



Left: Students from Yina township, Weining county in Guizhou province attend class. The town has received poverty aid and the average income of farmers has increased as a result. **Right: Farmers from Wanghutun village**, Taijiang county in Guizhou, wear Miao ethnic group dress for tourists to take photos in lily fields. The lily plantation there is an initiative of the local government to transform local agriculture and boost rural tourism to alleviate poverty. PHOTOS BY YANG WENBIN / XINHUA



Innovative program digs deep to revitalize countryside of Guizhou

Current year seen as pivotal for the region's future economic and social development

By CAO YINGYING
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A new poverty alleviation program has been launched by the Guizhou Provincial Party Committee and government to revitalize the province's countryside, starting from Feb 24 and running to June 30.

According to the Guizhou government, the current year is seen as pivotal for the province's economic and social development.

The poverty alleviation program is the key mission for the province.

The program has four major goals, the first being to adjust the structure of the agricultural sector during this spring's ploughing season.

According to government plans, corn fields need to be reduced by 330,000 hectares in 2018 while the total area given over to cultivating vegetables is set to reach 933,333 hectares and tea plantations should cover 373,333 hectares.

A total of 8,000 hectares are earmarked to grow edible mushrooms and 230,000 hectares of fields will be used to plant Chinese medical herbs. In addition, the government is targeting a poultry population of 80 million and total 2018 egg production of 75,000 metric tons.

According to the Guizhou government, low-income villages will establish special farmers cooperatives, supported by technical teams and the general community will be involved in the cooperatives.

Officials said the government was placing great



Local residents celebrate Spring Festival last year at their newly relocated homes in Huishui county, Guizhou's Qiannan Bouyei and Miao autonomous prefecture, part of local government's effort towards poverty alleviation. TAO LIANG / XINHUA

10m yuan

increase in Guizhou's investment in 2018 to build 15,000 kilometers of new highways

30 percent

of main infrastructure projects associated with 132 population resettlement programs should be completed by end of June

importance on applying practical measures for improvements at the village, family and farmer level.

To speed up road construction in villages, Guizhou will increase investment by 10 billion yuan (\$1.58 billion) in the current year to build 15,000 kilometers of new highways, for the benefit of 2.35 million locals including 350,000 impoverished residents.

Officials said road improvement and maintenance was the second major goal of the new program.

The government will focus on the design and specifications of roads to ensure the quality of highways, and will use big data to improve management and maintenance of old expressways.

In addition, village bus services will be improved to bolster the rural transport network.

The third important action being taken in 2018 is that the

Guizhou government will relocate selected rural areas and implement urbanization there, on a county-by-county basis.

Officials said that by the end of March, some 132 population resettlement programs should be operating. The government said that 30 percent of the main infrastructure projects associated with the initiative should be completed by the end of June.

Last year 251 resettlement programs were implemented, involving new houses for 760,000 residents, 680,000 of them below the poverty line.

The Guizhou government also released policies on the education, medicine and housing sectors.

Officials said plans to improve nutrition will cover pre-school children in 66 impoverished counties. Financial aid to poor stu-

dents will be timely and the province's government will improve education standards in districts with ethnic communities.

The construction of clinics in rural areas and primary and middle schools will also be standardized and normalized.

According to the Guizhou government, 80 percent of renovation projects involving dangerous and old houses, as well as rivers and roads, are expected to start earlier in the year.

In addition, it is estimated that 20 percent of these projects should be completed by the end of June.

Officials added that to ensure the smooth running of the projects, the Guizhou government would allocate sufficient project funding and encourage craftsmen and villagers to participate in the projects.

Victories scored in province's crucial fight against poverty

By YUAN SHENGGAO

The mountainous Southwest China province of Guizhou is considered by many to be the main battleground in China's crucial fight against poverty — but top officials and experts say major victories have been scored and many more achievements are to come.

According to the latest data, in the five years to December 2017 the number of people living below the poverty line in Guizhou fell by 6.7 million and the poverty rate decreased significantly, from 26.8 percent to 8 percent over the same period.

Despite that achievement, however, officials estimate that more than 2 million people still live below the national poverty line.

Experts say education is key to lifting people out of poverty.

Guizhou invested 331.5 billion yuan (\$52.35 billion) in developing education since 2012, and a comprehensive educational assistance system has been set up gradually.

Before the new school year, officials in Puding county in the city of Anshun were tasked with briefing 17,886 poor households about how to take advantage of new progressive education policies that can help them.

These aim to make sure that their children will be able to attend school and change their futures through education, supported by tuition discounts, national grants and loans.

"Every year we insist on investigating and collecting information on students whose families have economic difficulties," said Liu Hui, director of the Center of Student Assistance Administration in Puding.

"According to their family conditions, we establish an information database, which greatly improves the work efficiency and the accuracy of the assistance."

Government and schools of the county have been actively raising funds to improve the catering conditions in schools following the implementation of the Nutrition Improvement Program for

Rural Compulsory Students. Since 2012, a total of 50 million yuan has been invested to build 44 new school canteens and to reconstruct old ones.

In 2013, the county was designated as a model by the China Development Research Foundation because of the achievements of its nutrition improvement program. Last year, more than 8 million yuan was invested to improve facilities at school canteens.

Yang Ming is a manager responsible for sales and production at Jinhe Agricultural Development and Investment Co Ltd, a company that signed a supply contract with school canteens in Puding.

"The nutrition improvement program can also promote the development of the agricultural industry and the income of impoverished farmers," Yang said.

The company has signed contracts with 49 households and cooperatives. More than 1,857 metric tons of meat, eggs and vegetables were sent to schools last year and 2,819 impoverished households benefited from it.

According to data provided to the assistance center, Puding county supported 180,000 impoverished students with more than 100 million yuan in funding in 2017.

In the past year, in the entire province of Guizhou a total of 4.7 million impoverished students were supported.

Officials said the Nutrition Improvement Program for Rural Compulsory Students has been fully implemented and has covered all rural areas in the province.

Wang Fengyou, former head of the Guizhou Provincial Department of Education, said during the two sessions of Guizhou's legislative and political advisory bodies in January that the province's education system still faced the problem of uneven standards and disparities between rural and urban schools.

"By 2018, Guizhou plans to take the lead in achieving a balanced education in rural areas, including 29 counties and the Gui'an New Area in southwestern China," he said.

Zhao Yandi contributed to the story.



Students of the She ethnic group in Guizhou's Majiang county have benefited from a nutrition improvement program. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

New online treatment service beams medical expertise to villages

By CAO YINGYING

Patients in far-flung villages can now be attended to by doctors from first-class hospitals in Southwest China's Guizhou province, benefiting from improvements in the province's remote treatment service.

Villagers from Jiuchang in Kaiyang county previously had to take a 100-kilometer bus ride through winding mountain roads to reach Guiyang city, capital of Guizhou, in order to be seen by top hospitals doctors.

But now they get the sterling service by visiting Li Zaigang, a doctor at the village clinic.

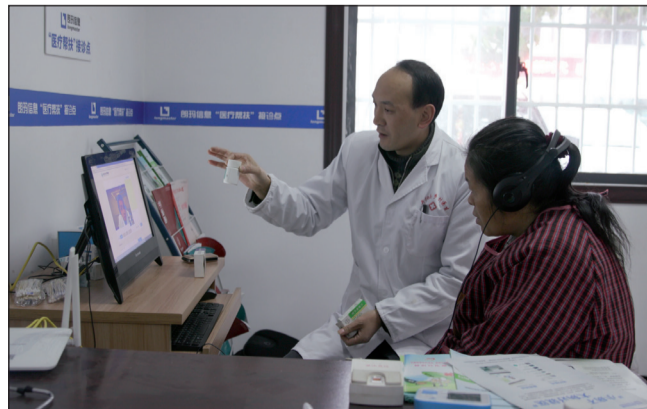
Li gives an initial diagnosis. But if he feels uncertain, he can ask premium hospitals for help, which save patients' time and money while supplying them with quality medical services.

Nie Wenqiong, a 53-year-old villager who was diagnosed with diabetes three years ago, had to take a 40-minute bus ride downtown to have regular checkups each month. Now, however, Li does the physical examination for her.

On Jan 18, Li found Nie's blood sugar was higher than normal and contacted Wang Xiaobing, a physician at a top-level Guiyang hospital, and told him about the condition of the patient.

After 30 minutes of direct consultation with Nie over the computer, Wang gave suggestions and Li made adjustments to Nie's dosage and arranged the next checkup after a few days.

"Through remote treatment, I can receive diagnosis from provincial experts without registering and waiting in a long line," Nie said.



Li Zaigang, a doctor at Jiuchang village in Kaiyang county in Guizhou province, uses his computer to get remote treatment advice from a big hospital for a villager. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

On Jan 8, the village had its first remote consultation on the internet for six-year-old patient Gou Junling, who received top-flight attention from some of the country's leading doctors

while at the local clinic. During the consultation, doctors from Beijing Friendship Hospital, top hospitals in Guiyang, and the local township discussed and analyzed

the cause of the disease and the patient's condition. They then offered a specific treatment plan.

Service spans province

Zhang Guangqi, vice-chairman of the Guizhou provincial committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and former deputy director of the Health and Family Planning Commission of Guizhou, said: "Guizhou is one of the first provinces to implement remote medical treatment from hospitals at provincial, city, county and village levels."

He said that last year 1.5 billion yuan (\$237.79 million) was invested to equip the province with digital medical equipment, such as digital imaging devices and type-B ultrasonic examination machines, for

1,543 governmental grassroots medical institutions.

In 2017, Guizhou's medical bodies organized difficult disease consultations, providing remote diagnosis for 114,000 villagers, as well as holding more than 200 distance education training courses for over 200,000 people.

Wang Rongpin, director of the radiology department of Guizhou Provincial People's Hospital, said remote medical services allow patients with slight illnesses to get treatment at local medical institutions, not only saving time and money, but also providing doctors with more experience.

Insurance lowers burden

In addition to improving its remote treatment system, Guizhou is also carrying out four medical security systems

— primary illness insurance, serious illness insurance, medical rescue and medical support — to reduce the burden for low-income people seeking medical treatment, according to the province's government.

During the first 11 months of last year, a total of 1.84 million people in Guizhou benefited from the medical security systems, receiving reimbursements totaling 3.48 billion yuan.

Scan the QR code and follow China Daily's Greg Fountain on a journey of discovery in Jiuchang village, Kaiyang county of Guizhou province:

