



American Community Organizing Strategy for Disaster Response and Its Inspiration to China

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Abstract. In the context of frequent disasters, practice in many countries shows that community organizing model is helpful to improve community resilience. Based on the text of the Master Plan of New York City over the years, this paper summarizes New York's experience in community organization construction with resilience indicators, interactive maps, expanded subjects and volunteer cultivation. From the perspective of planning, this paper puts forward the strategy of community organization in China: in the aspect of planning technology, resilience index should be set up and interactive map should be developed; At the planning level, the relationship between power and responsibility should be clarified and the implementation plan should be formulated. At the level of planning implementation, the subject of implementation should be expanded to cultivate voluntary forces.

Keywords: community organization · New York · Master Plan · Community organization

1 Introduction

Pioneered by Saul David Alinsky (1909–1972), the community organization model is a model of social action at the neighborhood level that aims to help city dwellers construct durable, institutionalized ways of action and local leadership. To enable the formerly divided and declining community to reintegrate into a unified expression and gain the collective power to overcome external oppression [1].

In the context of frequent disasters all over the world, countries are exploring strategies to build a community organization model. In Britain, natural disasters were mainly storms, floods and storm surges. The government activated the market through policies and transferred community services to civil organizations and private institutions [2]. As Japan faces the threat of volcanoes, earthquakes, tsunamis and landslides, residents spontaneously organize “autonomous councils”, the smallest unit of governance in Japanese society, based on geographical relations, to combat disasters [4]. After the Kobe Earthquake in 1998, the city of Kobe, Japan, promoted the “Disaster Prevention and Welfare Community Project Plan”. Through the cooperation of citizens, plan promoters and the municipal government, the existing social welfare organizations and human networks in

the community were brought into play to carry out disaster prevention and relief publicity, education and training, and formulate disaster prevention and relief plans [5]. There are many kinds of natural disasters in the United States, including hurricanes, snowstorms and wildfires. The government is responsible for the planning, guidance and financial support for community construction, and community organizations are responsible for the specific implementation [3]. In 1996, the United States launched “Project Impact” and established the disaster-resistant community planning committee, which is composed of community local government officials, entrepreneurs, people with ideas to protect community safety and the community middle class to build disaster-resistant communities [3]. As a global city, New York has a high practical representation and theoretical research value in the construction of disaster-oriented community organizations.

By comparing the theory and practice of disaster-oriented community organization construction abroad, China is participating in the main body [6], planning implementability, prevention and daily maintenance [7]. There are shortcomings. Firstly, in foreign there are many participants: non-profit organizations, volunteers, citizen groups, residents, and the participation of community service organizations in the form of outsourcing services. However, China is dominated by the government, and residents’ participation is still low. Secondly, disaster-oriented community organizations in China do not track implementation plans year by year. Thirdly, there is often a lack of effective measures for pre-disaster prevention and daily construction.

2 The Emergence and Development of Community Organization in New York

2.1 The Background of Community Organization in New York

Influenced by the British idea of community autonomy based on the protection of private property, community autonomy in the United States has been in the bud since before the founding of New York. After the founding of the United States in 1787, the three powers were separated and the bourgeoisie federalism was implemented, with the local power limited by the state government. From the early 20th century to the 1960s, the size of American cities expanded disorderly. The resulting problems of inadequate infrastructure led to the decline of urban centers and the spread of suburbanization in the United States. In the 1970s and 1980s, public choice theory advocated maintaining the “Balkanization” of metropolitan areas in the United States and using market mechanisms to allocate the service needs of local communities. In the 1990s, new regionalism advocated dealing with metropolitan areas through mutual cooperation between government, the private sector, and nonprofit organizations [8].

2.2 Disaster-Oriented Community Organization Model

New York community adopts the governance model of the trinity of government, community committee and non-profit organization, and its community self-governing organizations mainly include community development organizations (CDCs) and residents’ associations (RCAs) [9]. As a nation of global immigrants, the urban expansion of

the United States has been accompanied by conflicts such as community annexation, racial differences, and the gap between rich and poor. From the beginning of the Great Depression until after World War II, the federal government implemented urban renewal programs, Community action programs, and model city programs to promote the development of community self-governing organizations. In the process of community prevention, response to disasters and post-disaster reconstruction, community organizations play an important role, including guiding community members to help themselves, help each other in emergencies, and seek public assistance in a timely manner, which helps improve the community's ability to prevent and reduce disasters and thus strengthen the resilience of the city.

3 The New York City Master Plan Guides Community Organization

3.1 Background: The Master Plan of New York City Born in the Disaster

Back in the late 1980s, the United States Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) put forward the "Disaster-oriented Community Activity" program, which encourages communities to take the initiative to reduce disasters from the bottom up. In 2013, the city of New York launched a master plan, A Stronger and More Resilient New York, to help cities and communities recover from Hurricane Sandy against the backdrop of the devastation wrought by the storm. In 2015's Greener and Better New York, New York City put more emphasis on the building of community organizations, and put forward specific building strategies such as resilience indicators, interactive maps, expanded subjects and volunteer cultivation. In the following three years, New York City concentrated on building community organizations and reported the progress every year. By the end of 2018, the city's communities had largely recovered from Hurricane Sandy, 120, 000 accessible emergency shelters had been built, and volunteerism among New Yorkers had increased. By 2050, New York City plans to eliminate long-term disaster-related unemployment.

3.2 Main Content: Problem-Oriented Organizational Construction of New York City

The main contents of the Master Plan of New York City over the years are listed as Table 1:

Beginning with the 2015 New York City Master Plan "A Greater, Greener New York," "New York City has proposed strengthening community organization as an initiative to build systems to strengthen community organizations that serve neighbors and expand citizen participation in volunteering, as mentioned in Table 2. The Master Plan also puts forward four specific construction strategies, namely, adopting resilience indicators, interactive maps, expanding subjects, volunteer cultivation and designating lead agencies and community pilots.

Table 1. Background, main contents and Resilient communities of the Master Plan of New York City in Calendar Edition

	Planning Background	Main content	Community organization in New York
2007 edition of Greener, Better New York	Population growth, aging infrastructure, environmental problems	Propose strategies on land, air, water, energy and transportation, and emphasize cooperation and reform among governments and institutions at all levels, and provide ways to finance.	Propose measures to build communities in areas such as housing, open space, transport, air quality and climate change
2013 edition of A Stronger, More Resilient New York	The massive damage from Hurricane Sandy in 2012	With resilience as a fundamental goal, the plan aims to strengthen the city's ability to adapt to climate change and ensure faster recovery when natural disasters breach New York City's defences	To help communities recover from Hurricane Sandy and strengthen their resilience
The 2015 edition of A Greater, Greener New York	Life and income inequality, aging infrastructure, inadequate parks and public Spaces, urban noise, climate change and more	Emphasis on building a stronger, more sustainable, resilient and equitable city.	Make cities safer by strengthening community, social and economic resilience.
2019 Master Plan for A Strong and Just New York	Addressing the unresolved issues of the first three editions of the plan: the housing crisis, economic insecurity, wealth and health disparities, climate, inadequate infrastructure, democracy	Building a strong and fair city means emphasizing environmental sustainability, economic equality and social justice.	Foster communities with safe, affordable housing, parks, cultural resources, and shared Spaces.

Table 2. Building strategies and lead agencies for community organizations in the 2015 New York City Master Plan Source: Author’s own drawing

Initiative: Building Community Organizations	Serial number	Construction strategy	Lead agency
	1	Create a way to develop and test resilience metrics	ORR
	2	Develop a comprehensive, interactive web platform to map community-based organizations and government services	OPS
	3	Building Hurricane Sandy called for troops to make recommendations on expanding the involvement of community organizations and faith groups in emergency planning and resilience efforts	ORR
	4	Expand civic engagement to meet the city’s greatest needs, including connecting volunteers to emergency preparedness and response, by promoting volunteer opportunities, building volunteer capacity in nonprofits and city agencies, and engaging a diverse cross-section of city residents as volunteer and year of service members.	NYC Service
	Community readiness: Launch pilot programs to identify and address gaps in community capacity		ORR

4 ORR 3 New York City Community Organization Building Strategy

4.1 Participants: The Whole People Can Build Disaster-Oriented Community Organizations

According to the Master Plan of New York City over the years, the participating subjects of community organization in New York City are shown as Fig. 1:

First, temporary task forces and rescue teams. ORR (New York City Office of Resilience) and NYCEM (New York City Office of Emergency Response) worked with the City Council to create the Hurricane Sandy Task Force with rescue teams. The task force made recommendations for expanding the involvement of community organizations and faith-based groups in local emergency planning and resilience efforts,

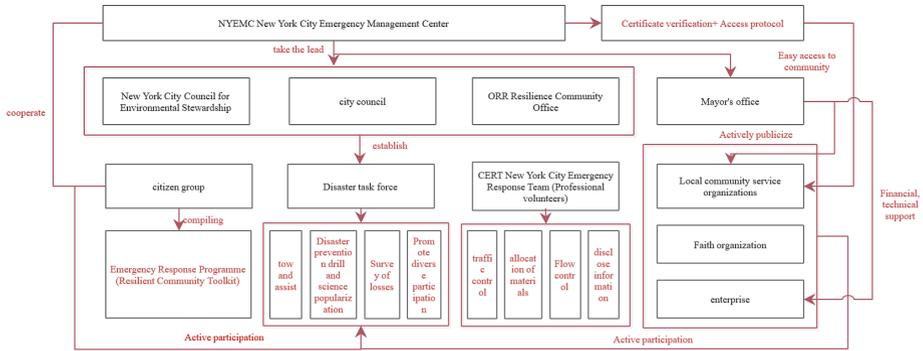


Fig. 1. New York City Community organization participants Map Source: author’s own drawing

and launched the Hurricane Sandy Charity Organization and Place of Worship Recovery mission. The Rescue team investigated the damage to community and faith-based organizations involved in Hurricane Sandy recovery efforts.

Second, Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT). Members of the New York City Community Emergency Response Team (NYC CERT) are trained volunteers who serve for at least one year after graduating from their training. CERT members are responsible for providing fire safety, light search and rescue, community disaster support, disaster medical operations, and basic traffic control, which is in Table 3. These include: traffic and crowd control; Escorting New York City residents evacuating buildings to retrieve personal belongings, missing person searches, personnel assistance centers and interpretation services; Emergency food and supply distribution during power outages and water supply disruptions; And the establishment of community disaster networks and information distribution.

Third, a wide range of social service organizations. New York City’s wide range of social service organizations play a vital role in meeting individual needs, strengthening neighborhoods, and promoting greater equality and opportunity for city residents, Such as 2019 TD five bo luo bicycle tour, 48 in48, 501 c3, and other community organizations (<https://www.nycservice.org/organizations/>). They have also proved vital in responding to disasters and supporting long-term recovery and resilience. The city contracts with more than 4, 000 human service organizations to provide publicly funded services. The Mayor’s Operating Office (ORR) has coordinated efforts to make these community resources more discoverable to individuals, nonprofit practitioners, and decision makers.

Fourth, volunteer nurturing. The New York Service works with the New York Center for Emergency Management through the Office of Emergency Situations (EMC) to expand citizen volunteer engagement to address the risks posed by heat waves and rising temperatures; Connecting volunteers with emergency preparedness and response, offering opportunities to train and work at commodity distribution points. City agencies and organizations, schools, need complete registration at <https://www.nycservice.org/>, and wait for 2 to 3 weeks after the service through New York City. Volunteers can then be recruited on the site. For community organizations looking to develop or expand their volunteer programs, New York City has introduced GVMS (Volunteer Management

Table 3. Composition of CERT Volunteers in New York City Source: Author's drawing

Species	Duties
Volunteer leadership	Communications liaison
Borough coordinator	Provide volunteer input to CERT staff on behalf of the members of the borough, provide administrative support, and provide support for exercises within the boundaries of the borough
Chief	Act as the primary contact between CERT and the team; Work with the Borough Coordinator and provide volunteer input to the representative team; Manage the team, plan and approve the recruitment of new members to the volunteer team
Ready NYC(New York Contact Office Ready)	Serve as a team specialist for Ready NYC with exercise planning; Working with the New York City Emergency Management Center, team leaders and community networking contacts to establish and promote New York Ready events; Logistics; And maintaining the number of volunteer teams
Radio trainer	Provide guidance on citywide radio programs about the program; And provide municifed-specific radio training and act as an instructor to radio trainees.

System), a free management course. (<https://www.nycservice.org/pages/pages/123>), the course arrangement in the Table 4:

New York City service center web site (<https://www.nycservice.org/pages/pages/216>) regularly release training link. Study documents will be updated after the program for volunteers and the public who missed the program. For example, a training course on addressing collective trauma in COVID-19 was launched on 5 November 2020, introducing action-oriented recommendations on safe work Spaces, peer support and management to address collective harm to workers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

4.2 Implementation of Assessments: Incorporate Urban Resilience Plans and Assess Them Annually

New York City has designated and controlled indicators for each sub-goal in Vision 4 (Resilient City), and will conduct an evaluation of the completion of indicators at the middle and end of each year. The resilience indicators identified in the 2017 Annual Report are listed in Table 5.

At the city level, New York City has set up two level 14 indicators for implementation with a problem-plus-goal orientation, covering various aspects such as community, architecture, infrastructure and coastal zone protection, and the data are updated every

Table 4. New York City free management courses GVMS source: <https://www.nycservice.org/pages/pages/123>

Main contents of the Great Volunteer Management System training program		
Topic 1	An introduction to skills-based volunteering	–
Topic 2	Examples of skill-based volunteers providing emergency food	–
Topic 3	Assess readiness to manage skill-based volunteers	Organize preparation and assessment tools
		Project-based preparation and evaluation
Topic 4	Project preparation framework for three skills-based volunteer projects	Website Development
		Social media and digital communication strategies
		Grant application writing
Topic 5	Recruiting skilled volunteers	Manage off-site volunteers

six months. China should also incorporate resilience indicators into overall urban planning, and provide simple and evaluable indicators for various disasters faced by cities in conjunction with environmental protection to guide special and community planning for resilient cities, as well as implement indicators and plan evaluation.

4.3 Data-Driven: Divide Community Disaster Risk Areas and Guide Them to Avoid Disasters

New York City has developed a comprehensive and interactive web-based platform that maps New York City' large and small community organizations and activities, as well as local government services and initiatives. In 2016, New York City released data from the Health and Human Services (HHS) platform to map the types of services and physical locations of each human service funded by the city to track the city's funding for social services in different neighborhoods and to enable the city to gain greater insight into the impact of various services and areas that require greater investment [10].

In the meantime, the NYC Readiness Guide APP offers tips and information aimed at helping New Yorkers prepare for a variety of emergencies. Download address: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=gov.nyc.oem.readynyc.users> can store important information they may need in an emergency, such as emergency contact information, meeting place, health information, supply lists help users gather the right items to use in an emergency. Other key features of the app include tips and information about what to do in case of an emergency, from the city's official source -Notify NYC's alert source, providing information about emergency events and vital New York City services.

Table 5. Resilience Indicators identified in the 2017 Annual Report Source: Author’s drawing

	Indicators	Prior data	Most recent data	Goals
Vision level metrics	Eliminate long-term disaster-related unemployment by 2050	No data	No data	Elimination by 2050
	Reduce the social vulnerability index of communities across the city	4 (2020)	No data	Reduced
	Reducing average annual economic losses from climate-related events	No data	No data	Reduced
By strengthening community, social and economic resilience, every urban community will be safer				
Community	Capacity of accessible emergency shelters	10000 (2016))	10,000 (2017)	120,000 (2018)
	Volunteerism rates among New Yorkers	10000 (2016).	17.4% (2015).	25.0% (2020)
Buildings in the city will be upgraded to cope with the effects of climate change				
Buildings	Number of flood insurance policies in the city	No data	55, 682 (2017)	Increase
	Upgraded floor space for flood risk	Number of elevated houses in redevelopment plans (cumulative)	7, 692, 721 (2017)	Added
	Number of elevated houses in redevelopment plans (cumulative)	202 (2016)	957 (2017)	Added
The region’s infrastructure system will be adjusted to maintain continuous service				

(continued)

Table 5. (continued)

	Indicators	Prior data	Most recent data	Goals
Infrastructure	System Average outage Frequency Index (SAIFI), the number of outages per 1, 000 customers	89. 8 (2015)	85. 9 (2016)	Reduced
	Average Customer Outage Duration Index (CAIDI), average outage duration in hours 3, 4	3. 66 (2015)	2. 89 (2016)	Reduced
	Percentage of hospital and long-term care beds benefiting from facility modifications to improve resilience	84% (2016)	84% (2017)	100% (2020)
New York City's coastal defenses will be beefed up in case of flooding and rising sea levels				
Coastal zone protection	Complete line coastal defences	84, 100 (2016)	104, 100 (2017)	Increase
	Several acres of coastal ecosystems are restored	14. 9 (2016)	22. 0 (2017)	Added
	Number of residents benefiting from coastal defences and restored ecosystems	200000 (2015).	No data	Increase

4.4 Community Handbook: Develop the Resilient Community Toolkit Planning Paradigm for Community Emergency Planning

Together with various community partners, the New York City Center for Emergency Management (NYCEM) developed the toolkit, which highlights best practices and templates for developing/implementing community emergency plans, and identifies ways NYCEM can engage with local communities before, during, and after an emergency. The toolkit includes guidelines for reaching out to populations with limited English

proficiency, people with contact and functional needs, and other vulnerable populations. The process for using the toolkit includes: → New York City Specific Emergency Planning Guidelines → Plan templates and protocols for communities to develop their own emergency plans → examples of other community emergency planning efforts. (nyc.gov/citizencorps), which is in Table 6.

Forty community partner websites in the Share Your Space Survey, which identify Spaces that may support emergency operations or outreach activities, were added to the citywide asset and logistics management system database. On top of that, the New York Emergency Management Center trained 400 Commodity Distribution Point (CDP) workers to distribute necessities such as food, water and blankets to communities during emergencies. The city will also consider using these Spaces for non-emergency events, such as Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training classes, award ceremonies or National Preparedness Month events. Information such as point of contact information, the number of people that can be accommodated will need to be filled out.

Table 6. New York City Community Emergency Planning Toolkit Main Contents Source: Author’s drawing

Community Emergency Planning - a Community and faith-based Web toolkit for New York City	
Part 1 of 4: Pre-Emergency	1 Define the community
	2. Map community resources
	3. Develop a communication strategy
	4. Coordinate volunteers
	5 Identify community Spaces
	6 Get involved in your community
Part 2 of 2: After the Emergency	1 Connect to the city’s emergency command center
	2 Conduct a needs assessment
	3. Conduct a resource assessment
	4 Manage donations
Part 3 of 3: Putting Your Plan into Action 1 Put your plan into action	1 Community involvement and mitigation projects
	2. Examples of emergencies
Part 4 of 4: Additional Resources	1 Community-based emergency services in New York City
	2 Frequently Asked Questions
	3. Important resources

5 Implications for the Construction of Community Organization in China

5.1 Technical Aspects of Planning: Setting Resilience Indicators and Developing Interactive Maps

At the general planning level, the establishment of community resilience indicators makes it easier to enhance the implementation of planning from the technical level. Among them, New York City has put forward 14 secondary indicators for urban resilience at the vision level and sub-level (community, building, infrastructure, coastal zone protection) level, and has stipulated the completion years and data requirements of each indicator. It is suggested to set up implementable resilience indicators at the overall planning level in a simple and clear way to guide the special planning and community planning of resilient cities, as well as implement the indicators and plan evaluation [11–13].

In addition, China should follow the example of New York City in establishing interactive maps of community services, in which large and small community organizations and activities as well as local government services and initiatives are mapped. This will not only facilitate public access to resources and services, but also provide a new perspective for urban decision-making. In the future governance, communities should make full use of scientific and technological means to integrate daily management work, establish their own dynamic database and information platform, accurately understand the community population, so that “wisdom” can be associated with each specific “person”, and truly realize the smart management of the city.

5.2 Planning Level: Clarify the Relationship Between Power and Responsibility, and Formulate Implementation Plans

In New York City, since the establishment of resilient community organizations in 2015, specific support initiatives have been established, implementation evaluations have been conducted annually, and key lead agencies for each initiative have been identified. Currently, China’s urban master plan plans are evaluated every five years. It is suggested that China learn from New York. In the process of planning, attention should be paid to connecting projects, clarifying the relationship between powers and responsibilities and the sources of funds, and carrying out annual evaluation of the implementation of the plan [14].

5.3 Planning and Implementation Level: Expand Implementation Subjects and Cultivate Voluntary Forces

In New York City, led by the New York City Center for Emergency Management, district volunteers, faith-based organizations, civic leaders and local businesses are working together to build resilient community organizations. After Hurricane Sandy, New York City established task forces and rescue teams; Contracts with more than 4,000 human service organizations to provide publicly funded services and increase advocacy; Through a comprehensive volunteer training system and regular emergency drills, to enhance

community risk perception, identify needs, and promote personal resilience. During the COVID-19 epidemic, some community owners' committees, community volunteer organizations and enterprises actively organized self-rescue and mutual assistance at critical moments, but generally speaking, the timeliness, extensiveness, continuity and coordination with the community committees are far from enough.

It is suggested that China expand the main body of resilient community organizations. At the organizational level, emphasis should be placed on cultivating community organizations, actively developing the resilience of non-governmental community organizations, and purchasing services from outside through regional coordination when necessary [15]. At the level of residents, surveys should be conducted on volunteer participation, on the basis of which the volunteer system should be improved and the masses should be extensively mobilized. We should actively carry out disaster prevention and mitigation exercises, as well as daily resilience training, so as to fully arm the people and build a common resilient home.

6 Conclusion

New York's problem-oriented master planning strategy has brought enlightenment to Chinese community organizations in various aspects. At the planning technical level, resilience indicators should be established and interactive maps developed so that community members can use available resources in time when disasters occur. At the level of planning, the relationship between rights, responsibilities and interests of multiple subjects should be clarified, and the evaluation plan should be formulated year by year. From the perspective of planning and implementation, we should optimize the volunteer training system and social service purchase guarantee mechanism, so that all people can participate in building a common resilient home.

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