

Student photographers bring smiles to poor villagers' faces

Charity project captures life in the Guizhou countryside

By YANG JUN in Guiyang and DU JUAN in Beijing

Wang Bangbi, 30, and his classmates have taken more than 5,000 family photos for free in poor villages in Guizhou province since 2012 in the hope of giving those people a memorable experience.

With his team, composed of photography majors from Guizhou Normal University, Wang has visited 16 remote villages in the past five years, taking photos of poor families. For many villagers, it was the first time they had had their photo taken.

Wang is from an impoverished family himself — he was the last one in his class to buy a camera due to financial constraints.

"In 2009, my mom used money that was supposed to be for buying her medicine to buy me a camera worth 12,000 yuan (\$1,750)," he said. "However, I will never have the chance to take a family photo for my family because my mom died two months after she bought me the camera."

"It was so upsetting for me, and it is what gave me the idea of taking pictures for poor families like mine."

In July 2012, Wang contacted several students, who supported his idea and collected 3,300 yuan by working part-time jobs.

They spent the money on paper, ink and other materials. Then, they went to the villages of Zhongzhai and Duoque in Guizhou's Liupanshui city, carrying camera equipment, tents and food rations.

"In the beginning, nobody believed us," Wang said. "We showed the village committee an introduction letter from our university, and it wasn't until we gave some young villagers photos that we took of them that people believed we were doing it for free."

On the second day, villagers showed up wearing their best clothes, waiting in a line and hoping to have their first-ever picture taken.

That was the 11-member team's first charity trip. They walked for three hours in the mountains to reach the area, lived in tents and ate meals of compressed biscuits.

"We didn't want to disrupt the lives of locals," Wang said.

Soon, many more students at the university wanted to join the team.

"Every member of the team can gain something from the charity trips, especially when they witness the sincerity in the smiles of the villagers when they see their photos," Wang said.



A family in Liupanshui, Guizhou province, poses for a group photo. Wang Bangbi's team has taken more than 5,000 family photos for poor villagers in Guizhou since 2012. LONG DAIBING / FOR CHINA DAILY



A member of Wang's team shows his photos to two sisters. WEN SHUANG / FOR CHINA DAILY



Two children show off their smiles for the volunteer photographers. SUN CUIPING / FOR CHINA DAILY

Master's grad finds passion in poultry farm

By FENG ZHIWEI

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Having studied for six years in Russia, Gong Guanghui did not follow his family's wishes and find a job in finance. Instead, he returned to his home village to follow in his father's footsteps, and has run a chicken farm for the past eight years.

Born in 1981 in Hunan province's Fengping town, Gong went to Russia for undergraduate study in 2003, after which he obtained a master's degree in economics and management from St. Petersburg State University of Economics in 2009.

Upon returning to China, he intended to work for a State-owned enterprise in Guangdong province. However, shortly after arriving in Guangdong, he visited a large-scale chicken farm with modern equipment belonging to Guangdong Wens Foodstuffs Group, and it occurred to him that chicken breeding was a potentially profitable business.

After careful consideration, he decided to return to his hometown to set up his own chicken farm.

"It was a difficult decision to make. Some of my relatives said my family had spent so much money supporting my studies that I should follow their wishes," Gong recalled.

As an ancient Chinese saying goes, everything is hard to start with, and Gong soon found this to be true. A lack of capital and an incomplete application process meant his expansion plans for his family's chicken farm could not be implemented.

The local government then said Gong's farm would need to be demolished due to the construction of a highway. However, this was a blessing in disguise, and Gong recognized the opportunity to solve his problems of inadequate capital and a complex application process.

Gong was granted a simplified application process and obtained compensation from the government as well as loans from local credit unions, which paid for world-class chicken farming equipment from Germany.

Jiang Chenglong contributed to this story.



Gong Guanghui counts the number of eggs at his chicken farm. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The original 11 members have all graduated, but they still participate in the charity shoots when they have time, especially Wang.

He said he hopes the project continues forever, passing on the love from one generation to the next.

Wen Shuang, a junior student at the university, is now in charge of the team, taking over Wang's role.

"At present, all photography majors at Guizhou Normal University are members of the team," Wen said.

They take turns to go on charity shoots. As the project has grown, companies have contacted the team enquiring about sponsorship, but Wen said they insist on raising the necessary funding through working part-time jobs.

Sun Cuiping, a student from Jiangsu province, said she had never seen mountains like the ones in Guizhou back in her hometown. She used to fall over often when she walked to remote villages in the mountains, but now she is used to the rocky terrain.

"During a recent trip in Zhenning county, an old man died the day after we took photos of him, which means we captured the precious last moments of his life," Sun said.

"Love is precious. You should cherish the loving relationships you have with your family members," she added. "I'm doing something meaningful and I will continue to do it."

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Dong Xianwu contributed to this story.

Around China

JIANGSU Biker caught using fake CIA document

A male motorcycle rider who showed police officers a fake CIA identification document while being investigated on an expressway in Nanjing was recently detained. Motorcycles are banned from driving on expressways. The man, who is a native of Henan province, will be punished according to the law, police said.



YANGTZE EVENING NEWS

Couple fined over plum-picking plan

A couple who rode their motorcycle along an expressway, stopping to pick plums along the way, were stopped by police in Nanjing. The man said he knows riding motorcycles on the expressway is banned, but that he did so because his wife is pregnant and had a craving for something sour. The couple were released after being educated and fined.

YANGTZE EVENING NEWS

SICHUAN Officer assaulted by square dancer

A 48-year-old woman in Zigong, surnamed Zheng, was recently detained for fighting

with and pinching a community police officer who stopped her from dancing in a public square during the national entrance examination for Chinese universities and colleges, known as *gao-kao*. Zheng jostled with the officer, Xie Changping, who attempted to stop her from dancing because the music was too loud. Xie had to call police for help after being injured by Zheng.

CHENGDU BUSINESS DAILY

CHONGQING Woman dies in elevator fall

A woman, surnamed Tan, died after falling into an elevator shaft at Fengdu County People's Hospital. She walked into the shaft on the seventh

floor, falling to the bottom. The elevator had already risen to the eighth floor. Despite attempts to save Tan, she was pronounced dead a few hours later.

THE BEIJING NEWS

Nervous novice crashes vehicle

A man, surnamed He, who drove his car into a set of steps in the city's Shapingba district was helped by a police officer and pedestrians, who lifted his car out of trouble. The accident caused heavy traffic congestion. He said he had only recently obtained his driver's license and crashed because he was nervous about driving on a busy road.

CQNEWS.NET

GUANGXI Gang nabbed with 50 kg of ketamine

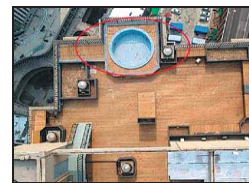
Six men who colluded to produce drugs in a barren mountain were recently detained in Liuzhou. Police seized more than 50 kilograms of ketamine, as well as tools and equipment used for drug production, during a raid on the secret drug den. Police set up a task force when they found materials for producing ketamine in a trash can the men sold to a local recycle station in October.

CHINANEWS.COM.CN

SHANDONG Rooftop pool to be demolished

A property owner in Dezhou

has promised to demolish a swimming pool built on the top of a skyscraper in a housing estate after mediation from urban patrol officers, known as *chengguan*. The officers launched an investigation after residents complained, saying construction of the swimming pool had not been authorized and that it threatens the safety of the building. The circular pool, which was built by an apartment owner on the top floor, is



more than 3 meters in diameter and more than 1 meter deep.

CHINA YOUTH DAILY

Son kills father in hit-and-run

A man in Heze, surnamed Yang, who recently fled the scene after knocking someone over while driving on a highway later learned the victim, who died, was his father. Traffic police were puzzled when the victim's family members asked them not to investigate the case further the day after the incident. However, they launched an investigation and found the hit-and-run culprit was the victim's son. Yang admitted to the crime after being detained.

MUDAN EVENING NEWS