

# A volunteer effort that transformed the vineyards of Yunnan



Zhang Jinpan is a grape expert from Jiading's Malu Town.



Zhang (left) and her team carry out a donation activity at the Shishan Kindergarten in Yunnan's Chuxiong Yi Autonomous Prefecture.



Zhang provides guidance in the field for grape cultivation to the local farmers.



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### Zhang Jinpan

Deputy director of the Agriculture and Rural Service Center in Malu Town

### Liu Ruihan and Jiang Mengyu

Zhang Jinpan, who lives in Malu Town in Jiading District, is known as a “grape expert,” having dedicated her life to the sweet vine. But her story goes far beyond the vineyards; it’s a tale of linking two worlds, connecting Shanghai to the heart of southwest China’s Yunnan Province.

In 2020, Zhang led the Chuxiong team of the 23rd batch of Shanghai-Yunnan Volunteers, a group dedicated to assisting Yunnan’s development. Zhang’s journey began with a sense of purpose and a duty to use her expertise for the growth of Yunnan’s grape industry.

“I studied fruit tree cultivation, and after my postgraduate studies, I spent 12 years working in agricultural management in Malu,” she explained. “Going to Yunnan provided an opportunity to engage in technical exchanges and contribute to the development of the local industry.”

True to her words, Zhang began her volunteer effort by traversing various grape-growing districts in Yunnan. Her tour was packed with tireless research, and she graciously shared her grape cultivation skills with the locals.

She instilled newfound knowledge in local farmers through hands-on training, improving production management and brand development.

Meanwhile, the sharp contrast between Yunnan’s rich natural surroundings and Shanghai’s busy urban sprawl opened up new possibilities for her.

Zhang, in addition to her technical role, formed a bridge between the Jading and Chuxiong districts, launching charity initiatives. Over the course of six months, Zhang and her team worked with organizations and individual contributors to grant scholarships to six outstanding Wuding County junior high school students.

“The journey of education is an endless adventure,” Zhang said with a glint of pride.

Her dedication to fostering the goals of these young minds did not end when she returned to Shanghai. Zhang now serves as deputy director of the Agriculture and Rural Service Center in Malu Town.

Looking back on her three-year trip, Zhang recalled the excitement and anxiety that came with the goal of supporting Yunnan. The terrain of Yunnan was beautiful, but it also provided distinct obstacles.

“The rugged landscape dominates, with few flat agricultural areas. Yunnan’s agricultural practices and regional variances differ greatly from Shanghai’s urban agriculture setting,” she said.

Fortunately, what began as an unknown voyage became a treasured memory. She experienced the warm welcome of the locals as well as personal progress.

Zhang progressed from a technical specialist to a managerial position focusing on rural rehabilitation. Her journey from Shanghai to Yunnan was transformative, strengthening her resolve to continue contributing to Yunnan’s growth and creating linkages between Shanghai and the southwestern province.

“I fully recognize the significant disparities in development between the eastern and western regions and the importance of cooperation between these regions,” said Zhang. “Through a deep understanding of various aspects of the Shanghai-Yunnan collaboration, such as industry support, poverty alleviation through consumption and working together for a better life, I have come to comprehend the arduousness and significance of Yunnan’s poverty alleviation endeavors.”

Zhang’s story exemplifies the transformative potential of “Support Yunnan.” Hers is a narrative of commitment and companionship. The bridge she constructed between Shanghai and Yunnan Province nurtures both dreams and grapevines.



The 23rd batch of Shanghai-Yunnan volunteers’ Chuxiong team visit the Chuxiong Prefecture Museum to gain a deeper understanding of the local history and culture. — Photos by Liu Ruihan