

Research on the Chinese U3A Model

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Introduction

I. Research Background

At the Oriental Symposium, an International Academic Exchange for Education of the Senior in April 2018, Prof Francois Vellas, the AIUTA president, did a presentation on “U3A: a French Model”. Ms Maria Chester, Secretary General of AIUTA, gave a speech titled “U3A: the UK Experience”. Meanwhile, Mr Lin Yuanhe, vice president of Chinese Association of Universities for the Aged(CAUA) , addressed the participants with a speech titled “Elderly Education: the China Model” . From these presentations, we can conclude that, U3As of the French model are mostly held in universities, while the British model relies heavily on the community, that is, a network of U3As based on self service and mutual help. When it comes to the Chinese model, these are U3As led by the Party and government, run directly by various functional departments of the government, while diverse social forces take a part.

In his speech titled “INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION On ELDERLY EDUCATION Post Covid19”, which was given at the second Oriental Symposium on Senior Education in October 2020, Prof Vellas noted “during AIUTA seminars, especially the Wuhan International Conference in China in May 2019, much experience was discussed, notably the international cooperation in the framework of the New Silk Road (Belt and Road Initiative) program. The results of this cooperation have made it possible to bring together the different models of universities of the third age between the original French model, the British model and the Chinese model. These connections between the main areas of policies for seniors education leads to the development of a wider choice of university education for the elderly and also to increase the involvement of public authorities.”

As such, issues on global U3A model has become part of AIUTA's focus.

II. Significance of the Research

China's U3A program is transforming from a self-being phase to a self-making one. Model formulation, therefore, has become a task of historic merit.

Studies on the Chinese U3A model is a reaching-out-to-the world experiment in light of international comparison. Engaging with their international counterparts, U3A models promote cooperation by showing the strength of each other and pursuing the common good. As the UK model relies on a highly developed market economy as well as a scheme of go-between agencies, the French model draws upon robust higher education institutions. When it comes to China, a developing country with a tremendous, already aging population, the model of U3As dependent on government agencies provides an example to nations that becomes elderly before becoming rich.

III. Research Methods

In the latter half of 2019, 20 U3As across China formed a national research team dedicated to Research on the Chinese U3A Model. The launching ceremony, where the research structure was determined, took place at Guangzhou Elderly University in September 2020.

Methods in use: Building upon the experience in explaining and assessing French and British models,

study, observe and assess Chinese U3A in terms of its 40-year development path and mechanism. With reference to existing U3A theories at home and abroad and Chinese U3A policies, to describe the Chinese model in accordance with the social economic growth pattern, and to carry out model-structure-based studies.

IV. A Sketch of the Chinese U3A model

With the guidance of the Party and the government, related functional departments directly run U3As with the participation of social forces of various kinds. Such is the way the Chinese model is organized.

The essence of the Chinese model is to put the people front and center. Its ultimate goal is to provide the people with more equitable elderly education of higher quality. That's why Party committees and governments at every level prioritize, support and invest in U3As enormously.

The fundamental drive for the model is to meet people's needs for a better life. The basic goal is to help the older adults achieve all-round development.

The Chinese model is rooted in our fertile cultural soil. Fine culture of the nation is the soul of the model.

Back in 1997, the second CAUA general assembly set the U3A mission as "to increase knowledge, enrich life, cultivate taste, boost health and serve the society", which laid the theoretical foundation for the Chinese model.

The model has rich implications with Chinese characteristics. Demand-based courses and guidance-based programs make up the curriculum. Contents of political thought and traditional culture is a uniqueness. Activity-based teaching enriches campus culture. Volunteer services become a common sight.

The Chinese model is well safeguarded. Education for older adults is protected by the Constitution, while related U3A laws, regulations and policies provide adequate support.

The Chinese model is one with historic and societal values. It facilitates the realization of positive ageing and helps to build a lifelong education system aimed for the whole population. It is an integral part in the creation of a learning society, also an important subject of cultural transmission.

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Chapter 1 Formation and Development of the Chinese U3A Model

According to the result of China's seventh demographic census released in May 2021, the population aged 60 and above was 264.02 million, accounting for 18.70% (among which, 190.64 million were aged 65 and above, accounting for 13.50%). The degree of population aging has been further deepened in China, which calls for further development of education for the seniors.

Section 1 Origin of the Chinese U3A Model

I. Rooted in the soil of the history and culture of the Chinese nation

The Chinese people's excellent traditional culture of respecting the seniors born and developed in the production and daily life for a long time, and the plain philosophy of education for the seniors such as "live and learn" have provided spiritual and cultural foundation for the rise and development of contemporary education for the seniors in China.

II. Originated from the reform and innovation of China's cadre system

In 1982, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China issued the "Decision on Establishing a Retirement System for Retired Cadres". A large number of retired cadres retired and they had strong desire to continue to receive education. In 1983, China's first university for the seniors, Shandong Seniors University, was established. Ever since then universities for the seniors sprang up all over the country, opening the prelude to the development of education for the seniors in China. The reform of the cadre system provided the main impetus for the rise and development of education for the seniors in China. It was precisely because of this historical and institutional choice that China's education for the seniors has the characteristics that schools are run by the Communist Party of China (CPC) and government departments since day one.

III. Political, economic and social development based on the reform and opening-up over the more than 4 decades

Over the past 40 years since the reform and opening-up, China has undergone earth-shaking changes, and people's lives have achieved a moderately prosperous level, which has laid a solid material foundation for the development of education for the seniors in China. The increasingly strong mental and cultural needs of the seniors have injected strong internal driving impetus into the development of China's education for the seniors and pushed the creation of the model with Chinese characteristics.

Section 2 How the Chinese U3A Model was Formed

I. The evolution process of the Chinese U3A Model

This model with Chinese characteristics was not accomplished overnight, but was gradually shaped up and developed over the course of nearly 4 decades.

(I) The embryonic stage (1983-1999)

This stage was from the emergence of China's first university for the seniors to when China officially marched into the old age national ranks.

1. Go with the flow. On June 4, 1983, Shandong Seniors University was established. It adopted the old model in which the school was run as a retired cadre unit by the Party Committee's organization departments.

2. Ride on the momentum. Universities for the seniors had been established all over the country. Most of them also adopted the school-running system of Shandong Seniors University in which the university was sponsored by the local retired cadre department.

3. Education for the seniors was gradually recognized and affirmed by the state. On December 5, 1985, the National Seniors University Experience Exchange Conference was held. Leaders of the CPC and the state attended the conference and made important speeches, pointing out that "seniors universities are a novelty in China and a great innovation in China's education". After the conference, there was a blowout of universities for the seniors. In 1988, the National Congress of Seniors Universities was held in Wuhan, and the China Association of Universities for the Aged was established. The "Education Law" was promulgated and implemented in 1995, giving the seniors the right to "enjoy equal educational opportunities in accordance with the law". In 1996, the "Law on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of the Seniors" was promulgated and implemented, in which the state government's determination to develop education for the seniors was emphasized.

(II) Growth stage (1999-2016)

This stage was from when China entered an aging society to the State Council issued the "Outline for the Development of Education for the Seniors (2016-2020)".

1. Many rules and regulations had been introduced intensively. In 1999, the Ministry of Culture issued the "Opinions on Strengthening Cultural Work for the Seniors". It required cultural administrative departments at all levels to actively and systematically establish universities for the seniors. In June 2001, the Organization Department of the CPC Central Committee, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Civil Affairs, and the National Working Committee on Aging issued the "Notice on Promoting Education for the Seniors", requiring further measures to be taken to consolidate the existing achievements made in the cause of education for the seniors. In 2010, the "Outline of the National Medium- and Long-Term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010-2020)" officially incorporated education for the seniors into the national great education system.

2. The senior-related functional departments had become relevant in running schools. Various government departments had joined in the practice of education for the seniors. Educational administrative departments, departments of seniors affairs, cultural departments, civil affairs departments and other institutions related to the seniors had included the education for the seniors into their agenda as an important matter, and facilitated the establishment of universities for the seniors. Some colleges and universities, large state-owned enterprises and institutions, and the military had also set up universities for the seniors.

3. Experiment in the society's participation in education for the seniors. The state government guided the whole society to participate in it. Various industries, private enterprises, and social groups had tried to gradually participate in the establishment of universities for the seniors. For example, Zhejiang Greentown Group relied on its real estate to open Greentown Yile College, and Weifang Huadu Yiniyuan Seniors Care Institution cooperated and ran the school together with Weifang's municipal university for the seniors.

(III) Forming stage (2016-2021)

This stage started from the "Outline for the Development of Education for the Seniors (2016-2020)" issued by the State Council to the "Opinions on Strengthening Work Concerning the Aging Population in the New Era" issued by the Central Committee of the CPC and the State Council in 2021.

1. The state paid more attention to the top-level design of education for the seniors. The Fifth Plenary Session of the 19th Central Committee of the CPC in 2020 proposed to improve the lifelong learning system, implement the national strategy to actively respond to the tendency of population aging, and actively develop human resources of the seniors.

2. Various models with local's own characteristics under the leadership of the Party and government were formed. The first was the one with Shandong as representative. It was a typical Chinese U3A Model, in which the local government's Organization Department's Retired Cadre Bureau was in charge of running the university and the relevant departments would actively participate. Hubei Province, Fujian Province, Guangdong Province, Yunnan Province, He'nan Province, Hu'nan Province, Shaanxi Province adopted such a model. The second model was represented by Shanghai. The government's education administrative department acted as the coordinator and multiple departments participated, forming a school-running network covering the whole city. The typical example of the third model was Guizhou. It had formed a three-level leading organization of provincial, city (prefecture), county (city/district) for education for the seniors, which extended to five levels of township (town) and village (community). The fourth was the education model represented by Tianjin, with Tianjin University for the Aged established by the Tianjin Municipal Government as the main body, and radiating the high-quality education resources to the grassroots. Fifth, Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan regions had also formed their own unique education models for the seniors. There were both Chinese cultural colors and imprints of education models of Britain and France in their education models.

3. Extensive participation of society in running the universities. Under the promotion of the public policies, the whole society such as universities, vocational colleges, professional nursing homes, and private enterprises had organized or participated in education for the seniors through means such as sole proprietorship, joint venture, cooperation, which had alleviated the problem of insufficient resources.

(IV) A new stage of development (2021-present)

The U3A Model with Chinese characteristics has not stopped racing ahead. In November 2021, the Central Committee of the CPC and the State Council issued the "Opinions on Strengthening the Work Concerning Aging Population in the New Era", which proposed, "Expand the resources supply of education for the seniors and incorporate education for the seniors into the lifelong education system." which gave direction and path for the innovation and development of the Chinese U3A Model in the new era.

Chapter 2 Comparison of the Chinese Model and its International Counterparts

The context of globalization has made various countries more interconnected than ever in the field of education for the seniors. In particular, the International Association of Universities for the Third Age (AIUTA) established in 1978 has been playing an important role in promoting the international exchange and cooperation of education for the seniors. The exchanges of the three major education models for the seniors, namely the French model, the British model and the Chinese model, have also been deepened.

Section 1 Three Major U3A Models in the World

Internationally, the main criterion to define the education model for the seniors is who is the main body of running a university for the seniors. Accordingly, the research objects mainly focus on the French model, the British model, and the Chinese U3A Model.

I. The French Model

In 1973, under the impetus of French professor Pierre Vellas, the world's first university for the seniors, Toulouse University of the Third Age was established. Soon other French institutions of higher were inspired to set up similar third-age universities. In the end the French U3A Model relying on institutions of higher learning came into shape.

In the French U3A Model, the university for the senior shares administrative, financial, and personnel resources with colleges and universities. In other word, a "school within school" is established and run within colleges and universities. With the resources of advanced educational concepts, rich teaching resources and competent faculty of colleges and universities, different fields such as art, literature, science, humanities, medicine, health, politics, environment are included in the content of courses. Meanwhile events and activities have broadened the breadth of the connotation of education for the seniors and deepened its depth. The education for the seniors in France is close to life, with social hotspots as the starting point, such as research and studies on topics such as public health and climate change.

The French U3A Model has profoundly influenced the rest of the world. The preferred alternative for most countries in Europe, many countries in Latin America, and several countries in Asia and Africa when they set up universities for the seniors is to rely on institutions of higher learning. Germany, Italy, and Brazil are three typical examples.

II. The British Model

The British model is greatly influenced by the theory of welfare rights. In 1981, some British scholars and experts jointly launched "Forum of Educational Rights for the seniors". They discussed and studied the French U3A Model prevailing in the European continent at that time and created a suitable method for the U.K.'s own characteristics to develop the education for the seniors. In 1982, the United Kingdom successively established universities for the seniors, and published the "Goals and Guiding Principles of Universities for the Third Age", requiring that the establishment of universities for the seniors must comply with three principles, namely, all the seniors having access to universities, embodying education, and operating democratically. They had become labels for the British model of education for seniors. In 1983, the UK Third Age Trust was established, followed by a national committee soon after.

The British model is senior-students-oriented, advocating whoever capable can become a teacher. The

courses are close to the real life of senior students. It is a “help-yourself” style education model for the seniors. As of May 2016, there were more than 1,000 universities for the seniors in the UK, with more than 360,000 registered students. The numbers of universities and senior students have continued to grow in recent years. According to statistics, the annual growth rate of the universities is about 5%, and that of students is 7%.

The British U3A Model is also popular in the world. In particular, in the past, the Commonwealth of Nations and English-speaking countries would follow suit. Typical examples are Australia, Canada, Singapore and so on.

III. The Chinese model

China's universities for seniors are established by the CPC's organization departments, retired cadre departments, education departments, and civil affairs departments at all levels. "Led by Party and government, run by functional departments, and the whole society participates in the running" is an important feature of the Chinese U3A Model, which is different from France's reliance on higher education institutions and the United Kingdom's reliance on the nongovernmental sectors.

According to the needs of senior students, China's universities for the seniors provide courses covering cultural knowledge, calligraphy, painting and photography, literary and artistic activities, sports activities, medical care, housekeeping skills and information technology, etc. They encourage and support the seniors to carry out students' association activities independently, integrate into society, and show and make the most of their rich experience through volunteer activities. Nowadays with modern information technology seniors can even receive education remotely without leaving home.

There is a diversity of institutions of education for the seniors in China. Some are subordinates to the Party committee and run by relevant government departments, such as the Retired Cadre bureau, the Civil Affairs Bureau, the Aging Committee (Office), the Cultural Bureau or the Education Bureau. Some are subordinate to nongovernmental organizations, such as private enterprises. There are also some universities run by education management institutions for the seniors which have administrative functions. At present, open universities engaging in education for the seniors has become a new trend.

The Chinese U3A Model affects the world alongside with the French model and the British model. The Chinese model provides a reference for countries that have become an aging society before getting rich, economically underdeveloped, or underdeveloped in higher education.

Section 2 The Coexistence, Co-prosperity and Mutual Learning of Different Countries' U3A Models

I. Commonalities of the models of education for the seniors in different countries

1. Active support from the government

Although the level of governments' support varies, they all hold a positive attitude of encouraging, guiding, supporting and even leading towards education for the seniors, which is mainly reflected in a series of laws, regulations or policies and the underlying concepts.

In France, policies and regulations related to the seniors mainly focus on social insurance, home care, and medical care. The French government has also taken certain positive measures to encourage higher education institutions to engage in education for the seniors. For example, the 1968 "Higher Education Direction Guidance Law" provided policy support for France to carry out education for the seniors relying on higher education institutions. A report issued in 1971 advocated that the government should ensure that each seniors person had appropriate activities, which played a key role in the

development of education for the seniors. The “Vocational Continuing Education Act” promulgated in 1971 took the concept of lifelong education as the core and included education for the seniors in the entire education system.

The “Smith Report” promulgated in 1919 by the UK government demonstrated that adults have the possibility of receiving education, and proposed that attention should be paid to the education of everyone; The UK government legislated a series of legal policies on continuing education for adults, such as “Adult Education Regulations”, “Education Act 1944”, “Continuing Education Regulations”, “The Education Reform Act”, “Further and Higher Education Act”, “Skills for the 21st Century - Realizing Our Potential” and the “Continuing Education and Skills Program”. They reflected the British government's commitment to the disadvantaged group's equity in education. They had always adhered to the ideas of justice, equality and inclusiveness, and tried including as many people as possible in learning, providing support for the development of education for the seniors in the UK.

In China, the “Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of the Seniors” provides a legal basis to carry out education for the seniors. More and more relevant laws and regulations have been constantly emphasizing education for the seniors. In 2016, the General Office of the State Council issued the “Plan for Development of Education for the Seniors (2016-2020)”. It became the first special plan for education for the seniors in China; in November 2021, the Central Committee of the CPC and the State Council promulgated the “Opinions on Strengthening the Work Concerning Aging Population in the New Era”, highlighting the inclusion of education for seniors into the national lifelong education system.

There are also many relevant laws and regulations in other countries, some of which are quite representative. For example, the United States has relatively complete laws related to the seniors. The “Law on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of the Seniors”, the “Education Act for the Seniors”, the “American Seniors Law”, the “American Seniors Welfare Law”, and the “Age Discrimination Act of 1975”. are all targeted special laws concerning the rights, education, welfare and employment of the seniors.

2. Same educational concepts and teaching implementation

Be it the French model, the British model, the Chinese model or models in other countries, the curriculum design is based on the interests of the seniors to a certain extent. And by providing a variety of content, they combine learning and family life, social life, society, and especially modern technology together to help the seniors to better adapt to modern life and re-socialize. In China, the courses have been extended greatly and formed a wide spectrum, with the goal of realizing a systematic state. Currently there are about 500 courses in China's universities for the seniors, providing more high-quality education that are suitable for the seniors.

Class teaching is the most common teaching form. But group teaching that focuses on the autonomy of the seniors is another important teaching form in education for the seniors. In the UK in particular, hobby groups are the lifeblood of the UK U3A Model. The group advocates "help yourself" learning. The students will first read for self-study, and then complete the learning content through seminars such as discussions and debates or in the form of lectures. France, China and other countries also have similar study groups. In addition, with the development of science and technology, plus the outbreak of the COVID-19 epidemic in 2020, online distance teaching has increasingly been learned and accepted by the seniors, which further accelerates the modernization of education for the seniors.

Autonomous teaching management: In various models of education for the seniors frameworks, great

importance is attached to the learner autonomy, and most of the teachers are part-time teachers. There are few teaching evaluations such as examinations or tests for the seniors. The related teaching management is also different from the traditional ones where the former is more about establishing a complete support service system for the teaching activities, improving the teaching environment, providing learning resources, teaching students according to their aptitude, and guiding cooperative learning.

Teaching achievements demonstrate socialization: In the education of the seniors in various countries, we can see the spirit of volunteers. The original intention of education for the seniors is to meet the spiritual and cultural needs of the seniors and enrich their lives. On the other hand, this education also provides a channel for the seniors to contribute their strength to others and the society again. In China, it is common for seniors colleges to enlist volunteers. They will, according to their own conditions and the knowledge they have learned, voluntarily participate in various school service activities as well as go out of the campus to do public service.

II. Differences in the models of education for the seniors in different countries

The educational models around the world also have their own characteristics.

1. Different cultural traditions

France is a civil law country. It believes that human rights are innate and that people are born free and equal. They have always valued rational thinking and pursued truth. They try to avoid the influence of emotional thinking on judgment, and appreciate abstract thinking and generalization. Therefore, the French model combines education for the seniors with higher education, focusing on its academic development; the United Kingdom is a country with a common law system, which includes more concepts about freedom. At the same time it is a typical country of following the doctrine of stare decisis. Nongovernmental sectors are the main force to form and manage the British U3A Model spontaneously and independently; China and France are both civil law countries, but the Confucian culture is deeply rooted in China. The Chinese people respect and value social ethics, which in turn boost the Chinese U3A Model to grow, develop and expand rapidly under the leadership of the Party and government and in the social atmosphere of respecting the seniors and making them role model for others.

Their unique cultural traditions are an important cornerstone for other countries to choose the path of education for the seniors that suits their own conditions.

2. Different sources of resource supply

In France, education for the seniors relies on institutions of higher learning. Its administrative, financial and teaching facilities are shared with colleges and universities, which also makes education for the seniors in a subordinate position. When the resources are insufficient or the schools are working stiffly, colleges for the seniors may have to make compromise when priorities are other teaching behaviors. Also tuition fees paid by senior students, social donations and direct subsidies from the local government are also sources of resources. In the UK, just like how the universities for the seniors are established in the first place, the sources of resource supply are relatively scattered. Since they adopt a social model, they rely on donations from senior students and seek financial support from the society to self-fund as much as possible. They also try to reduce the cost of running a school by means such as setting up of system of mutual teaching and learning, taking advantage of the volunteer services of the students, using their own venue resources. In China, education for the seniors is a public service product, and the relevant funds are mainly supported by the state.

III. Education for the seniors models in different countries coexist and learn from each other

The biggest advantage of the French model is that the essence of education can be brought into full play, and the education is highly academic; the biggest advantage of the British model is that it is robust and dynamite because the teaching activities are self-help and spontaneous; the biggest advantage of the Chinese model is that education, as a social public service product, is run by the government.

The different models of various countries are essentially determined by the national conditions of each country's economy, culture, and folk customs. Each model has its own advantages. They influence each other, penetrate each other, learn from each other, and promote each other, forming a colorful development pattern of third-age education in the world. It is common that you can see imprints and overlaps among the models.

As mentioned above, it is extremely important to promote international exchanges and cooperation in education for the seniors all over the world.

Chapter 3 Theoretical Basis of the Chinese U3A Model

Pattern structure theory states that the theoretical basis of any model is the basic element of that model.

Section 1 Philosophical Theoretical Foundation

I. Based on the basic social contradiction theory

At this stage, the basic contradictions of the Chinese society are expressed as the main social contradictions. The main contradiction in Chinese society has been transformed into the contradiction between the people's ever-growing needs for a better life and the unbalanced and inadequate development. The basic contradictions in society determine and restrict the development of education for the seniors. Only by vigorously developing productive forces can we provide more adequate material conditions to better develop education for the seniors and meet the growing needs of the seniors for a better life, and fundamentally solve problems such as insufficient resource supply for the education for the seniors, unbalanced development between urban and rural areas and different regions, and the unsound safeguard mechanism. The operation mode of education for the seniors is inevitably the product of the way to solve the main social contradiction. So the Chinese U3A Model came into being in accordance with the laws of things revealed by the philosophy.

II. Taking the theory of people's comprehensive development as the theoretical cornerstone

The theory of all-round development of human beings is the theoretical cornerstone and the most fundamental and solid theoretical basis for the Chinese U3A Model. In the context of an aging society, adhering to the theory of all-round development of human beings requires a complete and systematic education for hundreds of millions of seniors. First, to meet the self-needs of the seniors. Improve the lifespan and quality of life of the seniors in an all-round way. Second, to develop the potential of the seniors. Promote the seniors to continue to participate in social development, integrate into and serve the society. Third, to promote the comprehensive and lifelong development of the seniors. That is to say, the physical strength and intelligence of the seniors can be fully, freely and harmoniously developed to achieve a successful aging. Fourth, to promote sustainable development of our society.

To sum up, the fundamental goal of the Chinese U3A Model is to promote and realize the free and comprehensive development of our people.

Section 2 Nourished by Ancient Chinese Educational Thought

The ideological origin of the Chinese U3A Model is rooted in Chinese traditional culture.

The origin of China's education for the seniors activities can be traced back to the pre-Qin period. Old people who were proficient in music and culture during the Shang Dynasty would serve as music teachers in an educational place called *Guzong*. In the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period, when private schools appeared, Confucius proposed that "there is no discrimination if there is education", and took in more than 3,000 disciples regardless of their ages. The education for the seniors in the Han and Tang Dynasties was developed with the brand of Confucianism while inheriting the tradition of respecting the seniors. It paid attention to the demonstration and guidance role of the elders, and emphasized that the old people also should continue learning. The academy system had its heyday in the Song and Ming Dynasties, and many middle-aged and seniors scholars gave lectures in the academies with many seniors students.

Since ancient times in China, the idea of lifelong education had been embodied in ancient educational activities. The pattern of government education as the mainstay with private education acting a supportive role had taken shape. The inheritance of filial piety education and the culture of respecting the seniors had become the core connotation of education for the seniors. Strengthen moral education and cultivate people is a main thread running through the traditional Chinese education for the seniors. The Chinese U3A Model was rooted and grown in such a cultural soil.

Section 3 Influence of International Trends of Education for the Seniors

Starting from the value orientation of social participation, the international trend of education for the seniors has summarized and refined several theories of great influence: lifelong education, the construction of a learning society, and the concept of active aging, which have had a positive impact on the education for the seniors in China. The formation and maturity of the theoretical framework of the Chinese U3A Model have, to a large extent, benefited from the international trend of education for the seniors.

The trend of lifelong education has influenced the formation and development of the Chinese U3A Model in an all-round way. The concept of a learning society has paved the way for the "last mile of education". The theory of active aging provides a new perspective and direction of the Chinese U3A Model.

AIUTA's international exchange activities complement and improve the Chinese U3A Model. The main architecture of the Chinese model has been established and internationally recognized. It realizes a harmonious coexistence with other education models for the seniors while respecting for differences. At the same time the international academic exchanges led by AIUTA promote the comparison, exchange, mutual learning and understanding between different models of educations for the seniors. It is indispensable to complement and improve the connotation of the theoretical framework of the China U3A Model.

Chapter 4 The Impetus of the Chinese U3A Model

Section 1 Inner Impetus of the Chinese U3A Model

Inner impetus is a state of internal arousal or tension that arises on the basis of needs. This impetus and need are basically synonyms.

The fundamental driving force of "to meet the people's ever-growing needs for a better life" has given birth to a heartfelt eagerness of the seniors to achieve their goal of lifelong learning. And this can be accompanied by a permanent inner impetus for the Chinese U3A Model.

I. "Live and learn" enables the seniors to move from the margin of education to the center.

In the education for the seniors, it is especially important that the seniors keep up with the rapid development of the times. The seniors have gradually become an emerging population of learning activities. AIUTA's perspective believes that students in universities for seniors are students of a new generation. It is an important educational goal to tap the seniors' potentials and achieve self-fulfillment through the education for the seniors. It constitutes a deep built-in dynamic that stems from education.

II. To meet the educational needs of the seniors that "answer the calling of life"

Human needs are the internal driving force for production development and social progress, the driving force and basis for all human activities, and the original basis for constituting the measurement of value. The needs of the seniors for education are survival, enjoyment, and self-development. All three originate from the call of life. An ancient Greek philosopher Protagoras said, "Man is the measure of all things", which can be extended to "the needs of people are the measure of the value of all things". Therefore satisfying the needs of the seniors will inevitably become an inexhaustible source of inner impetus for the Chinese U3A Model.

III. "Participate in development", the seniors turn the pressure of aging into driving force

The trend of population aging brings new huge social demands and associated development opportunities and driving forces to education for the seniors. Therefore, developing and utilizing the human resources of the seniors, increasing the contribution rate of the seniors in social development, and promoting the comprehensive and sustainable development of the whole society are the challenges China is and will be facing in the future. But the problems also bring a major development opportunity for China's education for the seniors. The essence of the idea "seniors must participate in the social development" is the senior's needs themselves. The main focus is to improve the cultural, educational, scientific and technological level of the seniors, achieve an active aging, and create a society shared by all regardless of age. This theory and practice of the participation of the seniors in social development has become the defining inner impetus of the Chinese U3A Model.

Section 2 External Impetus of the Chinese U3A Model

The external impetus is the force that acts on things and drives them from the outside. Mechanisms of external and inner impetus are interrelated and interactive, and under certain conditions, external impetus can be completely transformed into inner impetus.

I. Driven by the fundamental spirit: People-oriented

The new concept of development clearly regards people oriented as the highest value orientation of

development. The idea of people-oriented means respect, understand, and care about people. It is about continuously meeting people's comprehensive needs and promoting their all-round development. The Chinese U3A Model came into being and grew in response to the people-oriented philosophy. It follows the basic principles of valuing, understanding, respecting and caring for the seniors. It enhances and explores the seniors' potentials, and cultivates the self-esteem, self-consciousness, self-confidence, self-love, self-reliance and self-improvement awareness of the seniors. It continuously improves the quality of life of the seniors. It improves survival and development ability and promotes the development and improvement of the seniors themselves. People-oriented is the most profound, fundamental and powerful external impetus of the Chinese U3A Model.

II. Driven by mission: Continue socialization

Making sure the seniors can continue to socialize is a major mission entrusted by the aging society to the education for the seniors, which constitutes one of the external impetuses of the Chinese U3A Model.

A society is an aggregate of individuals. How people grow from a biological being to a social being involves "socialization", a sociological context with special connotations. Marcel Lesnar who was a French scholar studying adult education was the first to propose that "the process of human being's socialization is a process that lasts this individual's lifetime". With the change of the individual's social role during the aging period as a new starting point, one can continue to develop their sociality with the platform of education for the seniors. This is the final stage of the continued socialization of adults. The main tasks of socialization are summarized by Robert Havighurst, a famous American scholar who advocated the theory of socialization as "adapting to retirement life and the reduction of economic income; establishing pleasant and intimate relationships with people of similar age; accepting new things and get rid of stereotypes; shortening the gap between generations; accepting widowhood and adapt to the life afterwards; learn to arrange leisure time scientifically, reasonably and healthily; establish new daily routine and develop good living habits accordingly; continue to properly perform social responsibilities and obligations as a citizen." Since the Chinese U3A Model has taken on such a historical task of resocializing the seniors, an indispensable impetus from the society outside has been injected in it.

II. Driven by responsibility: Provide "fairer and better quality education"

"Developing a fairer and better quality education for the seniors" is a three-stage progressive strategic goal of the Chinese U3A Model based on a new starting point. The first stage: to ensure that the seniors have a fair opportunity to receive education. The second stage: to ensure that the seniors have a fair opportunity to receive quality education. The third stage: to improve the quality of life of senior students. A fairer and higher-quality education for the seniors is one that can create a better life for the seniors, one that creates independent choices, conscious learning and pursuit of self-realization for the seniors, and one that keeps the seniors up with the development of the times and adapts to the requirements of the times. We should use a value measurement of fairer and high-quality to measure and promote the Chinese U3A Model. The new driving force of this model has also been revealed. This is the nascent driving force based on the target source for the Chinese U3A Model.

Chapter 5 U3A Running in the Chinese Model

Section1 A Diverse U3A Running Pattern

The party-government-led diverse school-running pattern means that under the leadership of the CPC and the government, different functional departments of the Party and government serve as the main body to run various types of universities and educational institutions for the seniors at all levels. Hence horizontally, a many-body system of government department of education, organization, civil affairs, culture, and aging to run universities for seniors; Parallely, there is an overall structure of the progressive development of multi-level school-running systems such as provinces, cities (prefectures), counties, townships (towns/streets), and villages (communities).

According to statistics, by the end of 2020, China has more than 70,000 universities or schools for the seniors of different types at all levels. A five-level hierarchy has basically been formed or is being constructed at the provincial, city (prefecture), county, township (town/street), and village (community) levels. There are 15 million registered students in the universities, and another 12 million registered students in online education.

The specific forms of party-government-led diverse school-running include:

(I) University for the seniors run by Party institutions

1. The Party committee runs the school directly. In this case, the university is often directly affiliated with the Party committee of a certain level, such as the provincial or municipal level. A typical case is Guizhou Senior Citizens University. 2. A functional departments of the Party committee runs the school. The main form is that the organization department of the Party committee is the competent department and the retired cadre bureau under the organization department runs the university. This is the most extensive school-running model and management system implemented above the county level where the funding is provided by the local finance.

China's central government encourages and supports retired cadre departments to establish retired cadre (seniors) universities. Various provinces across the country have basically formed a provincial, city, and county-level retired cadre system to host retired cadre (seniors) universities from top to bottom. Among them, more than 20 provinces such as Heilongjiang, Jilin, Liaoning, Hebei, He'nan, Shandong, Shanxi, Gansu, Inner Mongolia, Shaanxi, Ningxia, Hubei, Hu'nan, Jiangxi, Anhui, Guangdong, Guangxi, Yunnan, Zhejiang, and Fujian have even undertaken the overall planning and coordination functions of education for the seniors in the regions.

(II) The form of government-run universities for the seniors

Government-run universities for the seniors are further divided into three categories: run directly by the government, run by government's functional departments, and run by nongovernmental sectors led by government. 1. The government runs the school directly, and the funds are provided by the government finance. The most typical one is Harbin University for the Aged; 2. the school is run by the government's functional departments, including education, culture, civil affairs, and aging committees (offices). A typical example of such a university for the seniors directly sponsored by the education department is Shanghai University for the Elderly; relying on institution of higher learning: 116 colleges and universities are currently running a university for the seniors; relying on open universities to run a university for the seniors, there are currently 30 open universities of provincial-level and some

prefecture-level cities that have open an affiliated open university for the seniors; relying on community education to provide education for the seniors. The funds are invested by the education department. The cultural sector is currently running more than 1,000 universities all over China. Schools run by civil affairs departments, such as the universities for seniors in Zhejiang and Sichuan provinces, have formed a four-level school-running system at the provincial, city, county, and township (town/community) levels. At present, many universities for the seniors run by the civil affairs departments are going through a change of being run by seniors care institutions. 3. Schools run by nongovernmental sectors that are led by government. For example, large state-owned enterprises and institutions, various state ministries, commissions and bureaus, retired science and technology workers associations, military retired cadres centers, and social organizations. For example, the University for the Seniors of the Chinese Academy of Sciences has established branch campuses in Wuhan, Hefei, Xi'an, Dalian, Changchun, Mianyang, Xinjiang and other regions. It is also very common that national ministries, commissions and bureaus, as the main body of institutions for running schools, run universities for the seniors. For example, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Public Security, the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Water Resources, the Ministry of Transport, the Ministry of Finance, the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television, the National Forestry and Grassland Administration and other national ministries, commissions and bureaus have established their own universities for the seniors.

Universities for the seniors belonging to the retired cadre system account for more than 80% of all the universities for seniors in the cities. With their large scale and high degree of modernization, they have formed distinctive characteristics: (1) Smooth operation system and the orderly management system. (2) Powerful institution and standard teaching. (3) Distinctive features and great influence with a clear public welfare nature.

Section 2 Typical Cases of U3A Running

I. The case of school run by retired cadre bureau

(I) Shandong Seniors University

In 1983, China's first university for the seniors, Shandong Seniors University, came into being, which blazed a trail for education for the seniors in China. In 1986, the Organization Department of Shandong Provincial Party Committee determined the size of staffing for the university. On top of a guarantee mechanism of provincial financial management, independent account, and financial investment as the main source, the university also took the initiative to get funding from the society. It has established a school funding investment mechanism with the government's financial investment as the main source while social sponsorship and tuition paid by students play a supportive role. Today's Shandong Seniors University has developed into a multi-form, multi-level, multi-disciplinary and multi-school comprehensive university for the seniors with 15,000 registered students.

(II) Guangzhou Retired Cadre University

Guangzhou Retired Cadre University was established in July 1988. It is led by the Organization Department of the Municipal Party Committee and run by its Retired Cadre Bureau. The school's running funds are fully allocated by the local finance. At present, it has developed into a multi-disciplinary, multi-school system, multi-level and multi-functional "academy for the seniors". The school has two campuses, north and south, with a school area of more than 50,000 square meters. It is open to all walks of life with 285 courses available. Currently there are 35,000 students.

II. Cases of two types of universities led by government

(I) The case of universities directly run by government

1. Harbin University for the Aged

In April 1984, Harbin University for the Aged was formally established. It was affiliated to the Harbin municipal government and fully funded by the municipal finance. In 1988, the municipal government approved the establishment of the Harbin University for the Aged School-running Committee, which was composed of the Organization Department of the Municipal Party Committee, the Education Commission, the Personnel Bureau, the Finance Bureau, the Aging Committee, and the Federation of Trade Unions. In 1994, a new campus was completed, and the school scale reached 38,000 student-course.

2. Tianjin University for the Aged

Tianjin University for the Aged is established by Tianjin Municipal Commission on Aging, Retired Cadre Bureau, Civil Affairs Bureau, Red Cross Society, Social Union, Municipal Association for Science and Technology and other departments. The former leadership of the CPPCC Tianjin Municipal Committee serve as the chairman of the school board, the director of the school committee and the principal. The school-running funds they get from the municipal finance have been increased year by year. The school now has 32,000 registered student-course. The most prominent feature of the university is that it pioneered the "one body and two wings" model, that is, an open school-running pattern with the school headquarters as the main body, and an octopus-style school-running model and distance learning network as the two "wings".

(II) Cases of government-led, functional departments run universities

1. Cases of university being run by education department

(1) The case of direct school running by the education department - Shanghai University for the Elderly

In 1985, the Shanghai Education for the Seniors College was renamed Shanghai University for the Elderly, and in 2004 it became directly affiliated with the Shanghai Municipal Education Commission. The municipal government has given strong financial support. At present, Shanghai University for the Elderly has developed into a 1+20 "Shanghai University for the Elderly Alliance" covering the whole city. The number of students is increasing and the faculty is getting more qualified. An all-round, multi-level, wide-coverage, nearby and convenient education system for the seniors has been formed. Over the years, Shanghai University for the Elderly has made contributions to strengthening international exchanges.

(2) Cases of universities run by higher education institutions - University for the Seniors of Shanghai East China Normal University

The University for the Seniors of Shanghai East China Normal University was established in December 1999. In 2017, the school established a school committee to standardize management. 70% of the teachers have intermediate and senior professional titles. In July 2015, it became the first to establish a school website among the nine universities for seniors in Shanghai. The school has always fully relied on the resources East China Normal University has to offer. With the scientific research advantages, the university introduces experts and strengthens the theoretical and practical research on education for the seniors. They also rely on the advantages of disciplines to develop characteristic trademark courses, and give full play to the advantages of teachers' resources and strengthen the construction of teaching

staff.

2. A case of universities run by the cultural department - Jilin University for the Seniors of Jilin Mass Art Center

The University for the Seniors in Jilin City, Jilin Province was established on the basis of the Mass Art Center, with a building area of 5,172.98 square meters. More than 50 literary and art teams carry out activities throughout the year, with an average of 200,000 people per year. The school funds are mainly invested by Jilin's local finance. The school has carried out a series of "mass lectures" training for the people. The courses are mainly divided into seven categories: music, dance, art, traditional opera, folk art, literature, and language.

3. The case of universities run by the civil affairs department - the University for the Seniors in Jiangnan District Nursing Home, Wuhan

The predecessor of University for the Seniors in Jiangnan District Nursing Home, Wuhan was Jiangnan District Social Welfare Institute in Wuhan. In April 2001, it was the first in China to set up a school for the seniors in a nursing home. Since 2010, special funds have been invested every year to expand teaching venues and purchasing supporting teaching facility. In view of the high percentage of seniors of old age, their illness and poor health condition, rich life experience, uneven educational background, and the interests of the seniors, the university hires people with expertise from all walks of life to give class. The school adheres to the principle of "no charge for teaching, doesn't need to leave the nursing home to take any class, and no vacations all year round". The apartments for the aged and the university have integrated into a "combination of education and living". They support each other and coexist and develop together.

Chapter 6 Substance of the Chinese U3A Model

Section 1 The Curriculum

Curriculum is the basic means to achieve educational goals.

I. Curriculum setting

It has been 40 years since the education for the seniors was developed in China. All universities for seniors have formed their own complete syllabuses, teaching plans, and teaching materials. Although there is no unified planning in the whole country, they have gradually formed a scientific subject system, showing their own characteristics in the curriculum setting.

(I) Clear objectives of the courses

The "Education for the Seniors Development Plan (2016-2020)" issued by the State Council pointed out that the goal of the education for the seniors curriculum system is to "guide and help the seniors to enrich their later life, relax and recreate in an active and cultural way, make up for their regrets, fulfill their supplementary needs, help them keep making progress, pursue continuous development and realize the value of their lives." Factors such as knowledge, ability, method, process, emotion, attitude, and value influence and restrict each other and in the end we form the following curriculum goals.

Objectives of various courses in education for the seniors

Course Category	Course Objectives	Course Category	Course Objectives
Health Care			Guide the seniors to acquire the knowledge and skills to deal with aging, establish a scientific attitude and optimistic attitude of health preservation, strengthen the body and improve the quality of life
Music and Dance			Guide the seniors to have literary and artistic activities, broaden their horizons, improve their aesthetics, promote physical and mental health, show the cultural charm of the seniors to the society, and make their later years happy and lively
Art of Living			Help the seniors improve their ability to deal with family chores, improve the art of living, coordinate internal family relations, strengthen intergenerational communication, and enjoy high-quality recreation
Calligraphy, Painting and Photography			Instruct the seniors to improve their taste in life, cultivate their sentiments, realize retirement in a cultural way, and cultivate seniors calligrapher, painter and photographers
Science and Technology			Help the seniors adapt to the development of the times, use modern scientific and technological means such as information technology to enter the new technological society and the Internet world,

	overcome the digital divide, and share the results of technological progress
Literature, History and Beauty	Help the seniors increase their knowledge, improve their literacy, broaden their minds, enjoy retirement life in a high-level cultural way, and cultivate seniors literary creation and philosophy, history, and aesthetics talents
Language	Help the seniors improve their language level, learn and master foreign languages so as to help them travel abroad, visit relatives, and communicate with foreigners.

(II) Curriculum System of the "Four Combinations"

The principles of teaching of university for seniors are "Four Combinations": the combination of basicity and improvement, locality and diversity, tradition and modernity, and individuality and society. Many universities for seniors divide their courses according to the type of courses. Courses are divided into basic courses, advanced courses, and seminars according to different course tasks; compulsory courses and elective courses are divided according to the requirements of syllabus and teaching plan; according to the content of courses, they can be divided into professional courses and public courses; Curriculum formulation can be divided into ordinary courses and courses of local characteristics. Some incorporate the improvement of information literacy into the curriculum objectives of education for the seniors, and focus on the development and utilization of educational information resources.

(III) Teaching methods of the "Four Principles"

Principles of teaching methods for education for the seniors in China: first, inspire and encourage students to cultivate students' interest and motivation; second, emphasize the integration of theory with practice, and to consolidate learning results through thinking questions, hands-on practice, demonstrations, social practice, etc.; third, teach students in accordance with their aptitude. Different and diverse teaching methods are used to make up for differences in students' aptitude and geographical differences; fourth, step-by-step teaching where teachers arrange the teaching schedule in an easy-to-understand manner based on students' ideological cognition and actual needs.

II. Teaching organization of the "Four Classrooms"

The so-called teaching organization refers to the way in which teachers and students interact in a certain time and space environment with the established teaching objectives and teaching content as center.

In 2005, Zhang Wenfan, president of the China Association of Senior Universities, put forward at the association's third congress that "Do a good job in the first classroom (classroom teaching and school education); enrich the second classroom (society activities and extracurricular activities); and expand the third classroom (community activities and social activities). This is an important concept innovation in the development of our education for the seniors." The "Three Classrooms" theory in the Chinese U3A Model has basically formed. The first classroom is the classroom teaching of, and the key is to improve the quality of classroom teaching; the second classroom is the extension of the first classroom, and the main forms include hobby groups, associations, teams, etc.; the third classroom is the transformation of the results of the first and second classrooms where the school organizes students to join society in a purposeful and planned way. At present, some Chinese scholars put forward the

concept of "the fourth classroom" for education for the seniors. Travelling and field trips have opened up the fourth classroom for seniors and enriched the characteristics of the teaching organization of the Chinese U3A Model.

The real practice of the "four classrooms" often penetrate each other, forming a mixed classroom model.

III. The Evaluation System of the "Four Practices"

The evaluation of teaching quality in universities for seniors generally takes teachers' classroom teaching as the main body to carry out a combination of qualitative and quantitative evaluation. Qualitative evaluation includes symposiums, questionnaires, and sit-on lectures, etc., which are relatively brief and intuitive to evaluate the teaching quality. There are a few universities that use the "Classroom Teaching Quality Evaluation Scale" to conduct quantitative evaluations to supplement their qualitative evaluations.

The basic methods of teaching evaluation in universities for seniors under the framework of the Chinese model are as follows: First, conduct inspections of the teaching conditions at each stage. Second, establish a multi-level class attending system. Third, regularly organize and carry out course teaching quality assessment activities. Through the assessment of students' attendance rate, class notes, homework, study miss, feedback report, learning achievement display, social practice and other aspects. Fourth, establish a university student committee to participate in the supervision of teaching quality. Promote this work in a scientific and standardized way can improve the level of teaching management.

Section 2 Event-based teaching

I. The connotation of event-based teaching

Event-based teaching is a term in contrast to classroom teaching, and is an important means to test teaching results, exchange learning experiences, and enhance learning interest. According to the classification of curriculum content, the event-based teaching of the Chinese U3A Model is divided into the following categories:

(1) Carry out activities around recreational courses. (2) Carry out activities around the skill courses. (3) Carry out activities around appreciation courses. (4) Carry out activities around academic courses. (5) Carry out activities around cultural literacy courses.

The active teaching of the Chinese U3A Model is rooted in the contemporary life. It plays its role serving the work of the government and the society, and inherits excellent Chinese culture. It mainly has the following characteristics:

1. Carry out relevant positive activities to better serve the central task as well as the overall interests of the country. 2. Carry out positive activities around specific events in a specific period. 3. Carry out positive activities around major festivals. 4. Carry out positive activities around the work of the local's development and interests.

There are too many active teaching projects in universities for the seniors across the country. There is a high degree of homogeneity in the organization level and theme of the activities; but at the same time, it also presents different characteristics due to regional differences.

The homogeneity of event-based teaching is mainly reflected in the fact that almost all the organizational levels of event-based teaching can be summarized as (inter-) school activities, (inter-)

municipal activities, (inter-) provincial activities, national activities and foreign exchange activities, etc. And they often have similar themes. For example, (inter-) school-level activities are generally in the form of graduation exhibitions, achievement exhibitions, exchange visits, etc.; (inter-) municipal activities and (inter-) provincial activities are often done to serve the central work or major time nodes of the city or the province. For example, the universities would hold a series of theatrical performances as a part of publicity or provide volunteer services when the city or the province are winning the title of civilized city, bidding for the Olympic Games, holding a forum or summit, or having legal popularization activities. National activities generally are centered around national theme events, such as National Day, Spring Festival, major national conferences, etc.

The regional differences in event-based teaching are in contrast to the concept of homogeneity. In the process of organizing and developing event-based teaching for the seniors, local characteristics and brand effects have gradually formed, and the sphere of influence has continued to expand, and the trend of teaching activities branding has become more and more obvious. For example, Zhejiang has three major brands of "Gray Haired Pioneers", "Silver Shining River", and "Lohas Life for the Seniors". Guangxi has established the brand of "Colorful Golden Autumn" cultural and art festival. Shanghai launched a campaign of senior volunteers aiding Xinjiang in 2003 and has carried out 17 consecutive sessions, with a total of 392 seniors volunteers who went to provide volunteer services in Xinjiang.

II Team building in event-based teaching

Event-based teaching cannot go without teamwork. For this reason, the Chinese U3As at different levels attach much importance to team building.

Teams can be roughly divided into four categories according to the purpose of team building.

(1) Cultural and sports teams based on common hobbies. (2) Management teams aimed at diverting managing responsibility from U3A to students themselves. (3) Temporary Party branches for the enhancement of grass-roots Party building. (4) Service teams for the care of the youth.

Voluntary teams are a special kind. *Law of the Protection of the Elderly Rights and Interests*, which was revised in December 2018, promises to "encourage the elderly to engage in voluntary activities or set up social welfare programs based on self-willingness and in their capacity", thus clarifies the legal status of elderly voluntary service. Teams are organized in three modes. The first is top-down launch and promotion which boasts strong mobility. The second is bottom-up launch and top-down promotion. The third is launched and promoted bottom-up.

According to the nature of service the elderly have to offer, voluntary work can be classified as technique, hobby, care, and knowledge oriented.

Technique: the elderly impart professional know-how which they gained before retirement. E.g. a voluntary team from Leling City Forestry and Fruit Gardening Association in Shandong Province has organized an event to "bring expertise to the orchard", which helps date farmers reduce 200 million worth of loss annually, benefiting over 100,000 people.

Hobby: Older adults with common cultural interest, by way of performance or exhibition, enhance the

quality of life for the wider elderly population. E.g. a 80-member silver voluntary team in Henan Province staged a live show for the local community to “Welcome the Double Ninth Festival and Celebrate the Evening Glow”.

Care: Retirees enjoying robust health provide respite care for those in need of constant care. E.g. in a heavily elderly community in Jiangsu Province, the younger care for the older, the healthy for the disabled. Based on convenience, distance and familiarity, the volunteers visit, chat with or provide companion to those in need on one-to-one, one-to-many or many-to-one basis.

Knowledge: Qualified older adults teach at U3As or other institutions. *The Implementation Outline for the Silver Teacher Project*, jointly issued by the Ministries of Education and of Treasury, aims to hire and mobilize retired principals, researchers and expert teachers to give lectures in rural schools.

How the voluntary teams work: (1) volunteers are trained at U3As in related skill and knowledge areas. (2) to establish a logistic mechanism. (3) to utilize various assessment and encouragement measures.

III Activities to Showcase U3A Teaching Achievement

Up till now, CAUA has organized the national cultural and artistic performance for seven times, and the national calligraphy and painting contest for five times. Performances and contests at regional levels constantly take place, suggesting Chinese U3As’ emphasis on achievement publicity. Campus cultural activity, as a nurturing channel of U3A education, allows for the students to make use of what they learn to bolster their skills for better integration into and service for the society. Take as an example, the annually held art festival in Shanghai University for the Elderly since 2005, paves the way for its educational achievements to be included in such venues as China Art Palace and Shanghai Grand Theatre. U3A teaching, as a result, is shown to the public and garners a huge boost.

As the Chinese model functions primarily as government actions, agencies are able to tap into their strong organization for the planning, operation and guiding of U3A teaching and achievement publicity, which constitutes one advantage of the model.

Chapter 7 The Chinese U3A Model to Be Improved

The Party and government-led, social forces-involved Chinese U3A model, as a derivative from the overall Chinese model of social development, and a public good offered to the whole society by the ruling Party and government, faces fresh requirements and challenges in the new era, thus making improvement inevitable.

Section 1. To Boost the Performance of Chinese U3A's Educational Function

I. Policy implementation will provide solid support for the Chinese Model to improve.

We shall fully carry out the tasks and requirements laid out by existing legal documents, meanwhile waste no time in formulating a new national development outline. Governments at regional levels shall make their own regulations to meet the needs of local U3A development.

The U3A system shall be reformed to strengthen the educational nature of the Chinese model. For that purpose, (1)U3A administrative and executive personnel are required to adjust their mindset, so that the concept is fully accepted that U3A represents an inseparable part of Chinese lifelong educational system. We cannot simply deem the U3A a place for retired life, recreation or amusement; its educational character must be recognized. (2)The curriculum also needs to be revised for more content of reason and culture, highlighting the U3A's educational and social values. Academic courses shall be added for the U3A curriculum's balanced growth. Contents of digital tech and artificial intelligence are also anticipated to naturalize the so-called digital immigrants. Silver study tours call for a promotion. Human resources courses aimed for the older talents are also welcome. (3) Reform is needed to incorporate the U3A into the national educational system and put it in the charge of national educational authorities.

We shall, bearing in mind the new development traits of our country, bring into full play the Chinese U3A model's cultural function. Firstly, following the cultural characteristic of the new era, U3As shall work harder to preserve, carry forward and upgrade the fine traditional culture. Second, following China's new development trend in the international community, notably a community of shared destiny for mankind and Belt and Road Initiative, U3As shall contribute more to spread fine traditional culture overseas.

Section 2. To strengthen the Service Capacity of Chinese U3A Model

I. Tap into the potential of the Chinese model for high quality development

1. Expand the educational size, and pursue more balanced growth

Through measures of "the east helping the west, the cities helping the countryside", resource sharing shall be promoted from region to region, and from urban to rural areas. Fine resources shall be shifted to grass-roots and rural areas to forge a supply structure based on demands, so that the educational landscape is optimized.

2. Learning from the practice of universities, we shall bring out the full potential of U3A education and

pursue high quality growth.

With inspiration from the French model, we can build upon the educational mechanism and management mode of universities, so that U3As will be run and managed more systematically. With a stable enrolment, U3As home in on structure optimization and quality elevation to forge a way of sustainable growth. For a quality output, U3A's potential needs to be brought out more.

II. Expand the forms of the Chinese model for diversity

A review of the British model helps us broaden the way by which the Chinese model is operated. It is imperative to build a complete supporting system where the U3A, the community and families are all involved. We shall draw on the various resources within the community, host doorstep educational activities, combine care with learning with an eye to enriching the older adults' cultural life. In families, members of the older and younger generations may learn together, thus supplying the elderly with an educational access without going out.

Discover and promote U3A patterns specific to a region for more inclusiveness. U3As that are initially open to retired public servants (elite education) shall broaden its access to serve the overall elderly population (general education).

The Internet and high tech such as AI shall be deployed to advance online education for older adults. ICT (Information and Communication Technology) such as Big Data and AI creates both challenges and opportunities. Following the trend of the times, U3As shall, through the use of 5G, Big Data and AI, explore the Internet + U3A mode where the elderly receive learning guidance and personalized recommendation. To conclude, information technologies shall be integrated into the whole U3A process.

Involve non-governmental and civil actors in the common cause of U3A growth. Through public procurement, joint investment by government and corporations and program cooperation, we shall diversify the U3A providing mechanism and funding channel. A compensation mechanism shall be put in place for private participants. The U3A market shall be optimized in terms of structure, content and lay-out.

Higher education institutions shall participate in the U3A program more ardently. Drawing upon their academic and social values, universities are expected to raise the Chinese U3A model's theoretical level and social benefits. For that to come, an awareness of responsibility and service shall be boosted. Through policy regulation and other measures, universities shall open their doors to older adults with a learning need and launch courses aimed for elderly social inclusion.

The open universities' U3A arm shall be strengthened. The Open University of China shall take the lead in building U3A experience hubs as a nationwide model. Open universities shall abandon any unilateral U3A approach exclusive from U3As by retired officials bureaus; instead, they shall, in the spirit of learning, integrating, cooperation and development, learn from the more than 30 years' experience of the latter, and share their own experience in community education and distant education. Open universities are highly expected to join forces with retired officials bureaus in the common reform and

renovation effort of Chinese U3As.

In line with the new development philosophy, we shall apply high and new technologies to the modernization of the Chinese model in terms of the system and management.

Innovation shall play a leading role in U3A's development. High technologies are essential in the U3A's smart and intelligent drive. Against the backdrop of "the Internet plus", U3A model reform shall entail utility of such technologies as cloud computing and big data, empowered by smart devices, in order to push for reform and progress in U3A teaching, management and research. Latest information technology will be applied to transform the traditional teaching mode. The shift to smart teaching will highlight the intelligent nature of the Chinese model.

Information-empowered U3A means a transformation in the forms and ways of learning. Through AI we can deliver digitized, smart results, which in turn leads to an intelligent Chinese model.

Section 3. the Chinese U3A Model's Development on Global Stage

I. Refine the Chinese model's characteristics to better tell the U3A story

For international recognition, the Chinese model still needs self perfection and more interpretation. We shall, based on its principles and spirit, further refine the substance of the model. A template would be needed for our international colleagues to assess or learn from the model. Only then will the model stands firm in the international community and demonstrate to countries around the world the Chinese story of U3As. At the same time, though, we would never ignore the diversity of cultures and indulge in the Chinese way of thinking. Only in a spirit of harmony without uniformity can we contribute to the common development of the global U3A campaign.

II. Drawing inspiration from foreign counterparts to fix any weakness in Chinese U3As

Practices of foreign U3As are well worth exploring, such as an emphasis on providers' diversity, courses of academic merit, legal support and elderly human resources. By learning from these good practices and drawing comparison, we can identify and fix shortcomings in Chinese U3As. In this way the model will not only boast its own uniqueness, but also benefit from the strength of the international U3A campaign.

To be more specific, universities, corporations, private actors and older adults themselves shall play a bigger role as education providers. As to the curriculum, we shall expand courses on boomerang working, social service, retirement preparation and hospice care. Contents in new technology and academic studies are also in need. The safeguard mechanism requires the attention and support of relevant authorities who, by stepping up legislation, could provide legal safeguards for the U3A. In terms of human resources, we shall expand employment opportunities for older adults, and launch courses which would make it easier for that to happen.

III. Actively follow the international trend to contribute to the global U3A discourse

To tell the Chinese U3A story to a global audience, we shall merge domestic trends with foreign ones. Through attendance at international seminars, we could get to know the advanced topics. By communicating with our foreign colleagues, we are able to link our research efforts. By way of relevant institutions, we could step up our dialogue across the border, with an eye for the Chinese model's development in the international community. Meanwhile, we shall bring into full play the theoretical and practical strength of the model, so that it will keep pace with the global U3A campaign while retaining its uniqueness.

Inter-generational cooperation has been at the forefront of world U3A research. Many a conference listed it as an important topic. Learning together at U3A turns out to be a feasible solution to improving inter-generational ties. This requires us to divert more attention to an education that involves the older adults' communication and harmony with the younger generation. In this way, the Chinese model's gains in theory will answer to the specific needs in practice, with a convergence in sight.

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