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He Dandan (front) attends class at Tudi'ao Town Middle School in Yanhe, Guizhou province. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Families reaping the rewards of relocation

Guizhou has shifted 1.88m people from remote areas in recent times, improving job and education prospects

By YANG JUN in Guiyang and **CHEN MEILING**

He Zhihong, 49, a resident of Tudi'ao town, Yanhe Tujia autonomous county, Guizhou province, said he used to live in a harsh environment where his clothes would be "covered by dust on sunny days and spotted with mud on rainy days".

"Walking was the only way to get where we wanted and sometimes we yelled at each other from a distance as there were no phones available," He said. "But those days have long gone."

He said life dramatically changed after his family moved from a remote area to a new apartment in Tudi'ao's Datianbao community in 2017, which houses about 300 poor families who came from surrounding villages. Relocation is one of the many measures the country has taken to reduce poverty.

He's house is a two-story building of 120 square meters with five rooms, offered by the government for free. He and his wife work as forest rangers near their home, and they each earn 800 yuan ($117) a month.

The family receives 2,400 yuan per month from the government as a basic living allowance. He said after the family income increased, they had more time to take care of their children. In the past, they had done odd jobs and sometimes worked far from home to earn a living.

What pleases He most is that his five children now all have the opportunity to attend school.

The eldest, He Dandan, 14, began a new semester at Tudi'ao Town Middle School in August. It takes 20 minutes for her to walk from home to school. She eats lunch at the canteen, which offers three dishes and one soup, and likes to borrow books from the school library.





From top: He Zhihong's three daughters study in their new home at Tudi'ao town. Tudi'ao Town Middle School is one of the designated educational facilities for relocated poor families in Guizhou.

"The new house and school are much better than the previous ones," she said.

He Zhihong said Dandan has made good progress in her studies. He said they don't have to pay for tuition, books and meals.

As a middle school student, Dandan, receives 312.50 yuan in education subsidy every semester, while her four younger siblings, all pupils, are given 250 yuan each. "With these preferential policies, I don't feel much pressure," He Zhihong said.

Tudi'ao Town Middle School is one of the designated educational facilities for poor families moving from remote areas to modern communities in Guizhou. A total of 145 out of 1,354 students at the school are from relocated families.

Wang Guorong, principal of the school, said students whose families had relocated only needed to bring their residence booklets for enrollment.

He added the school is equipped with three teaching buildings, an office building, dormitories for teachers and students, a canteen and a washing facility. "We aim to provide a healthy environment for students, and to contribute to rural culture and education development," Wang said.

Student Ran Honglian, 18, said she doesn't need to walk a long way or rent a room to attend school as she did before relocating. Ran's family shifted 20 kilometers to Datianbao community in 2018.

"Life here is much more comfortable. It's very convenient to go to school, the hospital and the shops," she said.

Ran's mother Tian Suxia, 52, takes care of the family on her own since her husband died. They live in a 166-sq-m house with three bedrooms and two bathrooms.

Tian earns 800 yuan a month as a forest ranger. The new house and school tuition are both free. Her three other children have jobs. "My best wish is that Honglian can go to a good university," Tian said.

Guizhou has relocated 1.88 million poor people since 2016, the most of any province in that period. With education one of the most urgent needs of residents, Guizhou has invested over 18.1 billion yuan to build or renovate 669 schools in the past four years, Xinhua News Agency reported in August.

Early this year, the province set a target of completing the construction of the last 96 educational facilities by the end of June and putting them into operation before last month.

Local education authorities said the goal was achieved, despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, with 52,000 students from relocated families being enrolled. The completion of the construction work means all relocation sites in Guizhou now have educational facilities.

The schools will help relocated families adapt to urban life, ensure stability and gradually increase their wealth, local authorities said.

Dong Xianwu contributed to this story.

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Xinjiang benefits from dean's textile training project

By CAO CHEN in Shanghai
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As the dean of the textiles and clothing school at Quanzhou Normal University in Fujian province, Qiu Yiping always has a full work schedule.

But regardless of how busy he is, the 65-year-old finds time every July for an annual trip to the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region to do volunteer teaching.

Since 2011, when he was dean of the textile college at Donghua University in Shanghai, Qiu has been leading volunteers to assist in the development of the textile industry in the autonomous region.

Qui and his team teach local cotton growers and factory workers both theoretical and practical skills and introduce them to new technology to improve production efficiency. The volunteers also conduct industrial research while they are there.

One of the team's recent accomplishments was the introduction of eco-friendly dyeing technology to Alar city in Aksu prefecture. Qiu said the technology has helped address the problem of a shortage of water for cotton dyeing.

"Xinjiang is one of the driest areas in the country. Water in the region is mostly used for agriculture, meaning there is little left for cotton dyeing," he said.

Qiu said about 140 kilograms of salt are generated and discharged along with wastewater when dyeing a metric ton of fabrics the traditional way.

"In contrast, this new dyeing technique uses almost no water and does not produce any salt. It also results in a 20 percent reduction in dyeing costs. Using such technology will accelerate the development of the industry and in turn improve local employment," he said.

According to Qiu, around 700 teachers and students from more than 10 universities and colleges have participated in the volunteer teaching program over the past decade.

Qiu said the volunteer program has helped nurture talented people and provide them with practical skills, which is beneficial to society and the economy and the construction of Xinjiang's textile industry.

> "I wanted to go to Xinjiang to help with the students' practical skills and contribute to local development."
>
> **Qiu Yiping,** dean of the textiles and clothing school at Quanzhou Normal University in Fujian province

As one of the first batch of students to receive a higher education in 1977, when China resumed the national college entrance exam, or *gaokao*, Qiu has devoted the past 42 years to the study of textiles.

He first studied at the Zhejiang Sci-Tech University in Zhejiang province, where he worked as a teaching assistant after graduating in 1982.

Qiu then studied extensively in the United States, gaining a master's degree at Auburn University and a doctoral degree at Cornell University, before completing his postdoctoral research in mechanical engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

After working as an assistant professor at North Carolina State University for seven years, he returned to China in 2003 with the aim of helping the development of the country's textile industry.

"After polishing my professional skills and independent-thinking ability abroad, I was eager to dedicate my life, knowledge and experience toward the development of China's textile industry," he said.

During his tenure at Donghua University, Qiu came up with the idea of setting up a volunteer team after the university assisted with the introduction of a textile engineering and clothing major at Xinjiang Tarim University.

"I wanted to go to Xinjiang to help with the students' practical skills and contribute to local development. It was meant to be a one-off thing. I'm surprised that this has since become an annual event," he said.

Although the volunteer event was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic this year, Qiu said he will still travel to Xinjiang this month to follow up on the progress of the project.



Qiu Yiping (center) and students prepare to leave Xinjiang Tarim University in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region for a field trip. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Herd mentality changed to beat poverty

By HOU LIQIANG
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For decades, Lhakar, a Tibetan village on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, was plagued by poverty. Because of the relatively small pastures available to villagers, their efforts to increase herds to boost incomes were not only fruitless, but also caused serious damage to the environment.

However, many families in the village in Tsekhok county, Qinghai province, which sits at an altitude of 3,500 meters, have seen their incomes triple in recent years.

The changes began after the village started a collective that has improved the efficiency of livestock herding and also freed up many of the villagers to do other work.

Jakdo's family of six owns about 70 hectares of pasture.

However, the family only made about 20,000 yuan a year from herding 40 yaks and 40 sheep before it joined the collective.

Though the 48-year-old thought about pursuing other work, he gave up the idea because his wife could not manage the animals on her own and also take care of their children.

"The amount of grass in our pasture was small and some parts of it were severely damaged, but I was shackled to the job," said Jakdo, who goes by one name.

In 2012, Jakdo joined the herding cooperative, which was established by a village committee a year earlier.

Villagers who join the cooperative hand over their livestock and pastures to the cooperative for management. At the end of the year, they are eligible for dividends according to the size of their pastures and the number of their animals, Jakdo said.

> **23.7 million yuan**
> the amount Lhakar village's herding collective paid in dividends to villagers from 2012 to last year

The collective generates income through the sale of meat and milk products. It also takes care of pest control in the pastures and purchases yaks of a better breed with funds left over after the dividends are paid.

Jakdo said his family can earn a yearly dividend of up to 50,000 yuan ($7,360) from the cooperative. He is paid additional annual income of about 20,000 yuan for his job as a deputy secretary of the cooperative. His wife earns 6,000 yuan a year milking cows for the collective.

According to the village committee, thanks to the cooperative, 236 herders out of a population of almost 900 were freed up to do other work or set up businesses.

Kaldo, who also joined the cooperative in 2012, started a transportation business after buying a small truck. The 44-year-old now makes over 50,000 yuan a year from the business. His wife also works for the cooperative milking cows.

With his increased income, Kaldo bought a car last year. "I never expected I could own a car," he said.

In 2010, per capita annual income in the village was 3,449 yuan, according to the village committee. The amount increased more than fourfold to 15,330 yuan by the end of 2018, when all villagers were removed from the national list of poverty-stricken people.

The collective paid 23.7 million yuan in dividends to villagers from 2012 to last year.

While greatly increasing villagers' incomes, the cooperative has also contributed to improvements in the environment, said Jakbum Gyal, deputy head of Tsekhok's bureau of agricultural and animal husbandry.

He said villagers need to reach a balance between the number of their animals and the size of their pastures if they want to join the collective.

For example, collective members are only allowed to have one yak for every hectare of pasture.

Traditionally, yaks graze on pastures throughout the year. Under the cooperative's management system, they are kept in pens for half of the year to protect the pasture, Jakbum Gyal said.

The collective model has been widely promoted in Tsekhok after it proved effective in increasing people's income and protecting the environment.

It has been adopted in 37 of the 64 villages in the county, with another 18 preparing to implement the system, Jakbum Gyal said.

In 2018, all villagers in Lhakar moved into new houses as the local government took steps to build a moderately prosperous society in all respects by the end of this year.

Each family only paid 35,000 yuan for an 80-square-meter house that cost over 200,000 yuan to build.

Kaldo said that before moving to their new home, his children had to travel 30 kilometers every day to go to school. "Now the schools are just near our homes. There are also restaurants and hospitals nearby," he said.