

Workplace nurseries to be launched

Care services aim to encourage working parents to have second child in Shanghai

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80 percent

of women surveyed in Shanghai of childbearing age said they are unwilling to have a second child.

Shanghai will build 50 nurseries in various workplaces by the end of this year in efforts to encourage more families to have a second child, following the implementation of the universal second-child policy last year.

The Shanghai Federation of Trade Unions said on Monday that it will step up its efforts in the next two years to promote a better environment for raising children and make life more convenient for working parents in the city.

According to a survey jointly conducted by the federation and the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences in 2016, about 80 percent of women in the city who are of childbearing age said they are unwilling to have a second child.

The major reason given by the interviewed women, who all hold permanent residence permits, was that they have nobody to help them take care of babies.

As a pilot project, the federation has already established nursery centers at 12 companies, which help take care of working parents' children.

Various child care services are offered at the centers, which are mainly located in enterprises, industrial parks and public institutions, the federation said, adding that it has received positive feedback.

It not only helps working parents solve child care issues,

but it is also beneficial for the child care service system, said He Huijuan, vice-chairwoman of the federation.

An additional 800 breast-feeding rooms will be introduced across the city in the next two years, which will bring the total number to more than 2,500, according to the federation, which started to build breast-feeding rooms, known as "Mommy Huts", in 2013, aimed at providing working women with private, safe and hygienic places to feed babies.

An official with the federation said companies and institutions are encouraged to establish more breast-feeding rooms for their working mothers.

Preschool education and nursery institutions in the city cater to children aged 3 or older, with few institutions offering child care services for children aged younger than 3.

A preliminary calculation by the Shanghai Women's Federation showed that about 100,000 children who are aged between 2 and 3 and have permanent residence permits require nursery services, but that there are only 39 independent nursery intuitions.

Waiting in the wings



A duck-shaped bench is displayed during Design Shanghai, a leading international design event, at the Shanghai Exhibition Center on Wednesday. The event will run through Saturday. GAO ERQIANG / CHINA DAILY

Guizhou steps up poverty relief efforts

By MA SI in Beijing
and YANG JUN in Guiyang

Guizhou province, which is home to more impoverished residents than any other province, is stepping up efforts to lift more people out of poverty, while ensuring no damage is done to the local environment.

"Though we have made progress in the battle against poverty, there is still a long way to go and the task is becoming increasingly difficult," said Chen Min'er, the province's Party chief and a deputy to the 12th National People's Congress, the country's top legislature.

Last year, the southwestern province lifted 1.2 million people out of poverty. As it ramps up resources to cultivate people's ability to support themselves, the mountainous province aims to help another 1 million rural residents who live below the poverty line of 2,300 yuan (\$335) in annual income.

“We must ensure that each family has a way to boost their income and everyone has a way out of poverty.”



Chen Min'er, Party chief of Guizhou province

"We must ensure that each family has a way to boost their income and everyone has a way out of poverty," Chen told reporters after a panel discussion during the ongoing two sessions — the annual gathering of the nation's top legislature and its top political advisory body — in Beijing.

Guizhou's move is part of China's broad efforts to help 70 million people out of poverty by 2020.

Last year, Guizhou resettled 458,000 poor people in rural areas, moving them to places with better infrastructure and ecology. It plans to transfer 750,000 more people this year so that they can have access to

better living standards and economic opportunities.

Amid concerns that industrial development may be accompanied by environmental degradation, Guizhou Governor Sun Zhigang said more efforts will be made to ensure that no damage is done to the quality of the province's air, water and virgin forests.

One example is how Tongren city has prospered by leveraging and protecting local natural resources. With a huge reserve of natural drinking water, the city has attracted beverage companies such as Nongfu Spring Co to set up factories there, which have employed

a significant number of local residents.

Chen Changxu, Party chief of Tongren, said the city's total output value of bottled water and other water-related industries reached 8.97 billion yuan in 2015.

"We will take more steps to protect our clean water and shore up growth," Chen said.

As the government rolls out more policies to support rural development, Hu Rongzhong, another national legislator, said: "Villages are in desperate need of technical experts. I suggest sending more officials to rural areas as part of the big push to upgrade agricultural industries."

According to local officials, Guizhou will step up efforts to boost rural industries this year in the hope of kindling a desire among the poor to pursue better lives and to reduce their dependence on government financial assistance.

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A translator reads letters to Liu Molan in Zibo, Shandong province, on Wednesday. The letters were sent by Oleg Kuvshinnikov, governor of Russia's Vologda Oblast, where Liu was born, and local children. ZHAO RUIXUE / CHINA DAILY

Woman gets gifts from hometown in Russia

By ZHAO RUIXUE
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A 90-year-old woman from the village of Vahevo in northern Russia's Vologda Oblast received on Wednesday photographs and letters written by children from her hometown, which she has not returned to for 83 years.

Born in the former Soviet Union in December 1926, Liu Molan, whose Russian name is Nina, moved to China with her family when she was 7 years old. Her father is Chinese, and met Nina's mother, a Russian, while doing business in the Soviet Union.

Nina lived with her family in Ili, the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region. At age 17, she married Liu Chunshu, a Chinese man who was 20 years older than her. Liu gave Nina the Chinese name Molan, meaning orchid, which she has used ever since.

After the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Liu Molan traveled with her husband to his hometown in Mansihe village, Shandong province. She now lives with her daughter-in-law, as her

husband and her adopted son and daughter have all died.

Liu Molan, who likes to sing Russian songs and Chinese folk songs, can still speak and write a little Russian, but she is more fluent in speaking a rural dialect native to Zibo.

Oleg Kuvshinnikov, governor of Vologda Oblast, wrote a letter to Liu Molan, saying that her story is an example of the long-standing friendship between China and Russia and wishing her a happy Year of the Rooster.

Children from her hometown wrote that they are glad to know that Liu Molan is living a happy life in China.

"Since you and your family left, great changes have taken place in our hometown. The pictures might remind you of your happy childhood here," one of the letters read.

Liu Molan said she is fond of the gifts, adding, "I hope children in my hometown visit China to see for themselves that it is a great country."

To help people from Liu Molan's hometown see where she lives now, the local government posted some pictures and Chinese gifts to the children in Vologda Oblast.

GUIYANG — When rape flowers begin to blossom in the rugged fields of Southwest China, people know it is time to depart. Young mothers and fathers leave home to find jobs, with toddlers and teenagers being left in the hands of elderly grandparents.

For people in Dazhai village in Guizhou province's Bijie city, spring has always brought a sense of hope along with a sense of the inescapable sorrow of separation. The village is home to more than 2,200 people, mostly of Miao ethnicity, and the most common way for villagers to escape poverty is to find jobs elsewhere.

Cai Qun, a 36-year-old mother, repeatedly experienced such departures before becoming a creative embroidery artist and a successful entrepreneur.

She is also among the more than 2,800 deputies of the 12th National People's Congress who are attending the ongoing two sessions — the annual gathering of the nation's top legislature and its top political advisory body — in Beijing. Cai said she wants to bring more congressional and public attention to the fate of China's "left-behind children".

"A child needs a mother. Stop mothers from leaving and bring them back," Cai said.

Cai's poverty-stricken hometown of Bijie has witnessed the brutal damage that poverty and the absence of parental care can do. In 2012, five children in Bijie died from carbon monoxide poisoning while burning charcoal for warmth in a roadside dumpster. In



Volunteers give away clothes, books and toys to more than 100 left-behind children in Bijie, Guizhou province, in February last year. LI JIANQIANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

60 million

Number of left-behind children in rural areas in China, with Bijie accounting for 260,000 of them

2015, four left-behind siblings aged 5 to 13 died after drinking pesticide at home.

Nationwide, there are more than 60 million left-behind children in rural areas, with Bijie accounting for 260,000 of those. Left-behind children are often victims of tragedies such as murder, trafficking and suicide.

"I hope there will be more incentives, such as loans for small business who can offer jobs to mothers in their hometowns," Cai said.

Cai's mother, who is 87 years old, gave birth to 13 children, of which six survived, with Cai being the youngest. Cai's childhood mostly involved fighting hunger, which is the reason she left Bijie.

"We did not have a paddy field, so it was difficult to find enough food. My mother always had to ask for food from neighbors," she said.

At the age of 12, Cai followed her sisters to the provincial capital of Guiyang to make a living collecting garbage. Like most girls in her village, Cai

married early. She gave birth to her daughter, Yang Linfeng, at the age of 16.

"My oldest sister took care of Yang Linfeng when I was away. For my daughter, my sister was more of a mother than me. I was like a relative she saw only once a year," Cai said.

While working in the industrial hubs of Yiwu and Shenzhen, Cai tried to make up for her absence by making hand-embroidered dresses for her daughter.

Almost every woman in her village knows how to embroider, but Cai is probably the most skilled. In 2007, Cai joined a provincial folk art competition and won a prize for her wax painting.

Briefly

BEIJING

Fugitive from UAE extradited

Chinese police officers escorted a fugitive from the United Arab Emirates on Wednesday, the first such case since the two nations signed an extradition treaty in 2004, according to public security authorities. Police in Shanghai's Putuo district said that in September 2007, the suspect, surnamed Kan, falsely claimed that he was authorized to sell a property, swindling deposits of 2 million yuan (\$289,000). He fled to the UAE in March 2008.

GUANGDONG

Official expelled from Party, post

A senior official has been removed from his post and expelled from the Communist Party of China. The Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, China's top anti-graft body, published a statement on its website on Wednesday saying Li Jia, former Party chief of Zhuhai, has severely violated Party disciplines, a phrase that usually refers to corruption. Li, also a member of the Standing Committee of the CPC Guangdong Committee, was said to have allowed his family members to abuse his position to reap huge profits.



INNER MONGOLIA

Region to protect the Great Wall

The Inner Mongolia autonomous region will take measures to preserve its stretch of the Great Wall, the regional culture department said on Wednesday. Protective nets and fences will be set up along sections of the Great Wall near villages and damaged parts will be restored in the next three years, the department said. A report released late last year showed that some sections of the Great Wall in the region had not been well preserved and illegal activities such as mining, construction and farming were discovered in protection areas around the Great Wall.

XINHUA—CHINA DAILY

Lawmaker calls for end to issue of left-behind children

"The competition was an eye-opener. My husband and I decided to open a workshop at home," she said.

Cai expanded her house into a factory and founded a company under her own name. Cai's embroidery products are popular at a karst cave tourist destination about 2 kilometers from her home. Last year, the shop's turnover was 8 million yuan (\$1.15 million).

She employs about 300 women, and half of them used to be migrant workers. "The older women are more skilled, but I'm persuading more young women to come to work for me," Cai said. "When there are many orders, women come to work at my shop, but they can also work from home, if necessary."

Yang Zhongmei, a 29-year-old mother, joined the workshop in 2015. Previously, she worked at an electronics factory in Shenzhen. She earns about 3,000 yuan each month, a few hundred yuan less than what she earned in Shenzhen.

"My son is in third grade and my daughter is in kindergarten. My son, in particular, is happy to see me back," Yang Zhongmei said.

Cai said: "When I was young, every evening my mother would sit down to rest, light a candle, start to sing and spend the evening sewing, which is something I will never forget. I hope embroidery can change the lives of more Miao women, like it did for me."

XINHUA