

## On the Issues Concerned with China-Africa Education Cooperation

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The establishment of China-Egypt diplomatic relations at ambassadorial level in May 1956 opened up the era of China-Africa diplomatic relations with Egypt being the starting point. This year is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and African countries; therefore the Chinese government has been holding a series of activities for celebration. In addition, this year is also the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary for China-Africa education cooperation; in fact, China and Africa began the education cooperation even earlier than their establishment of diplomatic relations.

After the friendly contacts between the Chinese and Egyptian premiers at Asian-African Conference (Bandung Conference) in April 1955, Bacoor, **Minister of Awqaf and Religious Affairs of Egypt** and Kamal, Professor of Constitutional Law of Cairo University visited China in the following May. They held talk with Chinese government representatives on May 31, and they signed “**Minutes of Talk on Culture**”, which encouraged the two countries to send exchange students and scholars for educational and cultural communications.<sup>1</sup> On the foundation of the Minutes of the Talk, China and Egypt signed “**Cultural Cooperation Agreements**”, which agreed on inviting instructors of language and literature from one country to teach at universities in the other; sending exchange students; mutual recognizing of diplomas and degrees granted by the schools and institutions on the same level from both sides; encouraging each other to exchange professors and scientists; sending education workers delegations and groups of students to each other for friendly visits.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, the educational communications between China and Egypt were provided with more official warrant. According to the spirits of the Minutes of the Talk, China sent 7 exchange students and 1 Chinese teacher to Cairo in January 1956, while Egypt sent 4 scholars and 4 students to China in the same year, and all of them received passions and cares from the local government and people. The exchange students from China went to Cairo University to study Arabic language, culture and history. Among the students studied there, the most outstanding one is Mr. Yang Fuchang, who afterward served as the Vice Minister of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Peoples Republic of China, who studied at the Faculty of Arts of Cairo University from 1956 to 1961, and worked at Chinese Embassy in Egypt after graduation. The task of the 4 Egyptian scholars who came to China was giving lectures, and Prof. Ahmed Hassan Fekri, the renowned scholar in History of Ancient Egypt from Cairo University was one of them, who gave lectures on his expertise at Peking University. According to the coordination of his lectures, a book titled “History of Ancient Egypt” was published, which introduced the Egyptian history from remote antiquity till 332 BC when Alexander the Great, King of Macedonia conquered Egypt. This book became an important reference book for understanding and studying

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<sup>1</sup> 钱俊瑞：《为中埃文化合作的新的发展而努力》，《人民日报》1956年5月21日。

<sup>2</sup> 《中华人民共和国政府埃及共和国政府文化合作协定》，《人民日报》1956年9月26日。

the history and culture in Ancient Egypt.<sup>1</sup> Among the 4 Egyptian students who came to China studying Fine Art, Agriculture and Philosophy respectively, Heba Enayaf, a student who had a Chinese name called “Heba”— “Black and White”— is the most famous one. While studying at Central Academy of Fine Art, he was instructed by famous artists such as Li Keran, Li Kuchan, Wu Zuoren, Huang Yongyu and so on. His wife Tomader Torky came with him studying fine art as well, and after graduation in 1961, they went back to Egypt and became famous artists who also committed themselves to promoting friendly relations between Egypt and China. An exhibition for the retrospection of the art life and works of the couple was held by the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) and Central Academy of Fine Art in 2002, meanwhile the two were granted title as “friendship envoy”.<sup>2</sup>

The students and scholars exchanging between China and Egypt in 1956 was the earliest cooperative and communicative activities between China and Africa after the establishment of New China. Like the mutual relations in political and diplomatic fields, the cooperative relations in education also serve as an important part in the China-Africa relations.

## **I. General Situation of China-Africa Educational Cooperation**

**Training exchange students for African countries is one of the very import aspects in the issue of China-Africa education communication and cooperation.** This part began quite early so that its scale and mechanism have been set and much experience has been accumulated. It was in the 1950s when most African countries hadn’t won their independence that New China began training exchange students for Africa. Following the 4 students from Egypt, China received 10 students from Sub-Sahara African countries such as Cameroon, Kenya, Uganda, Malawi and so on, which were still in their fight for independence.<sup>3</sup> After China’s Reform and Opens Up, the number of African students coming to China increases greatly. Since 1998, more than 1000 African students can be provided with scholarship by China, and in 2001, the number exceeded 1200.<sup>4</sup> The scale has been maintained up to 2005, and there are 24 students granted with Chinese Government Scholarship coming to study in China from each African country on average. (This number will grow year by year, according to the Ministry of Education, P R China, a total enrollment of 2 400 students per year will be achieved up to 2010. Since then, 48 students from each African country can come to study in China with government scholarship offered.<sup>5</sup>) During the 50 years, China has provided government scholarship to 50 African countries, and 18 000 African youths have got their further studies in China, those haven’t ever got the scholarship from Chinese government are just the 3 as follow: Swaziland, Burkina Faso, and Sao Tome and Principe.<sup>6</sup>

**Sending teachers in aid to Africa is another important part of China-Africa education cooperation.** From 1956 till the end of 2003, China has sent 523 specialized teachers to 35 African countries, who gave courses in more than 10 subjects and specialties, including science,

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<sup>1</sup> 阿·费克里：《埃及古代史》，高望之等译，商务印书馆 1973 年 4 月第 1 版。

<sup>2</sup> Xinhua News Agency website: [http://www.news.xinhuanet.com/english/2002-09/04/content\\_550020.htm](http://www.news.xinhuanet.com/english/2002-09/04/content_550020.htm).

<sup>3</sup> 《中国教育合作与交流》编写组：《中国与非洲国家教育合作与交流》，北京大学出版社，2005 年，第 2 页。

<sup>4</sup> 《中国与非洲国家教育合作与交流》，第 16 页。

<sup>5</sup> 教育部国际合作司：《大展宏图的中非教育合作盛会》，《西亚非洲》2006 年第 1 期，第 5 页。

<sup>6</sup> 《中国与非洲国家教育合作与交流》，第 17 页。

engineering, agriculture, arts and physical training, in order to assist African countries to develop the weak disciplines, train talents in technological field, develop education in middle schools and universities. In the late 1980s, China launched a series of associated aiding program called “**Advanced Education and Scientific Research Program**”, mainly aiming at: donating teaching and scientific research equipments to African universities; teachers in aid to Africa doing scientific researches together with the local university teachers and scientific researchers; selecting young teachers, persons dealing with scientific research or technologies to attend in an advanced studies in China. From 1995 till the end of 2003, China has implemented 43 sessions of “**Advanced Education and Scientific Research Program**” in 21 African countries successively, and under the assistance, 21 comparatively advanced laboratories in the fields of biology, micro-biology, computer science, physics, analytical chemistry, food refreshment and processing have been set up in universities of those countries.

The teaching of Chinese language has made great progress. Up to now, colleges and universities in Egypt, Tunis, Cameroon, Kenya, Mauritius and some other countries have courses about Chinese language and culture. Further more, “Confucius Institute” has been set up in Egypt, Kenya and South Africa, introducing Chinese language and culture to the local societies.

**Holding specialized seminars and training program is also an import part in China-Africa education cooperation.** This form of cooperation started in late 1980s. Regarding to the rapid development of China’s economy, African countries attach much importance to the experiences of China’s development. Since 1998, especially after the First Forum Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in Beijing in 2000, different ministries have held various sorts of trainings and seminars for officials of all circles and levels from African countries in China under the organization and coordination of Chinese central government. According to the comparative advantages of Chinese colleges and universities and the practical needs of the African countries, the Ministry of Education of P R China entrusts the domestic colleges and universities to held training programs and research programs covering the contents of basic education management, advanced education management, modern distance learning, vocational education, agricultural products processing, applied computer technologies, medicinal plants research and so on. Up to the end of 2003, 18 sessions of specialized seminars of different kinds had been held by 14 domestic colleges, universities and scientific research institutions which were entrusted by the Ministry of Education of P R China; 297 high level persons from 42 African countries entered into studies in China.<sup>1</sup> Other organs such as Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Culture and All-China Women’s Federation have also held relevant specialized seminars. In our university, the Peking University Center of Africa Studies had once held a session of training under the entrustment of the Ministry of Commerce. During the 40-day-long training, 16 economic and commercial officials from 10 different countries in Francophone Africa came, among whom 2 were vice-ministerial-level, 7 were director-general level, and 7 were director-level. In fact, we have organized 3 sessions of training courses for African economic and commercial officials, but the other 2 were for the officials coming from Arabic speaking countries, including those from the Northern Africa.

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<sup>1</sup> 《中国与非洲国家教育合作与交流》，第 44 页。

**In addition, exchanges and cooperation between educational and academic institutions of both sides including visits of top-level officials in education sector are also involved in China-Africa education cooperation.** As mentioned above, not long after the close of Asian-African Conference, **Bacoor, Minister of Awqaf and Religious Affairs of Egypt** (who also served as Grand Sheikh of Al Azhar University) and Kamal, Professor of Cairo University were sent by President Nasser to visit China and received warm reception by Premier Zhou Enlai. In the same year, Egypt sent **Islamic Congress** Delegation with 5 persons to visit China (**Anwar Sadat was Minister of State of Egypt at that time**). This visit prepared foundations for the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Egypt. Since then, frequent communications among the high level officials and delegations of education sectors began. Up to now, China has sent more than 100 education delegations to visit Africa while received as many delegations from African countries.<sup>1</sup> Communications in education sector were carried out not only through irregular mutual contacts, but also through mutual and multilateral high level talks and negotiation mechanism. “Sino-African Education Ministers Forum” was successfully held in Beijing in November last year. 14 Ministers of Education and 4 officials of higher level from 17 African countries participated the forum which centering on the theme of “strategy for educational development in China and African countries and international exchange and cooperation”. At the forum, China has made new commitment to assisting Africa, which included training 1000 educational administrative officials, presidents of universities, principals of middle schools and primary schools, as well as backbone teachers of African countries each year in the following 3 years; duplicate the number of African students who can receive Chinese government scholarship within the following 5 years. In addition, Universities in China have granted some African politicians and social activists who have made theoretical achievements the title of Honorary Doctor since the late 1970s, in order to praise and honor their contribution to the society and academic accomplishment. Peking University has granted Nelson Mandela, Muhammad Hosni Mubarak, Olusegun Obasanjo, Paul Biya, Pascal Lissouba, El Hadj Omar Bongo and Abdelaziz Bouteflika the title of Honorary Professors successively, more over, Peking University has established communicative relations successively with Cairo University, University of Cape Town, University of Pretoria, University of Dar es Salaam, Wist University and Stellenbosch University.

After a development of 50 years, China has established cooperative relations in education with 50 African countries, and the cooperation has developed from sending exchange students at the beginning to the current education communication and cooperation of multi-level, multi-field and multi-form. The China-Africa education cooperation has formed an independent developing system which combines leadership and coordination from government with active participation of universities and academic sectors. Those aid programs including education and scientific research programs and training programs have gradually formalized a quite scientific system from setting up the projects, evaluation to checking and acceptance. The domestic universities have settled up some important bases for Africa teaching and studies, including Peking University **Center for Africa Studies**, Zhejiang Normal University **Center for African Education Studies**, Tianjin University of Technology and Education **Center for African Vocational Education Studies**, meanwhile, a team for education aid which consists professional teachers who have excellent

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<sup>1</sup> 《中国与非洲国家教育合作与交流》，第 11 页；张秀琴、薛彦青、强亚平、罗建波：《中国和非洲国家的教育交流与合作》，《西亚非洲》2004 年第 3 期，第 25 页。

operative abilities and spirits of dedication has been gradually developed.

Although compared with the aid to Africa for education communications by the Western countries, China has not put much capital in it, yet China has recognized much success. Many Chinese teachers dedicated in their aiding Africa career, and won high remarks from the local government, teachers and students by their excellent skills in teaching and research. For example, Zhejiang Agricultural University (which has been merged in Zhejiang University) has sent 12 teachers successively to work in Cameroon. After 8 years hard work, a quite advanced and perfect micro-biology laboratory was set up in No.1 University of Yaounde, in whose construction China has put a capital of RMB 2 million.<sup>1</sup> Besides, relevant courses in micro-biology have been offered, and a good many graduate students were enrolled and trained. Up to now, there have been 28 masters and 11 doctors who have accomplished their high quality theses or doctoral dissertations and begun working at relevant vocations. While training talented personnel in micro-biology field, Chinese scientific researchers also collaborated with their colleagues of No.1 University of Yaounde to guide the students' multi-dimensional practices and researches in alcoholic fermentation, pesticide's biodegradation and so on, according to their specialties and local situations. The projects such as "tapioca's alcoholic fermentation" have supplied gaps in researching and manufacturing of Cameroon, President Paul Biya of Cameroon tasted the alcohol brewed by tapioca in person, and this was broadcasted lively in domestic TV channels. Teachers of Zhejiang University won high remarks by their diligence and dedication in their work of talents training, scientific researching and subjects building. On visiting to China in 2000, the Minister of Advanced Education of Cameroon awarded the 4 teachers of Zhejiang University who once assisted Cameroon the President Knight Medal in the name of the President of Cameroon.

On the aspect of exchange students training, most of the students who have accomplished their studies in China have gone into important positions when back to their countries. According to inadequate statistics, out of all the African students graduated in China, 8 are holding leading posts higher than ministerial-level; 8 have been assumed the offer of ambassadors of counsellors; 6 serve as Premiers or their secretaries; 3 are working as Secretary General in the association of promoting friendship with China.<sup>2</sup> Lots of middle age and youth diplomats working at embassies of their countries in China have once studied here. Dr. Mulatu Teshome who once served as president of the House of Federation of Ethiopia have come to China studying for 3 times, and he received bachelor of philosophy, master and doctor of international politics at Peking University. The tutor for his master degree was Prof. Liang Gencheng, who was my tutor as well, thus Dr. Mulatu Teshome is my senior in the regard. Mr. Charles Phiri once studied technology engineering at Northern Jiaotong University (which is now renamed as Beijing Jiaotong University) from 1972 to 1974, and he works as the Managing Director of TAZARA (Tanzania-Zambia Railway Authority). Besides Mr. Phiri, more than 270 African students who graduated in China have been working for TAZARA, and lots of them have already occupied the middle-level or higher leading positions. When I once visited Mr. Phiri during my study in Tanzania in 2003, he introduced status of TAZARA to me with much gratitude to China.

Different forms of education aid in Africa have helped the African countries train lots of talents, those

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<sup>1</sup> 《中国与非洲国家教育合作与交流》，第 31 页。

<sup>2</sup> 《中国与非洲国家教育合作与交流》，第 20 页。

who have received education involves people from different levels and vocations, including primary and middle schools students to doctorands, skilled works to scientists and technical personnel, general administrative officers to high-level officials. Further more, under the aid from China, African countries are building up their weak disciplines, and it makes for the promotion of education level and quality of their citizens, which has contributed in narrowing the digital gap between those countries and developed ones. In a long term, this will help those countries to break away from being further marginized and impoverished, and achieve economic prosperity, social development, peace and stability. The aid to Africa has helped to buildup the countries' self-developing capacities, so as the friendship ties between China and Africa which are regarded as significant foundation and support to China's diplomacy have been tightened, which can surely help to the enhancement of China's diplomacy and national interests.

However, there still lie imperfections in China-Africa education cooperation and communication, and I have 3 points as follow concerning this part.

## **II. The Issue of General Management and Coordination among Sectors**

There is a serious deficiency in the coordination among ministries and commissions according to those non-education cooperation, which is weakening the results of China-Africa education communication and cooperation. At present, the Ministry of Education has only sent an official to specially take charge of education related affairs to the Chinese Embassy in South Africa, but hasn't assigned certain persons to work at this field to the embassies in other 46 countries which have diplomatic relations with China so that the education division is taken charge by cultural counsellors or others. As a result, the effects largely rely on their attentions and efforts put in education division. In fact, more than a few countries don't work efficiently in their embassies here, and this is mainly related to the estimate system of the diplomats. The achievements of cultural counsellors are mainly estimated by the Ministry of Culture, to which they are affiliated according to cultural communications with their resident countries, including art performances, exhibitions, training of art talents and so on, but not concerned with how much they have done in education. I am benefited from China-Africa education cooperation. The study I attended in Tanzania in 2003 was a part of the cooperation between Ministry of Education of P R China and Zanzania. While I was studying there, I received lots of assists by the Cultural Counsellor Mr. Qiu Bingjun, who was sent there by the Ministry of Culture. During his 4-year-term, China and Tanzania had made lots of progress in education cooperation, so I was lucky to have been benefited much and I know that there are others like me as well. However, as I know, the other embassies where there weren't educational counsellors haven't done as well enough. Most of the countries haven't organized alumni for students studying in China, so that they can't do as India, Republic of Korea and other European countries whose students can exchange feelings and information in the activities held by their alumni or students associations. More over, the admission of exchange students is quite rough and careful, and those existing problems have something to do with the current system. From the perspective of system, according to a cultural counsellor, the education division goes beyond his responsibilities and it's natural and understandable that he often complains about it. Under this circumstance, he can decide how much effort to be spared to education or even no effort at all. Thus, all that has been paid by the government will not necessarily lead to a good result, what's even worse is that the precious educational resources will be wasted up, and China-Africa relations will be

undermined and out national interests on a whole will be damaged. Therefore, what is essential doesn't only include the requirement of diplomats' strong career ambition, spirits of dedication and overall perception of diplomacy, but also requires some adjustment and improvement in the authorization and mechanism of personnel, the estimation of operation as well as the criterion of promotion. Only through practices can we find out the ways to change the situation and solve the problems. Besides, the coordination among the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has problems on some other aspects as well. If different ministries and commissions can conform their necessary resources together and enhance general coordination with each other, efficiency will surely be promoted while the wasted resources and overlapped work will be decreased, so that China-Africa education cooperation will have more fruitful future. Some scholars have suggested that set up a high-level organ which is authorized to take charge of general direction of aid to Africa, and its responsibilities are providing the central government and other relevant functional sections with suggestions or supports on mid or long term policy making in the issue of aid to Africa; directing and coordinating the work of Africa studies, education, training, investigation and trading among different regions, sections and units within the country, so as to make sure all the aspects are going along smoothly and harmoniously. In my point of view, this suggestion is advisable.<sup>1</sup>

### III. The Issue of “Deficits” in China-Africa Education Cooperation

There is a great amount of trade deficits as well as grave deficits in culture and education exchange in China-Africa relations nowadays. The current situation is that on one side, China's intelligence support to aid Africa takes a large part in the mutual communication, but on the other side, China did not do much work in learning from Africa, and seldom sends students and scholars abroad to study and do research, more over, there are even fewer African scholars coming to give lectures in China.

In fact, at the very beginning, the education cooperation between China and Africa used to be interactive and in balance. After the China and Egypt have signed the **Cultural Cooperation Agreements**, China sent 7 exchange students and 1 Chinese teacher to Cairo in January 1956, while Egypt sent 4 scholars and 4 students to China in the same year. Just regarding to the figures, we can see at that time it was China that learnt more from its partner. Since then, China sent exchange students and teachers abroad to Egypt, Morocco and other African countries who mainly attended classes on language, literature and history, etc. Ascending to even earlier time before the foundation of the People's republic of China in 1949, we were benefited unilaterally from the education cooperation. In February 1931, four students, Ma Jian, Na Zhong, Lin Zhongming and Zhang Youcheng were selected from Kunming Mingde Middle School and Shanghai Islamic Normal College to study at Al Azhar University in Egypt. This was the first time that China sent students to Africa in organically. Afterwards another five groups of students were sent to study there. In total, about 30 students have gone to Al Azhar University.<sup>2</sup> But there isn't document showing that whether or not China received students from Africa at that time. If we ascend much further, Ma Fuchu, famous Chinese Islamic scholar went to Egypt for a two-year study in 1836, and then he went on studying on the tour to Jerusalem, Istanbul and Singapore. He devoted his life

<sup>1</sup> 黄泽全：《关于加强中非合作的思考与建议》，李保平、马锐敏主编：《非洲变革与发展》，世界知识出版社 2002 年版，第 317 页。

<sup>2</sup> 杨志波：《中国穆斯林留学生今昔》，伊呼网站：[http://www.islamhood.com/book\\_view.asp?id=89](http://www.islamhood.com/book_view.asp?id=89).

in carrying forward Islamic teaching and culture, and has left us with plenty of writings. Ma Fuchu is perhaps the first recorded Chinese student who went to study in Africa. Then in 1906, imam Wang Haoran went to Egypt and Turkey with his student imam Ma Debao for one year study and review, after their journey of pilgrimage to Mecca. Ha Decheng, famous Chinese educationist and Islamic scholar had a short term study in Egypt after his pilgrimage In 1913; In 1922 Wang Jingzhai, famous Faqeeh (Muslim Jurist) and translator went to Egypt to attend in advanced studies with his student Ma Hongdao for more than one year, and while he was studying at Al Azhar University, he served as the first head person in Chinese students section.<sup>1</sup>

Students and scholars' going to Africa is a very important and direct means of learning from Africa, contracting with local scholars, getting impressions and knowledge about African culture and situations of different countries. Thus, the Africa studies level in China will be likely to enhanced on a whole, which will lead to the emergence of real Africa experts. There are lots of things worth learning in Africa, and it has world famous masters in academic sectors as well, therefore, we will be benefited a lot if we can invite them to give us lectures. There are some world advanced technologies in some fields in Africa which worth our learning, such as heart displacement, the abstraction of out of coal, mining techniques, etc. It is time for us to change the unbalanced situation of China-Africa Education communication.

#### **IV. The Issue of Dispatching Volunteers to Africa**

There lies a great potential in the work of dispatching volunteers to Africa, and sending volunteers to Africa is indeed rewarding and worth our diligence and efforts.

According to China, the work of dispatching volunteers to Africa is still at its early step, in other words, it has a grand developing space ahead. China officially began to send its volunteers to Africa since 2004, and the first group of volunteers was made up by some Chinese teachers who went to Mauritius in October that year. As part of the "Volunteer Program for International Chinese Teachers" of the Office of Chinese Language Council, those volunteers would work in Mauritius for 1 year, teaching kids aged 5-12 Chinese at the government-run primary schools, and training local teachers to teach the kids Chinese. Afterwards, China sent out the second group of volunteers in 2005. 12 volunteers who came from Beijing, Chengdu, Shanghai and Yunnan, etc formed up a team of "China Youth Volunteers" set off from Beijing for Ethiopia in August 2005, and they would volunteer half year's time there. This program is taken charge by Young Volunteers Action Guiding Center under the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League of China under the entrustment of the Ministry of Commerce, and it is a part of "China Youth Volunteers Services".<sup>2</sup> During their stay in Ethiopia, they worked on programs dealing with methane development, Chinese teaching and information technology. Recently, China sent other 60 volunteers to Ethiopia. Up to now, China has just officially and half-officially sent 77 volunteers to Africa as mentioned above.

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<sup>1</sup> 杨志波:《中国穆斯林留学生今昔》,伊呼网站:[http://www.islamhood.com/book\\_view.asp?id=89](http://www.islamhood.com/book_view.asp?id=89);刘宝军:《回族留学生在海外的发展变迁史》,《宁夏社会科学》2005年第2期,第84页。

<sup>2</sup> The programme "China Youth Volunteers Services" begin in 1993. In 2000, China sent the first group of volunteers to Laos as the first team to oversea.

Compared with western developed countries' overseas volunteers dispatching work, China lags a long way behind in the scales, fields and organizing mechanism due to a rather short history. The US is the country that began to send volunteers to Africa quite early. Since 1961 when the first Peace Corps Volunteers accepted assignments to serve the Republic of Ghana and Tanganyika, more than 182,000 men and women have served in 138 countries, and currently the Peace Corps Volunteers are serving in 71 countries in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Central and South America, Europe, and the Middle East in which Sub-Sahara Africa remains their main destination. All the volunteers are American citizens no younger than 18, most of who are university graduates, and they volunteer 2 years collaborating with local community members in areas like education, youth outreach and community development, the environment, and information technology.<sup>1</sup> The Peace Corps were set up in the 1960s mainly in the political needs in the era of Cold War, and it came into being and developed also from the American philanthropic traditions, which indicates humanitarianism of its people. The volunteers have been teachers and mentors to countless children, helped farmers grow crops, worked with small businesses to market products, and shown women how to care for their babies. More recently, they've helped schools develop computer skills and educated entire communities about the threat of HIV/AIDS. Like the US, Britain, France the Northern European countries and Japan have such mature overseas volunteers' organization as well.

The work by the volunteers helps promote communications and friendships between the sending countries and countries they go to, and it supplemented well to the governmental aids. While UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan opened International Year of Volunteers 2001, he declared that "at the heart of volunteerism are the ideals of service and solidarity and the belief that together we can make the world a better place."<sup>2</sup> His words make sense. Volunteerism is non-profit but philanthropic and altruistic which is an important part in good will diplomacy within people to people. As for the Peace Corps of the US, most volunteers have inclination of idealism, which brings them sense of mission and leads them go to undeveloped countries to help the local community members in areas like education, youth outreach and community development, the environment, and information technology, in this sense, they have benefited the local people for sure. Because the Peace Corps volunteers mainly work at the grass root level in the countries, and they have formed the first impression about American people and America for the local people. The US Ambassador to the Republic of Guinea once mentioned in his telegraph to US Department of State that "The real US Ambassadors are those volunteers rather than those who are in the Embassy in the capital city. In fact, most of the people on the continent get ideas about the US and its people through their observation on the volunteers."<sup>3</sup> This view sounds reasonable. The generosity and dedication of volunteers win trusts and friendship for the US wherever they go, and this helps to improve the US's image in those countries. Further more, it enhances the attraction to the outside world which serves America's diplomatic strategy and national interests.<sup>4</sup> Although

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<sup>1</sup> The Peace Corp official website: <http://www.peacecorps.gov/index.cfm?shell=learn>.

<sup>2</sup> "UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's statement at the opening ceremony for the International Year of Volunteers 2001", the International Year of Volunteers 2001 Official website, <http://www.iyv-2001.org>.

<sup>3</sup> Mark L. Schneider, "Globalization, Information Technology, and the Peace Corps in the 21st Century"; "Remarks by Mark L.

Schneider for Announcement of Peace Corps HIV/AIDS Initiative". In <http://www.peacecorps.gov/news/view.cfm?news-id=487>.

<sup>4</sup> 参见刘国柱：《后冷战时期和平队的历史走势》，《世界经济与政治》2002年第8期，第54-59页。

China hasn't sent many volunteers to Africa, those who worked there won high reputations and remarks from the local people through their enthusiasm, initiatives, and industry in the works benefiting the local people, and this demonstrated Chinese youths' high spirit in the international volunteerism. 11 youth volunteers came back with honors from Ethiopia after their half year's work in January this year, while their head person, Feng Ai who studies at Fudan University for her doctoral degree stays there for her remaining work at Addis Ababa University for the establishment of the ever first Department of Chinese Language and Literature in Africa. Since the first mission of Chinese volunteers has brought with great impression to the Ethiopian people, Ethiopian government called for more volunteers from China after their return. **Mr. Haile-Kiros Gessesse**, Ethiopian Ambassador to China once remarked that "Like Feng Ai, those volunteers worked totally on their own will rather than working for money, so that they can put more enthusiasm in their work." He expressed his hope that more Chinese youth Volunteers can go to Ethiopia and help the local people, because those Chinese volunteers once worked there really helped them solved a lots of problems.<sup>1</sup>

Volunteers' service is an import means of spreading abroad the culture and values of their country. Since cultural factor is a part of "soft power", we shouldn't ignore its strengths and influences towards foreign policies and diplomatic activities. Still take Peace Corps for instance which most of the volunteers work as English teachers. Language is known not only a tool, but also as a culture carrier, thus the American value and public culture have been spread throughout Africa by their unconscious English teaching and spare-time activities. Most importantly, the people who are being taught by the volunteers at present will probably be future leaders of the countries. In fact, up to now, there have already been some cabinet ministers, envoys leaders in enterprises and trading organizations who once were taught by Peace Corps volunteers, including the incumbent Vice President of the Republic of Ghana. Those leaders who were taught in American way are now influencing or even determining some of the critical decisions of their countries.<sup>2</sup> The stories of Chinese volunteers are touching as well. Just before they would leave for China, a big ceremony for the completion of the courses was held in the class where they taught Chinese at Kotebe College. At the ceremony, their Ethiopian students sang "Dance of Youth", a famous song written by Wang Luobin in Chinese, the Cultural Counsellor from Chinese Embassy in Ethiopia awarded the students diplomas, and Mr. Bekale Seyoum, Dean of Kotebe College awarded certificates of honor to the 3 teachers. What happened excited the volunteers a lot, and what moved them most was at the end of the ceremony when all the students said "I love China" in Chinese together. One of the volunteers said: "The scenes of the ceremony made them very exciting, we came here on the mission of letting Ethiopian people know better about Chinese culture, history, economy and people, and we believed that we've made it, what we have done is worthwhile."<sup>3</sup> Volunteers work at the grass-root level so that whatever they do, they will have much communications with the local people. Through the mutual communications, people get to know each others' traditions, cultures, and then their souls and spirits will be impressed influenced. On the precondition of respecting the local tradition and history, the volunteers spread up Chinese culture and value conceptions through what they have said and done. The virtues of Chinese people such as diligence, respect to their work and prudence, together with the modern senses

<sup>1</sup> 谢洋:《中国青年志愿者教我学中文》,《中国青年报》2006年6月7日。

<sup>2</sup> 参见刘国柱:《后冷战时期和平队的历史走势》,《世界经济与政治》2002年第8期,第58页。

<sup>3</sup> 《埃塞俄比亚大学里第一个中文班》,中青在线网: [http://zqb.cyol.com/content/2006-01/21/content\\_1304626.htm](http://zqb.cyol.com/content/2006-01/21/content_1304626.htm).

about birth control and punctuality as well as volunteers' selfless dedication will help the local people in getting rid of blindness and bad habits while acquiring modern senses. In this point, cultural communications will not only promote friendship, but also make for the civilization, affluence and prosperity.

There is another important function about expanding China's volunteerism in Africa, and that is relief of the domestic employment pressure. The situation of employment lying in front of university graduates is serious. It is not easy any more for students to find jobs out of the ivory tower in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, according to the statistic by the Ministry of Education, P R China, the employment rate from 2001 to 2005 is only around 70% on average, and this is an increasing number of graduates waiting for jobs, which is 340,000 in 2001, 370,000 in 2002, 520,000 in 2003, and 690,000 in 2004. Although it was said that 74.5% of graduates out of 3.42 million were "settled" in 2005, 25.5% graduates didn't find formal jobs at that time which accounted for 872,000. University graduates in 2006 turn out to be 4.13 million which is increased with 750,000 compared with that of 2005. so that means an even more serious pressure on employment. For most of graduates, the level of occupations is in a downtrend, which results in less income and welfare. Meanwhile, informal positions take more proportion so that high-level services which fit the university graduates can't provide with sufficient vacancies. Even if at Peking University where the employment situations always seem optimistic, there are still 3%-5% graduates each year who can't find jobs. Even if there were still 3.5% undergraduates (88 people) and 3.6% graduate students (110 people) waiting for jobs last year, the year 2005 still turned out to have the best employment result compared with those of recent years.<sup>1</sup>

Concerning the university graduates, the choice of becoming volunteers to Africa, is no doubt a great relief of the domestic employment pressure. As a matter of fact, among the graduates, there is certain amount of people who are self-devoting. 81 graduates have chosen to work in the west part of China just from Peking University in 2005, which has duplicated both the number and rate comparing that of 2004.<sup>2</sup> Those students were willing to practice their skills and talents in rather tough regions and achieve their career goal there. The nongovernmental volunteerism to Africa took place earlier than that of governmental in China with more people involved. The volunteers go to work in Africa under the arrangement of civil and nongovernmental organizations and international NGOs. For example, Li Haibao, who was at that time a senior student at Beijing Forestry University accepted the assignment by Development Aid from People to People (DAPP), an NGO which locates its headquarter in Denmark to teach in Namibia for half a year 1998, and his work mainly consisted supervising the operation of local kinder gardens, giving suggestions, training the teachers and teaching the kids English and playing games. This NGO has adopted about 30 volunteers from China to serve in African countries.<sup>3</sup> It is obvious that there are more volunteers sent to Africa in non-governmental way than those of governmental way. If the government can provide a proper guidance and arrangement, I think the volunteerism in Africa would be attractive to students graduating and on campus. More over, volunteering is a previous part in one's life experience, and the volunteer himself will thus obtain advantages when hunting for jobs. Li Haibao, who once served in Africa voluntarily said that he had learnt a lot in Africa

<sup>1</sup> 《北京大学 2005 年毕业生就业工作总结》，北京大学出版物，第 1 页。

<sup>2</sup> 《北京大学 2005 年毕业生就业工作总结》，第 2—3 页。

<sup>3</sup> 刘元：《去非洲当志愿者》，《中国青年报》2000 年 3 月 1 日。

and he could help the others there, which was concerned profound to his life.<sup>1</sup> It's out of question that the employers would like to take in such candidates who have much experience and managed to overcome tough conditions. Liu Nan, who graduated from Beijing International Studies University, worked in a restaurant after graduation in 2000. In 2002, she went to Laos to teach English as a member of the first mission of volunteers working abroad, and when she came back after having finished her half-year's service there, she was hired to work at the Department of Marketing at Nestle. Liu Nan told the reporter that it was her service in Laos that helped her obtaining the job, because "the company attaches much importance to self-dedication", "the leaders thought that I have experienced tough conditions and grew a lot there, so that I would be more perseverant and endurant than the others." Her colleagues envied her volunteering experience much, "they think that it was a brilliant part of my life, and they admire my courage a lot" she added.<sup>2</sup>

The voluntary and dedicated service by those volunteers will help weaken, relieve, diminish even frustrate the impacts and discourses of "China threat" and "China Neo-colonialism". Those fallacies will be defeated themselves because time will tell. Those volunteers' work is unknown to the public, and it is without utilitarian aims, requires of profits or eager to quick success, but just with devotions and generosity. They just want to prove that China is a friend of Africa, and the Chinese people sincerely help the African people to revive their countries, and what they have done are just for the African people's interests. The services of volunteers in Africa will help the African people to raise consensus with China which will frustrate those discourses that slandering China. After the building of TAZARA, people hardly see the works which would symbolize China's generous and altruistic aid to Africa, thus, dispatching volunteers to serve Africa will be a good successor. As for the African people, the Chinese volunteers' works are closely associated with their local circumstances, which serve as good supplements to the cooperative programs between governments. It is effective to have volunteerism bear responsibilities of non-governmental diplomacy, on one hand, those volunteers will be able to practice their skills and specialties, on the other hand, the friendship between China and Africa will be developed. The correspondence between foreign aids which are characterized by civilian features and the former governmental programs will be a new approach towards people to people diplomacy and it requires serious study and research.

The recognition and devotion by the government is indispensable to the good result of volunteerism work. Regarding to the experience of other countries, overseas voluntary service is much more a campaign guided and supported by government rather than a civilian activity which is absolutely self-motivated. It is required that the nation be in charge of financial support, preliminary coordination, publicity, personnel enrollment and voluntary services instruction, etc. In China, the central budget is obviously supporter to the volunteers' overseas services. Apart of providing financial support, it is essential to take general coordination over ministries and commissions such as the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education, and all that mentioned here calls for further research and perfection. The "African Policy Paper" issued at the beginning of this year declared that "China will encourage and

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<sup>1</sup> 刘元：《去非洲当志愿者》，《中国青年报》2000年3月1日。

<sup>2</sup> 杜天琦、王涑恩：《东非高原有批中国志愿者》，《环球时报》2005年9月5日。

facilitate the exchanges between people's organizations of China and Africa, especially the youth and women, with a view to increasing the understanding, trust and cooperation of people on both sides. It will encourage and guide Chinese volunteers to serve in African countries.”<sup>1</sup> In this term, it is necessary to strengthen the volunteerism to Africa, improve the coordinating mechanism, enhance the volunteer dispatching scale and have more fields involved. It will become a significant action which spreads China’s aid to Africa into the civil level and local communities, and account for a new component to China’s policies towards Africa as well as China-Africa education cooperation.

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<sup>1</sup> China's African Policy, January 2006, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, P R China, in <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/zxxx/t230615.htm>.