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location force people into poverty. In 2013, many harvests were ruined by a hurricane, leaving about one-third of the population of 3,000 living below the national poverty line of 2,800 yuan a year.

"People's lives slid to the bottom of a hole, so we started thinking of a way out," Zhu says.

He recognized the business potential of local products — including eggs, honey and homemade bread — and realized that the internet could connect villagers with customers thousands of kilometers away. "Aksupa village has low levels of industrial pollution, so our organic products are exactly what people living in cities want," he says.

So far this year, the village's online store, supplied by nearly 100 local families, has earned 15,000 yuan through the sale of more than 10,000 eggs, and three families have opened their own online outlets. Liu Jianguo, a 51-year-old resident, said he can make more than 10,000 yuan per year selling eggs online.

Patigul Halik, a township official, says almost every family in Aksupa village keeps chickens to provide eggs and meat, and the online store provides a channel for the sale of surplus eggs. When an order is received, Halik visits local families to collect a fresh batch.

In November, a two-story e-commerce service center was established to collect, store and process produce before it is packed and sent to cities nationwide.

With the money she has made selling her bread online, Osman, the baker, has bought a refrigerator and electric bicycle — things she never thought her family would ever be able to afford.

"I don't have a computer and I don't know how the internet works," she said. "But I can see the changes brought by the internet very clearly."

According to Zhu, the township director, every resident will be above the poverty line by the end of 2017.

In 2014, the State Council Leading Group Office of Poverty Alleviation and Development, listed e-commerce as one of a number of effective policies to pursue. A year later, the use of e-commerce to alleviate poverty became one of the government's 10 Targeted Poverty Alleviation Projects, along with improved vocational training and microfinance.

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# Preschools key to avoiding life trap

By HOU LIQIANG and YANG JUN  
in Tongren, Guizhou

The success of Tongren, Guizhou province, in promoting preschool education in rural areas is being hailed as a possible blueprint for the eradication of poverty and a means of preventing its reemergence.

Seven of the 12 county-level regions in Tongren have been designated by the government as national-level poverty-stricken counties. In 2013, the average per capita income for farmers in the city was 5,397 yuan (\$780; 736 euros; £642), 40 percent lower than the national level that year.

Initiated in 2012 by the China Development Research Foundation and Songtao Miao autonomous county in Tongren, the Mountain Village Kindergarten Project has built 2,000 facilities for rural preschoolers. One-hundred percent of the communities are served today, up from just 10 percent in 2013.

Long Lihong, director of the Tongren City Education Commission, said most of the facilities are located in unused primary school classrooms, in village committee offices or in houses, instead of building new kindergartens. But kindergartens were built in every place where it could be guaranteed that more than 10 children would enroll.

In Houzhai village, three unused primary school classrooms were transformed into a kindergarten for 27 preschoolers from a nearby Miao ethnic community of 1,400.

Tongren's total revenue was 37.9 billion yuan from 2011 to last year. Since 2012, the city government has allocated 5 percent of its annual administrative budget to the kindergarten project. District governments are rewarded with 10,000 yuan for every facility they establish in the mountains, and the city government allocates 300 yuan per year to every child for teaching materials.

"Many kids in the rural areas are left-behind children. They are cared for by their grandparents, who are usually poorly educated and unable to do much for them," Long said. "We have seen great improvements in the children's linguistic skills, cognitive competence and memory capacity since they entered the kindergartens."

According to tests conducted by



CHILDREN take a post-lunch nap at the Muziping Village Kindergarten in Tongren. PHOTOS BY HOU LIQIANG / CHINA DAILY



SHI JIAHUI, 3, eats lunch at the Houzhai Village Kindergarten in Tongren, Guizhou province.

East China Normal University in Tongren, the language competence of children aged 4 to 5 improved by 23 percent after spending a year to 18 months at a kindergarten, while cognitive competence improved by 27 percent and memory improved by 34 percent.

The children's behavior and hygiene also improved.

Long Jiawei, 4, and her sister Long

Jiali, 6, have lived with their grandmother, Shi Qingjiao, since 2015, when their parents moved east to Zhejiang province for work. Shi, 75, has rheumatism and says all she can do for the girls is cook food and wash their clothes.

"My granddaughters' awareness of hygiene has changed a lot since they started at the kindergarten. Now, they ask to change their clothes and



LONG LIHONG, education official of Tongren city

have showers every day. They say they can't fall asleep if they don't take a shower," Shi says.

It will take about 20 years for the full impact of the project to be seen, but education is an important way of eradicating poverty, Long, the education director, says. "In poverty-stricken areas such as Tongren, it's key for people to make their way to colleges or universities to eradicate poverty."

"In addition to occupational and compulsory education," she added, "importance should also be attached to preschool learning, so we can build up the talent pool and save future generations from poverty."

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## COMMENT

# Nation sets example for world poverty reduction

By TAN XUEWEN

China, the largest developing country in the world, has been offering foreign aid and taking part in international poverty reduction for a long time. Previously, it was involved in international poverty relief cooperation as a receiver of aid from international organizations and Western countries, to help develop its economy and improve undeveloped infrastructure.

The country started to accept aid and guidance for poverty relief in its rural areas. It has won acclaim for alleviating hardship in these areas with its policy of poverty reduction through development projects. Now it has

started to shoulder international responsibility by contributing to poverty reduction in other countries.

China is making great efforts to transform itself from a developing country into a moderately developed one. It is fairly advanced in some areas of development but remains backward in others. Generally speaking, many believe China has the ability to rid itself of its backward areas and take its poverty alleviation experience to other countries.

Currently, China is mainly involved in international poverty relief and foreign aid under a regional cooperation mechanism. Its poverty reduction cooperation with African countries is mainly conducted under the terms of the

declaration of the Beijing Summit, which was passed at the Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation Beijing Summit in 2006, and the Program for Strengthening China-Africa Cooperation on Poverty Reduction, which was issued at the China-Africa Poverty Reduction and Development Conference in 2014. Africa and China have cooperated in agriculture, training, improvement of livelihoods, experience exchange and debt relief. Cooperation with member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in poverty relief is mainly conducted by sharing policy information and experience. Meanwhile, China also provides equipment and technology to ASEAN member states.

The country is now favorably poised domestically and internationally to participate in international poverty relief cooperation. Poverty reduction is one of China's most successful achievements and demonstrates the strength of its development model. Politically, the country has the motivation to promote its model in other countries. It's also a practicable means for the country to shoulder more international responsibility. Meanwhile, with Chinese overseas investment on the rise, the country also hopes to see its companies speed up their inclusion in local communities by shouldering more social responsibilities.

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