

86. How to help the unsupported elderly?

The living conditions of disadvantaged groups such as the rural unsupported elderly (*gugua laoren* 孤寡老人) are an important measure for considering and reflecting the fairness, harmony, and civilization of society.¹ Caring for and assisting the rural elderly is an obligation of the work team, as well as a major issue in village work.

First, give policy support. Based on policy, give economic subsidies to these households and establish as many public welfare facilities as possible. Penetrate deeply into the village organization to gather detailed statistics on the elderly, enter them into the registry, conduct regular analyses on the data, and verify targets. Match up the scattered unsupported elderly people so that they assemble into voluntary families, become each others' companions, and look after each other.

Second, express concern and help with enthusiasm. Spare no effort to improve the elderly's living facilities, and integrate the unsupported elderly into the rural health insurance system. The group's rural cadres, youth, Party activists, and others will pair with the unsupported elderly, periodically pay them visits, and pay frequent attention to their daily lives and physical health in order to provide them with security, domestic, and spiritual support services, as well as take the initiative to resolve their problems.

Third, strengthen the moral education of villagers. Vigorously promote the traditional virtue of respecting the old and cherishing the young, and actively advocate family harmony, neighborhood mutual aid, and harmonious coexistence. Teach village youth from a young age about the idea and moral behaviour of caring for the elderly, and organize them to participate more in activities that improve the circumstances of the elderly, benefit their livelihood, and amass popular support.

Fourth, promote self-reliance. Improve favourable policies to provide the unsupported elderly with even more opportunities and bring about even easier conditions. Encourage them to develop courtyard economies and engage in some production activities suitable for the elderly. Teach and guide them to actively improve their living conditions, and increase their self assurance.

Fifth, actively exploit social resources. Emphasize the work team's personal advantages, mobilize cadres, the masses, and social groups, charity funds, and other public welfare communities to visit and check on the unsupported elderly. Donate funds and goods and help them to resolve their everyday problems. Achieve a situation where we can allocate money for particular ends, with a specialist to supervise the distribution and use of the funds and goods.

¹ While *gugua* 孤寡 literally translates to "widowed" or "isolated," we have rendered it as "unsupported" because it most likely refers to elderly people who relied on relatives now detained or assigned to factories. See the "'Four Togethers' and 'Three Gifts' Handbook" for more on the state's efforts to manage the consequences of family separation as a function of mass detention policies:

<https://xinjiang.sppga.ubc.ca/chinese-sources/cadre-materials/the-four-togethers-and-three-gifts-handbook/>

Sixth, develop rich and colourful activities. At weddings and all other celebrations, everyone should take the initiative to invite the unsupported elderly to participate, making them feel the care and warmth of the Party organization as they happily spend their final years.

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