Research on the Pathways for Empowering Jiangxi Universities to Advance New Era Civilization Practice Work through Ganzhou City's Experience in New Era Civilization Practice

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Abstract: *The establishment of New Era Civilization Practice Centers is an important leverage to consolidate grassroots ideology and culture and promote the modernization of grassroots governance. Based on local realities, Ganzhou City has created a multi-stakeholder participation model that has many replicable and transferable practical experiences from sites' operation, volunteer team, activity implementation, and institutional mechanism. Through research methods such as field visits, seminars and interviews, and document review, we summarize the typical practices and implementation results of New Era Civilization Practice work in Ganzhou City and analyze its operational logic and practical highlights. We also put forward optimized paths based on four aspects (brand building, organizational leadership, multi-party collaboration, and resource integration), through which universities in Jiangxi Province can further deepen and make it more substantial in promoting New Era Civilization Practice work, providing practical references and theoretical insights for civilization practice construction throughout the province and even in similar regions and universities.*

Keywords: *New Era Civilization Practice Centers; grassroots governance; volunteer services; practical pathways*

1. Introduction

"We must pay even more attention in cultivating and educating people with culture, continuously enriching the people's spiritual world, promote their allround development." The building up of New Era Civilization Practice Centers is an important strategic deployment for strengthening grassroots ideological and political work and meeting the people's spiritual and cultural needs. Different places have been exploring new models on site construction, activities implementation and team cultivation since the comprehensive advance of this work, which has formed a civilization practice service network that covers both urban and rural areas.

"We should coordinate our efforts to cultivate civilization, practice it and create it, and integrate the urban and rural spiritual civilization together." Exploiting its advantage of red culture and Hakka culture, Ganzhou City in Jiangxi Province coordinates urban and rural resources and involves many parties, whose New Era Civilization Practice work is always leading in the province. The city strives to build New Era Civilization Practice Centers which are centers of attraction and radiation of spiritual civilization and social life services in grassroots social communities so that we can really open up the "last mile" from the direction of national cultural construction and ordinary people's aspiration[1]—constructing 15,487 civilization practice sites of different kinds, establishing 74,435 volunteer organizations, and the total amount of volunteer service exceeds 360 million. Unique work brands like "Red Alliance", "Dual-Group Joint Construction". At the same time, the local area actively cooperates with universities in its jurisdiction (such as Gannan Normal University, Ganzhou Teachers College) to explore a university-local collaboration mode to conduct theoretical publicity, volunteer services, and grassroots services, solve the problem of insufficient grassroots civilization practice capacity and lack of content, and also builds a practical platform for universities' practice-based education.

There exists a series of practical problems that every university in this province participates in local New Era Civilization Practice construction currently, like disconnected practical activities with local actual needs, narrow cooperation channels, lack of continuous services and incomplete

university-linkage mechanism for local areas. In order to sum up the practical experience of Ganzhou and solve the bottlenecks of New Era Civilization Practice work in universities across the whole province, our research team successively visited New Era Civilization Practice Centers, Practice Institutes, and Practice Stations at multiple locations (Yudu County and Zhanggong District) through comprehensive approaches: field inspections, seminars and exchanges, case analysis, and literature review to comprehensively summarize the local innovation measures and practical results in civilization practice. Based on the operation characteristics and educational goals of universities, we distilled suitable university – local collaboration practices which are conducive to the development of Jiangxi's universities, promote mutual promotion between universities and local areas and achieve two-way empowerment in New Era Civilization Practice work.

2. Typical Practices and Results of New Era Civilization Practice Construction in Ganzhou City

Through long-term exploration, Ganzhou City solved problems existing in the early stage of civilization practice work such as government working alone, passive public participation, single-function sites, activities are just formality. Transformed and upgraded the ideology consensus, site construction, team management, activity carriers, and institutional mechanisms; established a civilization practice work system with region-wide coordination, regular operation, and broad public participation.

2.1 Building Ideological Consensus: From Single-Actor Promotion to Multi-Actor Collective Governance

The vitality of New Era Civilization Practice work depends on public participation. In early stages of work advancement, grassroots civilization practice is mainly independently led by government functional departments and village (community) committees with the public, social organizations, units stationed in the area, and universities mostly in a passive supporting role; the situation where "cadres worked hard while the public stood by and watched", making it difficult to fully mobilize the public's sense of identification and enthusiasm for participation.

To solve this problem, Ganzhou City has always emphasized people, established a multi-actor co-governance platform, clarified the responsibility boundaries among all actors, unleashing the participation vitality of social forces (public, enterprise, university, social organization), transforming civilization practice from "administrative promotion" to "all-people participation." For example: Honghuan Road Community, Nanwai Subdistrict, Zhanggong District, building the "Red Alliance" joint construction model, linking together 11 entities including universities, cultural and creative parks and units stationed there through regular communication channels such as "Grid Night Talks," and "People's Roundtable", collecting residents' pressing concerns and difficulties. Since 2021, the community has coordinated and solved 23 livelihood problems such as installing elevators for old residential communities and deploying public charging piles. The number of civilization practice activities initiated independently by residents increased by 70% compared with 2020 data; completely breaking the limitation that the community carries out work independently, creating a sound atmosphere of co-construction, co-governance, and sharing.

2.2 Integrating Site Resources: From Single-Function Venues to Co-Built and Shared Spaces

The civilization practice sites are the basic carriers to carry out various activities. The past grassroots site construction was plagued with "one room for one use and fragmented functions", venues like lecture rooms, rural reading rooms, cultural activity rooms has its own function, there is an idle space resource, redundant construction can be seen everywhere, narrow service scope, it is difficult to meet diverse spiritual and cultural needs of the public.

Continue and modernize "local" cultural resources is needed to build the deeper "implicit" dimension of urban and rural spiritual civilization[2], Based on the principle of integrated utilization, unified development and efficient reuse, Ganzhou City coordinates the resources across departments and sectors, upgrade and renovate existing sites, construct composite, multifunctional practice sites, achieve "one site for multiple uses and shared use by multiple actors", reduce construction cost and expand service coverage. For example, the New Era Civilization Practice Center in Yudu County broke through the boundary between different departments, and jointly built a one-stop comprehensive service platform together with the County People's Court and the County Library, which was divided

into two parts: legal publicity and cultural services. The court often held activities such as interpreting the Civil Code and conducting legal publicity; the library provides cultural services (book lending and reading sharing), serving over 20,000 people cumulatively in 2024, realize the deep integration of legal publicity and cultural services. Effectively avoid the situation where there are separate site constructions by each department and waste resources, maximize the value of the site.

2.3 Optimizing Team Management: From Administrative Directive-Based Allocation to Autonomous Volunteer Participation

The main force of civilization practice is volunteers. The early grassroots volunteer teams were mainly organized by a directive from the cadre of the village Party branch and village committee together with the university students who participate in the activity passively leading to lack of enthusiasm on the part of the team members for service, resulting in issues like low professional capabilities, high team turnover and uneven service quality that made it impossible to guarantee regular implementation of volunteer services.

"Publicity and ideological work cadres must always learn new things, become familiar with new areas, expand their horizon, enhance their ability, intensify investigation and research. They have to constantly improve their footwork, vision, thinking and writing skills, strive to form a publicity and ideological work team which is politically firm, highly competent, pragmatic and innovative and can win battles." Ganzhou City changed the team formation and management model, set up service positions according to the actual needs of the public and established an incentive system including points redemption, honorary recognition and capacity training. Drawn enthusiastic members of the public and professional talent to actively participate in volunteer service teams and formed a professional, stable and regular volunteer force. "Story Mothers" Volunteer Service Team in Laijiawei Community, Dongwai Subdistrict, Zhanggong District is a typical example. Spontaneously formed by five parents in the jurisdiction in January 2023 provide services such as parent-child picture book reading and red story publicity. So far, they have conducted nine activities cumulatively served over 450 person-times of children. Active renewal rate among volunteers reaches 100% effectively solve the problem of lack of public reading services for children in the community reflect the sustainability of autonomous and localized volunteer teams.

2.4 Standardizing Activity Carriers: From Fragmented Implementation to Standardized and Brand-Based Implementation

At the beginning of civilisation practice activities some grassroots units focus on quantity but neglect quality; they conduct arbitrary activities with fragmented content (simple cleaning or distribution of leaflets), without having a unified theme, standard process and assessment criteria. Perfunctory activities will not bring about any results that could actually benefit the public at all.

The Ganzhou City developed a standard activity implementation system and fully process standards for activity planning, organization and implementation, and effect evaluation; transforming activities from "arbitrary implementation" to "brand building and quantified results." Taking advantage of the local industry features – "Home of Melons and Fruits", Longbu Village in Shashi Town, Ganxian District has created an unique activity brand: "industry + culture". Farmers' harvest festival and grape picking festival is held every year with full-process operating standards including advance publicity – tourist reception – agricultural product exhibition and sales – satisfaction survey. The Harvest Festival had over 800 attendees in 2024 which drove over 20,000 jin sales of local grapes. Besides, the village also holds regular "Civilization Market" providing free medical consultations, policy interpretation, convenience services etc., each event serving no less than 50 people, realizing two-way empowerment between increased rural industrial income and spread civilization trend.

2.5 Improving Institutional Mechanisms: From Single-Department Administration to Region-Wide Integrated Advancement

Institutional mechanism is the basic guarantee ensuring the long-term operation of civilization practice work. Previous New Era Civilization Practice work have been solely led by local civilization offices. Horizontal departments did not coordinate well, there was no smooth vertical linkage between levels, funding guarantees are insufficient and assessment mechanisms lack. This work could not be deepened in a sustainable way but remained just as a pilot at the short term level.

Ganzhou City established a regional advancement system featuring "government overall coordination and responsibility, departmental collaborative linkage, and broad social participation," combining all kinds of resources (policies, funding, human resources), setting up an institution with clear powers and responsibilities, adequate safeguard measures and effective assessment. The Shuinan Subdistrict in Zhanggong District issued the Measures for the Management of New Era Civilization Practice Volunteer Services, clearly stipulating the content of team formation, points management and activity assessment. At the same time, it included special funds for civilization practice into the fiscal budget at the corresponding level; in 2024, it invested 800,000 yuan in special funds, appointed five full-time management personnel, and actively encouraged enterprises under its jurisdiction to donate materials and take part in services. Resolved the shortcomings on safeguards from three aspects: institutions, personnel, and funding, and solved completely the problem of lack of support and instability among service staff.

3. Experience and Insights from Ganzhou's Practices for Jiangxi Universities in Advancing New Era Civilization Practice Work

The experiences of construction of New Era Civilization Practice Centers (multi-actor participation, resource integration, and mechanism innovation) from Ganzhou gives us a clear idea on how to deepen Jiangxi universities' deepening of university-local collaboration overcome difficulties in developing civilization practice. Optimizing our work pathway through brand building, organizing leadership, multi-party collaboration, and resource integration according to the universities' operation position, discipline characteristics, and practice-based education goal.

3.1 Leveraging University-Local Characteristics and Building Differentiated Practice Projects Through a "One Center, One Brand" Approach

Practicing civilization work, universities need not follow a model or homogenize their development; they should rather adapt measures according to the condition of every university, aligning its discipline advantage with local development needs, creating unique and effective university-local integration brands in reality.

Firstly, we should utilize our disciplines and specialties to promote local industrial development: agriculture and forestry universities can learn from the rural site service model, connecting with rural industrial bases, establishing a "agricultural technical assistance + civilization practice" service brand providing services like training on planting and breeding technologies or guiding e-commerce operations for agricultural products; Universities specialized in law and others may learn from Yudu County's experience in setting up rule-of-law sites, forming legal publicity volunteer service team, carrying out legal lectures/dispute mediation in villages and communities, promoting grassroots rule-of-law construction etc.

Secondly, universities need to explore regional cultural resources and build cultural IP. Jiangxi has profound red culture, Hakka culture, and intangible cultural heritage. The universities in humanities and arts have a full exploration for the connotation of local culture; they cooperated with local practice sites to create unique activities like red study tours, intangible cultural heritage inheritance and Hakka cultural experience, organizing teachers and students to take the public and tourists to experience local culture, which organically combine cultural inheritance and civilization dissemination.

Thirdly, focus on the pain points of livelihoods and offer accurate services. Normal universities should refer to the community children's service model for left-behind children in rural areas or community youth, create such as rural reading empowerment project, after-school care and aesthetic education classes, fill the gap of grassroots public services so that university practice services really meet the public's needs.

3.2 Strengthening High-Level Promotion and Building a Linked Responsibility System Involving the Top Leaders of Both Universities and Local Areas

The lack of organization leadership and bad implementation of responsibilities is one of the problems that need attention when doing university-local collaborative civilization practice work. From our work experience of "top leaders personally taking charge and holding top leaders accountable", we should establish a high-level promotion linkage mechanism and push down levels of work responsibility in universities.

First, Establishing a two-way university-local responsible person docking system. The university leader in charge of civilization practice work are the first responsible persons for both sides along with the principal person in charge of the local practice center (station or institute) sign a university-local collaborative cooperation agreement, clarify that universities export professional talents, teaching resources, technical services and course resources; Local identifies public needs, coordinates venues activities, provides logistics support, realize equality of rights and responsibilities, divide labor clearly.

Secondly, create a regular consultation and communication mechanism. With the guidance of the leaders in charge of both the university and the local area, we conduct a monthly work promotion meeting to review the phased need for services, formulate activity plans, coordinate solutions on venues, personnel and publicity so that our cooperative projects can proceed smoothly.

Third, Integrate it in a dual assessment and evaluation system: Indicators such as the effectiveness of university-local collaborative civilization practice, volunteer service hours, public satisfaction, and industrial and cultural driving effects are included in the scope for assessing university leadership team and functional department as well as local civilization practice site respectively; so that assessment forces responsibilities to be fulfilled.

3.3 Breaking Down Barriers and Divisions and Promoting Deep Collaboration and Downward Engagement of On-Campus and Off-Campus Forces

The practice work of civilization is not possible for a single department but requires dismantling the functional barriers on campus, engaging various off-campus actors as well as the downward engagement of all sorts of forces in service of the grassroots.

On the contrary, we need to integrate our functional departments in campuses so as to build up a work synergy. Break through the work barrier between the publicity department, academic affairs office, youth league committee and secondary colleges, set up a university-local civilization practice collaborative work office. The publicity department conducts theoretical publicity and ideological guidance; Academic Affairs Office combines civilization practice activities with practice credit management; Youth League Committee recruit volunteers, train them, manage them every day; Each secondary college carry out specialized service according to their disciplinary characteristics, achieve an integrated operation of on-campus work.

But on the contrary, it is necessary to associate a number of local actors to complement service forces. It's important that universities actively link with local enterprises, agricultural cooperatives, respected local people, and local volunteer teams, absorb local forces to join together in services, make up for the shortcomings of university student volunteers (high mobility and short service cycles); Enhance cooperation between universities and local integrated media centers, publicize the results of university-local collaborative practice, expand the influence of civilization practice; Implement "order-based" precise services: according to the demand list submitted by local areas, arrange teachers and students from corresponding specialties to provide downward services so as to realize the service mode where "public places orders, universities accept orders, and society evaluates orders."

3.4 Coordinating Internal and External Resources and Strengthening Implementation Safeguards Through the Integration of Physical and Digital Resources

Sufficient resource support is the basis for the long-term operation of civilization practice work, universities should combine on-campus and off-campus physical resources with digital resources in an overall resource guarantee system.

Firstly, build a digital supply-demand matching platform. Based on university information platforms, we need to build "a university-local demand-resource matching database" in which local residents or grassroots units post their service demands online that will be automatically matched with teachers and student volunteers who have corresponding specialties based on these demands. Meanwhile, universities should open sections like red micro-classrooms and online professional consultation, open distinctive university courses and red culture courses, establish an all-weather online service platform.

Secondly, Revitalize Physical Venues and Human Resources. Follow the combination of "going out" and "inviting in", organizing teachers and students going into local New Era Civilization Practice Centers, stations, and institutes for activities; fully utilizing existing grassroots sites without redundancy; inviting local intangible cultural heritage inheritors and advanced role models to come into

campus so as to enrich the content of on-campus civilization practice and ideological and political education.

Thirdly, set up resource ledgers and diversify funding guarantees. Establish management ledgers for equipment, venues and materials that are shared by universities and local areas; evaluate its use efficiency. Coordinate between special university funds and local fiscal funds, actively seek social public welfare donations, establish diversified funding guarantee models so as to constantly carry out all kinds of practice activities.

4. Conclusion

Establishing New Era Civilization Practice Centers is an important carrier of grassroots ideological and cultural construction and the modernization of grassroots governance; using university-local cooperation effectively overcomes bottlenecks of university practice-based education and enriches the content of grassroots civilization practice. According to local realities, Ganzhou City has taken the public as the main body and mechanisms as the guarantee with features of shared sites, joint team building, joint activity implementation, and linked mechanisms that are highly referential for universities in Jiangxi Province about its experiences in multi-actor participation, standardized operation, and long-term management.

Universities in this province must not only organize volunteer services, but they should fully leverage their own discipline features and operating advantages, actively link up with local development and public needs, constantly optimize the model of university-local linkage through setting distinctive brands, press leadership responsibilities into place, deepen multi-party collaboration as well as integrating various resources. We promote the deep integration of university talents, intellects and culture with grassroots sites and livelihood needs, make our New Era Civilization Practice work warm and effective so that there will be two-way empowerment and common development for university practice-based education and grassroots civilization construction.

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