

The Unique Value, Functional Positioning and Growth Reflection of Community Foundations under The Prevention and Control of The COVID-19

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Abstract

In the current grassroots governance process in China, as an important force in promoting social governance, community foundations play an important role in community residents' autonomy, integration of community resources, participation in community governance, and enhancement of social cohesion. my country's grassroots social governance and participation of grassroots social organizations in the governance of public crises are both a challenge and an opportunity. In participating in the process of public crisis management, community foundations in my country have demonstrated their unique values, such as localization advantages, rapid integration of local resources, and supplementary provision of public services and functional positioning of community cohesion. Community foundations have played an important role during the epidemic, but at the same time, there are still problems such as lack of professionalism, insufficient flexibility, and unclear goals that deserve in-depth reflection.

Keywords

COVID-19; Community Foundation; Unique value; Function positioning; Grow reflection.

1. Introduction

At the end of 1911 and the beginning of 1911, just when all Chinese were ready to stop their busy work and enjoy the joy of family reunion, the mood of the New Year was shattered by the novel Coronavirus outbreak (COVID-19), which caught us off guard at the speed, scope and impact of the spread of the virus. An unprepared epidemic has posed severe challenges to China's social governance and economic development. In the prevention and control of the epidemic, the CPC and people's governments at all levels have attached great importance to it and actively taken protest measures, while grassroots communities have also played an important role. During an investigation in Beijing on February 10, 2020, Xi Jinping pointed out that the whole country should give full play to the blocking role of communities in epidemic prevention and control, and move the prevention and control force down to communities. The Ministry of Civil Affairs of China's No. 37 document in 2020 specifically emphasized that "communities, social work, social organizations and community volunteers should play a synergistic role in building a safety barrier for community prevention and control." [1] In order to effectively deal with cross-infection and spread of COVID-19, the role of the community should not be ignored.

Community foundations, as social organizations serving people or things in the community, play an important role in grassroots social governance, draw much attention in the field of international public welfare and philanthropy, and play an important role in coordinating, leading and distributing resources in the community. The sudden outbreak of COVID-19 is a severe test for both the government and grassroots social organizations. In the early days of the epidemic, communities were the front line of epidemic prevention and control, and community prevention and control was the top priority in the anti-epidemic work. Community foundations

actively explored the integration of community resources and supplementary provision of community public services to do a good job in grassroots epidemic prevention.

2. Special Value of Community Foundations in Epidemic Prevention and Control

Community foundation is a grass-roots social organization based on the community, serving the community and focusing on solving the problems of the community. Xu Jialiang, professor of The School of International and Public Affairs at Shanghai Jiao Tong University, believes that community foundations are non-profit legal entities with complete corporate governance structure, with the joint participation of community residents, grassroots governments, social organizations and relevant enterprises to raise public assets and provide project funding to specific entities in the community. Community foundations have significant advantages and unique values that other social organizations do not have in terms of service objects and service contents. Therefore, community foundations have more room for action in the prevention and control of COVID-19 and can play their unique value

2.1. Local Advantages of Community Foundations Make Them More Flexible

The most significant advantage of the community foundation lies in its remarkable local characteristics. At present, many community foundations in China are automatically initiated by local residents, focusing on serving local residents, with a strong sense of localization. For example, Shenzhen Shekou Community Foundation is the first community foundation in Nanshan District of Shenzhen founded on December 14, 2014 by 89 residents living or working in Shekou, each of whom donated 1000 YUAN. At the beginning, Shekou Community Foundation hoped to create the most suitable community public space for the growth of civilization and culture. During the epidemic, the Shekou Community Foundation conducted research on the living conditions of residents in shekou to understand their needs. In order to alleviate the shortage of protective materials for community front-line workers, the Shekou Community Foundation initiated community mutual aid and self-rescue projects, actively collected basic epidemic prevention materials for community front-line workers, traffic police and volunteers, and actively carried out various community services related to the epidemic. Community foundations have the nature of being rooted in the grassroots society. They mainly serve community residents and aim to improve their quality of life and promote community development. During the epidemic period, the localization advantage of community foundations is more obvious. By conducting detailed research on epidemic prevention and control in their own communities, community foundations can have a clearer understanding of the basic situation of their own communities, and make flexible decisions based on their own responses to better epidemic prevention and control. Active measures such as community self-help have largely eased the pressure on governments at all levels.

2.2. The Advantages of Resource Integration of Community Foundations Make Them More Realistic

As a local resource collection and integration organization, community foundation can quickly integrate various resources within the community within the scope of its service. Mobilize the community to absorb material, human, organizational, cultural, educational, medical, social capital and other resources. Dig deep into the tangible and intangible resources of the community. Community foundations can raise funds and obtain support from community residents, grassroots governments, social organizations and enterprises.[2] For example, Chengdu Wuhou Community Development Foundation launched "Mandarin Action" to return to school and resume classes. In this action, Wuhou Community Development Foundation integrated corporate resources within its jurisdiction and obtained a charitable donation of

750,000 yuan by linking Sichuan Zongheng Liuhe Technology Co., LTD through public welfare advocacy. Wuhou Community Development Foundation will use this charitable donation to purchase the campus epidemic health detection system, which will be placed at the gates of primary and secondary schools within the scope of community services, to help teachers and students in the community, and ensure their health and safety. The Wuhou Development Community Foundation, in collaboration with Ping An Insurance and Yibao Plan, has launched the "Ten Thousand Nurses Operation" to provide free insurance for 10,000 frontline social workers in Wuhou district to reduce their worries.

2.3. The Spirit and Emotional Aspect of the Contract of Community Foundation

The Community Foundation is based on the community, rooted in the community and serves the community. Because the community foundation mainly by the community residents, the grassroots government, social organizations and related businesses such as multivariate main body participation, the external relations of community foundation is set, with community residents, the grassroots government, social organizations and enterprises have formed the good relations of cooperation, and even greatly open due to its members, Every community member has the opportunity to participate in the governance structure and participate in community activities. Community foundations are generally formed spontaneously and self-organized by residents. On the basis of self-governance, residents belong to the same community and get familiar with each other, which fully demonstrates the spirit of contract and interpersonal trust between residents and organizations of community foundations. Take Tecsun Community Foundation as an example. The "Hedi Charity Series" jointly launched by Tecsun Community Foundation and Shunde Innovation and Entrepreneurship Foundation is committed to supporting small and micro businesses and social organizations. Under the impact of the epidemic, small and micro enterprises that received financial assistance immediately returned to shunde society, while helping social organizations enhanced trust and understanding between organizations. Tecsun Community Foundation plays an important role in leveraging folk power and local emotion, which also highlights the spirit of contract and emotional orientation of community foundation.

3. Functional Positioning of Community Foundations in Epidemic Prevention and Control

Professor Zhang Qiang, director of the Risk Management Innovation Research Center at Beijing Normal University, divided the role of foundations in epidemic response into four aspects: The FOUNDATION represents all sectors of society in epidemic prevention and control, assists governments at all levels in the overall battle against the virus, supports various social organizations and voluntary services in epidemic prevention and control, and is a social innovator in effective risk management. Community foundations, as an important category of foundations, not only play the basic functions of foundations, but also shoulder the glorious burden of fighting COVID-19 in grassroots communities. Compared with other foundations, community foundations have a significant advantage in that they are rooted in the community, recognized and trusted by community residents, and can quickly mobilize and integrate various resources within the community. Clarifying the role of community foundations plays an important role in epidemic prevention and control.

3.1. The Resource Integration Function of Community Foundations

As a community resource integration platform, community foundation has the ability to fully integrate various resources in the community, especially the human, financial and material resources. During the epidemic, the community foundation actively carried out community mutual assistance activities. In the early stage of the epidemic, it actively carried out various

research work to identify the primary needs of community residents. Funds and materials for epidemic prevention should be collected and quickly integrated and distributed to places where they are urgently needed to make the most of them. During the epidemic, many community foundations actively carried out special projects for mutual assistance in community epidemic prevention, provided small funds to individuals, public welfare organizations and voluntary groups that participated in mutual assistance in epidemic prevention, and helped community epidemic prevention workers solve some of their financial problems. The use of funds mainly refers to funds generated during epidemic prevention activities, materials procurement, travel and catering subsidies, work allowances and other funds. In addition, surveys have found that many community-level medical workers, community workers and sanitation workers lack basic protective materials, masks and other basic protective materials, and the personal safety of many community-level epidemic prevention workers cannot be guaranteed. Therefore, community foundations distribute the protective materials they collect to those who need them, giving them greater meaning and value. Community foundations play an important role in resource integration. Grasping the orientation of resource integration of community foundations can better help community foundations play a greater role in epidemic prevention.

3.2. Supplementary Provision of Public Service Functions

The community Foundation is rooted in the community and is well aware of its community structure and pain points. Community foundations, as the most localized public welfare and charitable organizations besides grassroots governments, can well supplement the public service functions of grassroots governments.[3] Compared with the traditional top-down public service resource allocation model based on administrative level, community foundation provides an intermediary platform for multiple subjects to participate in the solution of community public affairs. Compared with general public service institutions, community foundations broaden the funding channels of public services and no longer rely solely on government resources. Public services are closer to the actual needs of communities from project design to final implementation, maximizing the utilization efficiency and ultimate benefit of public service resources to the greatest extent. During the epidemic, governments at all levels have introduced epidemic prevention measures and provided a series of public services. However, the situation of epidemic prevention and control varies from community to community, and there is no way to automatically unify policies and measures. At this point, the supplementary public service function of the community foundation can make up for the deficiency of relevant aspects. According to the specific situation of each community, the project that can better meet the needs of the community is designed to supplement the public service urgently needed under the epidemic situation.

3.3. Activate the Function of Community Cohesion

Community foundations serve as an effective platform to gather the love of local enterprises, gather the confidence of community residents, and build a bridge between government, enterprise, society and people. Compared with other public welfare organizations, they are more rooted in social networks and have a more accurate grasp of the needs of their communities. Community foundation through the hatch foster good community project activation community cohesion, to mobilize the community to participate in, the dispersed individual community residents to different community social organizations, make the residents of the individual participation into collective action, mechanism for the formation of good communities, active community cohesion function, improve the ability of community organizations at the grass-roots level. COVID-19 is both a challenge and an opportunity. The sudden outbreak has forced community foundations to develop a series of epidemic prevention programs to activate community cohesion and enhance the governance capacity of grassroots communities and social organizations. In addition, the epidemic has brought community

residents closer to their neighbors and community officials, and created a strong sense of cohesion and action among all communities. This echoes the hot topic of “resilient city” discussed by international academic circles in recent years.

4. Reflection on the Growth of Chinese Community Foundations in Epidemic Prevention and Control

4.1. The Significance of Foreign Community Foundations' Participation in Epidemic Prevention and Control

Community foundations are developing vigorously in many cities in China and playing an increasingly important role in grassroots social governance. However, at present, the construction of community foundations in China is still in the exploratory stage, and the research started late. Combined with the different national conditions, community foundations, as an “imported product”, are still in the initial stage of participating in social governance, which is far from reaching the maturity level of Western countries, especially the United States. Therefore, the actions of US Community Foundations in this COVID-19 pandemic deserve further study.

Taking the United States as an example, the actions of different types of community foundations in the fight against the epidemic are worthy of our reference. As of mid-April, 325 community foundations in the United States had set up grants to help epidemic prevention and relief efforts, raising more than \$560 million and announcing \$190 million in grants, according to the Community Foundation of America public Awareness Advocacy. As the New York Community Foundation, the New York Community Trust has focused on arts and culture funding during the pandemic, directing the majority of its fundraising to 276 key nonprofits in New York City during the pandemic. On March 9, 2020, the Seattle Community Foundation jointly launched a special fund with the Seattle City Government and Amazon, and raised \$2 million. As the first community foundation to launch an outbreak response in the United States. The effectiveness of THE Seattle Community Foundation is a result of its strategy of working with a wide range of businesses and its flexibility to respond to urgent needs in phases. In its first round of grants, THE Seattle Community Foundation did not adhere to the funding process, but emphasized the urgent need to ensure the survival of the underprivileged. The Silicon Valley Community Foundation strives for cross-disciplinary collaboration and flexibility.[4] In its fund-raising, it fully cooperates with the government and enterprises, and is committed to supporting small and micro enterprises, low-income families and advocating donation of medical equipment.

4.2. Inspiration from Community Foundations in China

The long-term exploration and development of THE American Community Foundation over the past 100 years provided the necessary conditions for the American Community Foundation to respond to the epidemic. China Community Foundation is still in its early stage, facing many problems and challenges, and we need to constantly reflect on our growth. Wang Zhenyao, director of the China Public Welfare Research Institute at Beijing Normal University, said of the involvement of social organizations in epidemic prevention and control, “Social organizations have done an excellent job so far, withstanding the test and forming a positive interaction with the government. But the exam is too big, so we need to sum up our experience and make further adjustments to many deficiencies.”

4.2.1. Community Foundation Management Needs to Be More Professional

At present, the development of Chinese community foundations and even China's public welfare and philanthropy is facing a huge challenge, namely, professional management needs to be improved. Every time it faces a huge test, it tests the degree of specialization of social organizations. As far as community foundations are concerned, they not only need to

professionalize their projects, but also their daily basic work. As a comprehensive grass-roots social organization, community foundations should strive to highlight the characteristics and expertise of each community and give full play to their unique social organization functions. At present, most of the staff engaged in the work of community foundations in China are part-time, most of which are held by community committees, community workers and leaders of community social organizations. The lack of professional competence of relevant staff seriously hinders the sustainable and healthy development of community foundations.[5] The epidemic has forced China Community Foundations to recruit more professional management and technical personnel to fully participate in the management and service process of community foundations, and adopt a full-time management mode, with each performing its own duties. Make the community foundation step forward toward professional organization.

4.2.2. Community Foundations Need to Be More Flexible

Community foundation at home and abroad, mainly divided into enterprise leading mode, residents dominant mode and three types of government-led mode, but the current our country community foundation, which is still in the preliminary exploration stage enterprise leading mode and residents dominant mode is not yet mature, is still used by domestic community foundation mostly government dominant model, its internal organization construction and the external environment to coordinate all exist some problems. The “offside” and “absence” of the government have seriously restricted the operation and development of community foundations.[6] During the epidemic period, some community foundations were stuck in a state of “waiting for policies” and did not give full play to the flexibility of community foundations. Various approval processes were complicated, and in the face of the epidemic, they could not independently complete project incubation and operation without government policy guidance and instructions. Community foundations are not government organizations in the full sense, but grassroots social organizations, and their incubation and operation projects should be flexible and form benign complementarities with government organizations. We should establish a sound governance mechanism and sound relations between government and society, and establish demand-oriented social services and rapid and effective diversified services.

4.2.3. Clarify the Mission and Objectives of the Community Foundation

From the very beginning, European and European Community foundations took root in communities, made use of local resources and solved local social problems through local approaches. The establishment of community foundations has changed the traditional concept of charity for the rich and encouraged the concept of “everyone can be charitable and always can be charitable”.[7] Community foundations should help donors meet the specific needs of the community and build local pride and responsibility according to local characteristics. Let community members realize that they are a member of the community, contribute and serve the community within their power, and improve community members’ participation and community identity. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many members of the community took their own risks and did not participate in community affairs. Concept as the forerunner of action, in the construction and growth process of community foundation, we should always publicize the concept and goal of community foundation, and clarify the vision and mission of community foundation. Only in this way can community members unite in the face of disaster, gather strength and build a better home together.

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