Assessment and Precise Matching:** Prior to project launch, investigations into the actual needs of persons with disabilities in recipient countries are often inadequate in depth and comprehensiveness. This results in some projects being disconnected from genuine local needs. Furthermore, the lack of effective information sharing and coordination mechanisms leads to a "one-size-fits-all" approach in some projects, failing to fully consider the specific needs of different regions and different disability groups, thereby impacting the targeting and effectiveness of volunteer services. According to the Blue Book of Disability Aid Volunteer Service (2022), research found that 40% of projects did not design services focusing on specific groups, exhibiting problems of insufficient personalization and differentiation<sup>[13]</sup>.

**Limitations in Empowerment and Participation:** Beneficiary persons with disabilities have relatively low participation levels in project design, management, and evaluation. Their opinions and suggestions are not fully heard or adopted, potentially leading to projects failing to effectively meet their actual needs during implementation and, to some extent, affecting their enthusiasm and initiative. Simultaneously, some projects exhibit deficiencies in empowerment, failing to fully stimulate the self-development capabilities and potential of persons with disabilities, which is detrimental to their self-realization and long-term development.

**Inadequate Monitoring and Evaluation System:** There is currently a lack of a systematic, scientific, and comprehensive effectiveness evaluation mechanism and data support system. It is difficult to accurately monitor and assess various indicators during project implementation, hindering a comprehensive and objective reflection of the actual results and impact of projects. This not only impedes experience summarization and improvement but also makes it challenging to demonstrate project effectiveness and value to stakeholders, thereby affecting project sustainability and resource acquisition. For example, in some disability aid volunteer service projects, while certain results were achieved, the lack of effective evaluation methods and data support made it difficult to accurately measure the actual benefits and social impact.

**Need to Enhance Professionalism and Standardization:** The professional level in volunteer selection, training, management, and project operation varies. Some volunteers lack necessary professional knowledge and skill training, potentially leading to non-standard operations or inadequate service delivery during service, affecting service quality. Regarding project operation, management processes for some projects are

insufficiently standardized, lacking clear division of responsibilities and effective supervision mechanisms, resulting in low project execution efficiency and frequent issues like resource wastage.

#### IV. DISCUSSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

##### 1. Discussion

Against the backdrop of deepening global cooperation on disability affairs and China's rising international influence, China's international disability aid volunteer service is deeply integrated with the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the South-South Cooperation framework in terms of its model construction, practice pathways, and effectiveness. The interactive relationship and mutual shaping mechanisms warrant in-depth exploration. Building upon existing research, this section further examines the positioning of disability aid volunteer service within the BRI strategy and how the strategic framework shapes the content and form of such services.

The BRI, as a crucial platform for China's efforts to build a community with a shared future for mankind, provides broad space and strategic guidance for international disability aid volunteer service through its "people-to-people bonds" component. Disability aid volunteer service plays a vital role in promoting humanitarian exchanges and consolidating popular support. Taking the "Brightness Action" project as an example, its implementation in BRI partner countries like Cameroon transcends mere medical aid; it serves as a bridge for cultural exchange and mutual understanding between China and recipient nations. By performing sight-restoring surgeries, Chinese medical experts convey advanced medical technology and humanitarian care to local populations, allowing beneficiaries to personally experience China's goodwill and responsibility, thereby strengthening emotional ties and political mutual trust between the countries. In this process, disability aid volunteer service, by directly touching people's livelihoods and improving lives, becomes a powerful tool within the BRI for fostering people-to-people bonds and building friendly international relations. This helps consolidate the popular foundation for BRI construction and creates a favorable social environment for economic development and cooperation among participating countries.

Simultaneously, the strategic planning and resource allocation mechanisms of the BRI profoundly shape the content and form of disability aid volunteer service. Under the BRI framework, projects are closely aligned with the actual needs and development goals of recipient countries, emphasizing integration with local infrastructure development in healthcare, education, etc. Project content extends beyond medical rehabilitation to encompass special education, vocational training, and other fields, forming a comprehensive disability service model. During implementation, multiple actors – including the government, enterprises, and social organizations – collaborate synergistically, integrating resources to ensure efficient execution and sustainable development. For instance, in some countries, Chinese enterprises collaborate with local institutions to jointly build disability rehabilitation centers and special education schools, providing both hardware support and personnel training/technical guidance, achieving localization and long-term viability of disability services.

Within the South-South Cooperation framework, China's international disability aid volunteer service further exemplifies solidarity and mutual assistance among developing nations. As the world's largest developing country, China selflessly shares its experience and technology in disability affairs development with other developing countries, helping them enhance their service capacities and promote the development of disability affairs. This cooperation model not only helps address the practical difficulties faced by recipient countries but also strengthens the voice and influence of developing countries on the international stage, promoting the balanced development of global disability rights protection.

In summary, China's international disability aid volunteer service and the BRI/South-South Cooperation frameworks are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. On one hand, disability aid volunteer service provides the grand strategies with concrete pathways for humanitarian care and livelihood improvement, enhancing the affinity and effectiveness of strategic implementation. On the other hand, the strategic frameworks provide strategic opportunities and resource guarantees for disability aid volunteer service, driving innovation and upgrading of volunteer service models. Deepening this interaction in the future will help enhance the quality and effectiveness of China's international disability aid volunteer service, contributing more "Chinese wisdom" and "Chinese solutions" to building a community with a shared future for mankind.

The practice of the "China Model" offers important insights for enriching theories of international volunteer service and development cooperation. It strongly demonstrates that, under specific political, economic, social, and cultural conditions, a strong government-led model can effectively integrate resources, rapidly respond to national strategic demands, and elevate volunteer service to a key vehicle for inter-state interaction, cooperation, and national image building, infusing new connotations into relevant theories<sup>[14]</sup>. However, the challenges highlighted in practice – such as sustainability dependence, cultural adaptation barriers, insufficient needs-based targeting, limited beneficiary empowerment and participation, lack of systematic effectiveness evaluation, and inherent flexibility tensions – prompt deeper reflection and point towards key directions for optimizing effectiveness.

The core of these challenges lies in achieving the transition from externally-input aid to cultivating endogenous development momentum through localized sustainability. This requires in-depth application of capacity building and sustainable development theories to construct long-term talent cultivation mechanisms and explore adaptive technology transfer pathways. Bridging the cultural gap urgently necessitates the systematic introduction of cross-cultural communication and participatory development theories to strengthen the cultural sensitivity of actors and build culturally adaptive mechanisms based on local partnerships.

The fundamental path to enhancing effectiveness lies in earnestly implementing the "person with disability-centered" principle. This relies on the deep practice of empowerment theory and participatory methods to ensure the substantive participation and voice of beneficiaries throughout the entire project cycle, and to carefully design initiatives that stimulate their self-development potential rather than fostering passive dependence. Establishing a scientific effectiveness evaluation system is the foundation for optimizing practice. It requires integrating methodologies from public policy and development project evaluation to construct a multi-dimensional framework focusing on medium-to-long-term impacts, changes in beneficiary well-being, and input-output efficiency, moving beyond simple activity quantity counts.

Ultimately, optimizing the "Chinese Characteristics" hinges on exploring the application of collaborative governance theory in practice. While maintaining the advantages of government leadership and resource coordination, it is essential to establish a more flexible collaborative network by clearly defining the boundaries of responsibilities and authorities among the government, professional institutions, and social forces (NGOs, enterprises). This will activate social innovation vitality and continuously enhance the professionalism and standardization of project operations<sup>[15]</sup>. Therefore, the future development of the China Model requires, while adhering to its own characteristics and institutional endowments, a more open approach to absorbing the essence of international theories. The goal is to find a new path for international disability aid volunteer service that balances executive efficiency, social equity, long-term sustainability, and profound cultural respect, contributing more inclusive and adaptive "Chinese wisdom" and "Chinese solutions" to the progress of global disability affairs.

## 2. Policy recommendations

At the governmental level, the government should strategically plan international disability support volunteering from a high-level perspective, strengthening inter-departmental coordination and collaboration by establishing cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms. This ensures that all relevant agencies can form synergies and jointly promote the development of international disability support volunteering. Regarding the improvement of laws and regulations, the government needs to construct a comprehensive legal framework to clarify the legal status of international disability support volunteering, fully safeguard the rights and interests of volunteers, and standardize the conduct of overseas activities<sup>[16]</sup>. Furthermore, the government should establish a scientific and reasonable performance evaluation framework. By creating project databases and regularly publishing evaluation reports, effective monitoring of project implementation processes and outcomes can be achieved. To promote the participation of social organizations in international disability support volunteering, the government should introduce a series of supportive policies, including providing financial support and capacity-building opportunities, to encourage social organizations to play a greater role in this field.

At the executing agency level, agencies need to focus on the professionalization of project management teams. Through clear division of responsibilities and comprehensive process management control, the quality of project planning, implementation, and evaluation can be enhanced. Before project initiation, executing agencies should conduct in-depth research into the actual needs of persons with disabilities in recipient countries, their cultural backgrounds, and socio-economic conditions. This ensures that project design closely aligns with local realities. Simultaneously, executing agencies must strengthen cultural sensitivity training for volunteers to enhance their cross-cultural communication skills, thereby enabling them to better adapt to the cultural environment of recipient countries and avoid unnecessary conflicts arising from cultural differences<sup>[17]</sup>. Additionally, executing agencies should actively explore diversified funding channels and establish localized talent cultivation mechanisms to provide a solid foundation for the long-term sustainable development of projects.

At the volunteer cultivation level, a comprehensive and rigorous selection standard should be established during the volunteer recruitment process. This involves evaluating volunteers comprehensively in terms of professional knowledge, communication skills, teamwork spirit, psychological resilience, and dedication to ensure selected volunteers possess sound professional competence and ethical qualities. To enhance volunteers' service skills, executing agencies need to strengthen volunteer training. Training content should cover professional knowledge and skills related to disability support, project background, management processes, and cross-cultural communication, among other aspects<sup>[18]</sup>. Concurrently, a well-developed volunteer incentive and safeguard mechanism is crucial. This not only attracts more outstanding talent to volunteer service but also increases volunteers' work enthusiasm and satisfaction by combining spiritual and material incentives. Furthermore, providing volunteers with adequate insurance and necessary medical and legal support is an important measure to safeguard their rights and interests<sup>[19]</sup>.

## V. CONCLUSION

This paper has conducted an in-depth exploration of the models, practices, and effectiveness of international disability aid volunteer service with Chinese characteristics. The research finds that within the government-led strategic service model, China's international disability aid volunteer service efficiently mobilizes resources and rapidly launches large-scale projects. The specialized skill output-oriented technical assistance model, leveraging domestic professional expertise, effectively enhances the disability aid capacity of recipient countries. The social force-driven supplementary exploration model provides diversified and flexible services to persons with disabilities in recipient countries. However, significant challenges persist in practice, including issues of sustainability, cultural adaptability, precise needs matching, beneficiary participation, and effectiveness evaluation.

International disability aid volunteer service with Chinese characteristics is the product of the interaction of factors such as the national system, cultural traditions, and developmental stage. The collectivist spirit and mutual aid ethos inherent in Chinese cultural traditions provide a powerful social synergy for international disability aid volunteer service. Yet, differences in the cultural backgrounds and value systems of recipients may influence the perception and acceptance of volunteer services. Furthermore, within the social force-driven supplementary exploration model, the active participation of social organizations, universities, and enterprises injects new vitality and innovative impetus into disability aid volunteer service. However, these organizations may encounter challenges during project implementation, such as insufficient funding, shortages of professional talent, and deficiencies in project management experience.

The primary perspective of this research is based on the analysis of Chinese policy texts and case studies. The lack of first-hand research from the recipient side may limit the comprehensiveness and objectivity of project effectiveness assessment. Future research should prioritize the recipient perspective, conducting field research in recipient countries. Employing a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods, future studies should gather the views, expectations, and suggestions of persons with disabilities and local partner organizations in recipient countries regarding China's international disability aid volunteer service. This will provide more targeted evidence for optimizing project adjustments. Simultaneously, strengthening international comparative research is essential to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of disability aid volunteer service models in other countries, offering valuable insights for Chinese practice. Additionally, promoting interdisciplinary research and encouraging scholars from diverse academic fields to collaborate will facilitate a multi-faceted exploration of the theoretical foundations, practical models, and policy recommendations for international disability aid volunteer service. This approach aims to provide richer and more comprehensive perspectives for research in this field.

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