

# Difficulties and Countermeasures in the Development of "Time bank" Mutual Pension Model Based on the Theoretical Perspective of Positive Aging

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## ABSTRACT

"Time bank" mutual support for the elderly is an innovative development of the new era of old-age services, advocating the community of healthy young elderly to help the elderly, with "time bank" as the intermediary, in the way of intergenerational relay to achieve the cross-space and cross-exchange of old-age services. From the theoretical perspective of positive aging, its promotion has strong practical significance, but it also faces difficulties in development, which are mainly reflected in the lack of policy and regulation protection, low public recognition and trust, difficulty in realizing regional universal deposit and exchange, and difficulty in guaranteeing service quality. It is suggested to clarify government responsibility, carry out extensive publicity, strengthen information management, strengthen professional training, so as to promote the sustainable development of "time bank" mutual pension mode.

**Keywords:** *Time bank, Mutual pension, Positive aging, Intergenerational relay.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

At present, China is in the accelerated development period of aging, and the shortage of community home care service caused by the lack of community service personnel is becoming increasingly prominent. How to solve the contradiction between the growing demand for old-age services and the insufficient supply of social old-age services? In the 14th Five-Year Plan, "actively developing human resources for the elderly" and "developing inclusive old-age services and mutual-assistance old-age services" have become national strategies to actively cope with population aging. In recent years, "positive aging" has gradually emerged<sup>[1]</sup>, focusing on the theoretical dimension of elderly services, focusing on the use of advantages to view the elderly group, and the young elderly as potential human resources have gradually been discovered. It is one of the effective ways to solve the shortage of old-age service supply in China to advocate the mutual help of the elderly in different age groups and provide old-age service within our power<sup>[2]</sup>. "Time bank" refers to the mutual-aid pension mode of helping the elderly with the cycle of young age based on the community<sup>[3]</sup>. It is an innovative pension mode that actively responds to aging and fully embodies the concept of positive aging.

## 2. THE PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF DEVELOPING THE "TIME BANK" MUTUAL SUPPORT PENSION MODEL FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF POSITIVE AGING THEORY

Positive aging is similar to the concept of "doing something for the old", which regards the elderly as a resource and believes that the elderly's active participation in social affairs can not only improve their own state, but also promote the improvement of social conditions, realizing a win-win situation between the elderly and the society. Based on the theoretical perspective of positive aging, it is of great practical significance to develop and promote the "time bank" mode of mutual support for the aged.

### ***2.1. For service providers: excavate life value and save pension capital***

With the increase of medical treatment level and quality of life, many retirees are hard to adapt to the great change of life rhythm after retirement. In addition, with the rapid development of urbanization and transportation, social mobility intensifies, and more and more people choose to go out. Empty-nester families

increase day by day, and the loneliness of the elderly worsens. Role change and psychological gap often affect the physical and mental health of the elderly. "Time bank" can provide a platform for the young elderly to interact with others, which can not only relieve their loneliness in life, but also give full play to their ability, dig out human capital and save pension capital for themselves. In this process, it can help the young elderly to find the value and meaning of life.

### ***2.2. For the service objects: to meet the needs of care, to achieve elderly care***

"Time Bank" is based on the community, so the elderly can continue to stay in the community they are familiar with, which is also in line with the local complex of traditional Chinese culture of "settling the land and relocating the land". At the same time, the majority of caregivers are people in the community, who are more familiar with each other, so that the elderly can avoid the problems brought by adapting to the new environment. At the same time, through this model, the service objects are closely connected with the elderly in the community, so that they can not only be taken care of in life, but also be consoled in psychology, so as to meet their dual physiological and psychological needs, enhance the happiness and satisfaction of the elderly in the community life, and realize the elderly care.

### ***2.3. To the community: relieve the pressure of supporting the elderly and promote community harmony***

To some extent, the "time bank" mutual pension model can be regarded as an integration of social resources, which can turn healthy young elderly people from social burden to social assets. As the aging of China's population accelerates and the burden on elderly care institutions increases, China has explicitly proposed to establish and improve a social elderly care service system based on home care, supported by communities and supported by institutions. As an important supplement of institutional and family pension, "Time bank" community mutual support for the elderly can not only benefit the younger elderly by encouraging them to participate, but also revitalize community resources and relieve social pension pressure. "Time bank" is beneficial to maintaining social stability on the basis of enhancing community cohesion.

### ***2.4. To the society: to relieve the pressure of pension and maintain social stability***

To some extent, the "time bank" mutual pension model can be regarded as an integration of social resources, which can turn healthy young elderly people from social burden to social assets. Encouraging the

younger elderly to participate in the "time bank" can not only benefit the younger elderly, but also increase the stability and continuity of the elderly volunteer service activities. As an important supplement of institutional and family pension, it will ease the pressure of social pension, and the society will be more stable and harmonious.

## **3. DIFFICULTIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF "TIME BANK" MUTUAL PENSION MODEL**

### ***3.1. Lack of authoritative top-level design***

At present, the lack of policies, regulations and trust guarantee mechanism has caused some obstacles to the actual development of "time bank". Time bank mutual pension does not have a unified leading unit, the lack of unified standardized management, resulting in the public credibility is not high. At the same time, all localities have established incentive mechanisms such as voluntary service time savings in their pension service regulations. If the right of volunteers to be helped in the future is not clearly guaranteed by the legal system, then volunteers will lose their enthusiasm and motivation to serve, which will undoubtedly restrict the rapid development of "time bank". "Time bank" is still a new thing, and the lack of unified and standardized guidance for a long time will seriously hinder the sustainable and stable development of mutual assistance for the elderly.

### ***3.2. Low degree of public recognition and trust***

"Time bank" was introduced into China at the end of the 19th century, so the research and practice of "time bank" in China only has a history of about 20 years and is relatively unknown to the public. On the other hand, the family pension is a traditional way of providing for the aged in China. The public also believes that the pension should be solved within the family, ignoring the attention to the "time bank". The public's low social recognition of "Time bank" mutual pension has greatly limited residents' enthusiasm and motivation to participate in it, resulting in a shortage of volunteers, which has become one of the important factors restricting the rapid development of "time bank" mutual pension.

### ***3.3. Lack of standardized deposit and exchange construction***

Different service labor values are different. At present, there is no unified conversion standard for time bank mutual pension project in China. Generally, the intensity and value of service are not considered, but the service duration is only concerned. Therefore, volunteers generally choose short-term exchange, which greatly limits the enthusiasm of volunteer services and

affects the sustainable development of time-bank mutual pension. At present, China's "time bank" information management system is not perfect, time storage and extraction need to be manually recorded and analyzed, the lack of sound information management operation platform, inter-regional exchange is difficult to achieve.

### ***3.4. It is difficult to guarantee the quality of service***

Sufficient community human resources is an important condition for the sustainable and stable development of "time bank" mutual pension. The elderly group is a special group, and their physical function is deteriorating, which will affect their thinking, not only useless, but also a burden, with many negative emotions, which requires caregivers to have some professional care skills. However, most of the volunteers do not have relevant professional skills and knowledge, which may lead to poor communication between volunteers and the elderly, incomplete care, and affect the efficiency and quality of services. The scale and specialization of community volunteer service team will have an important impact on the service quality and level of "time bank" mutual pension, and also bring important challenges to social management.

## **4. THE CONCRETE PRACTICE OF "TIME BANK" MUTUAL PENSION MODE AT HOME AND ABROAD**

### ***4.1. The concrete practice of foreign "time bank" mutual aid pension mode***

In foreign countries, various countries have developed different "time bank" practice modes according to their own reality. In Switzerland, the "time bank" is a pension program developed by the Federal Ministry of Social Insurance in which people save time spent caring for the elderly when they are young and use it later when they are old, ill or in need of care. The applicant's service hours will be credited to a personal account in the individual's Social Security system. Japan, which faces the same problem as China, has largely made up for the shortage of nursing staff by developing "time bank" and building "30-minute nursing community" supporting measures.

### ***4.2. The concrete practice of the "time bank" mutual pension mode in China***

Time banking was introduced to China in the 1990s and is closely integrated with volunteering. Different regions in China have developed different operation modes of "time bank" according to their own regional characteristics. Binjiang District of Hangzhou has implemented an "Internet + pension" model, in which

volunteers can exchange their offline welfare points provided by the government for an equivalent value through voluntary service. Meanwhile, volunteers can also transfer their points service to their relatives and friends. A "721" exchange model has been created in Yaohua Street, Qixia District, Nanjing city, Jiangsu Province. In this mode, there are two types of accounts: individual account and group account. When the volunteer's service time reaches 20 hours, it can be exchanged for individuals and their families, with the time value of 12 yuan per hour.

## **5. STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE "TIME BANK" MUTUAL AID PENSION MODEL**

### ***5.1. Issuing policies and regulations and improving legal support***

Relevant policies and regulations should be issued at the national level, and specific laws and regulations should be formulated. By integrating into the framework of the existing laws and policies, the management subjects, supervision subjects and related responsibilities should be clarified, so as to give the time bank mutual pension model legitimacy and clear responsibility rights. At the same time, local governments can formulate relevant policies and systems according to the actual situation of the current situation. Through resource allocation, tax exemption and institutional framework, the community can reduce the burden and make the community become the real manager of the "time bank". Under the top-level design, all units cooperate closely to formulate the list of time bank mutual pension service, establish and publish unified operation standards and evaluation index system about time bank, so as to evaluate and promote development and ensure the healthy development of time bank mutual pension mode.

### ***5.2. Improve the assessment mechanism and enhance trust***

In the traditional view, old-age care is often associated with social burden and family burden, which ignores the huge potential of the young healthy elderly, namely the demographic dividend of the elderly. First of all, through the establishment and formation of a systematic assessment mechanism to authenticate "depositors", their personality and moral level must be proved and guaranteed by the society, so as to ensure the quality of volunteer service. Secondly, high visibility and good reputation can provide a good "soil" for the development of "Time bank". It is necessary to make clear the focus of publicity, focusing on the two key publicity reports of "what residents want to know" and "what residents need to know", so as to attract the

masses to focus on this new pension mode. At the same time, multiple publicity channels can be adopted, such as information published in newspapers and publicity on community bulletin boards, to enhance the awareness and trust level of community residents.

### ***5.3. Build an information platform and establish a mechanism for universal deposit and withdrawal***

The efficient operation of the "time bank" requires the use of the Internet and big data platforms. The establishment of a special intelligent platform, the implementation of depositor registration system, not only can be used for personal account management, but also people who need services can use the platform to register service demand, so that the supply and demand can complete the best match in the shortest time. Comprehensive evaluation should be carried out according to the technical content and labor intensity of the service to standardize the service items. Cross-regional exchange and depositing should be guaranteed to avoid the loss of interests when the volunteers move to other places in a flexible way. We will promote the establishment of a unified nationwide mechanism for universal savings and withdrawals to ensure the quality of mutual assistance for the elderly. The establishment of a unified information management system, strengthen community and regional exchanges and cooperation, reasonable allocation and integration of pension resources in different communities, truly achieve pension resources sharing, information sharing, mutual benefit and win-win.

### ***5.4. Strengthen training management and improve service quality***

Volunteers are the "blood" of this model. Communities should strengthen contact with volunteer training institutions, professional nursing personnel, colleges and universities, and establish training departments. Community oriented, establish a standardized and professional service team, conduct regular assessment management, and test the service effectiveness of the service provider and the satisfaction of the service provider according to the standard, enhance the service level and quality of the service provider, improve the service satisfaction. Realize the transmission of the concept of reciprocity and the integration of public welfare resources, and integrate with the existing social governance system to form a sustainable mechanism of voluntary service.

## **6. CONCLUSIONS**

China's aging population is becoming more and more serious year by year, and it is moving from an "aging society" to a "deep aging society". To actively

cope with the aging population is a long-term strategic task for China. "Time bank" mutual pension model is the full embodiment of the positive aging concept, is an effective way to deal with the "silver wave"<sup>[2]</sup>, can to a certain extent complete some non-professional simple labor replacement, effectively reduce the total social cost, is conducive to the development of human capital of the community young elderly<sup>[4]</sup>. Voluntary mutual assistance between the elderly in the community is also a social humanistic care and the progress of human civilization<sup>[5]</sup>, with strong development potential and far-reaching social significance. As a new pension idea, "time bank" is undoubtedly helpful to solve the severe pension problem<sup>[6]</sup>, but at the same time, we should avoid risks, take positive prevention and response measures, and promote the sustainable development of "time bank" mutual pension model.

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