

# Visiting a Disadvantaged Student's Family

By Yang Jian

The Gaopa Village is an ancient village of the Miao Minority located in the rugged mountains of Qiandongnan Prefecture, Guizhou Province. It has 356 families and a population of 1926. The rice fields here have meager harvest and villagers are economically disadvantaged. In the past, inability to attend school due to financial reasons was a serious problem. Due to the help of Zigen and other non-profit organizations, and most recently government assistance, the situation has been improved significantly. However, quite a few families are still living in dire poverty.

On a August day in 2016, Zigen workers followed Principal Long of Gaopa Village School to visit the home of Little Nu, a student in eighth grade attending the secondary school in the township who receive Zigen's scholarship.

Little Nu's home is located by the side of a trail meandering through the bush. It is a wooden shed converted from a cow pen, and connected to cow pens and pig pens that are still in use. It is in very poor condition. Little Nu and his two brothers were so shy that they went to hide in the house upon our arriving.



*Little Nu's house, a wooden shed converted from cow pen.*

Little Nu lives with her mother and two brothers in this simple dwelling. Little Nu's two brothers are attending seventh and sixth grade. To defray the cost of living and education, Little Nu's dad is away working on a railway construction site. Little Nu's mother stays home to take care of the children, the agricultural work and cattles. Little Nu will be in eighth grade the coming September. She is a girl who likes to laugh, and had been in the cultural inheritance program in Principal Long's school. Little Nu hopes to finish school, even though her school work is not top notch. Zigen Fund's scholarship has helped Little Nu and her brothers, so that they will be able to finish school, and Little Nu will be able to resist the fate of other girls in village who marry too early.

Besides scholarships, Zigen Fund also supports programs in Health Education for Girls, Books Corner, Local Cultures, and Teachers Training. Zigen Fund and Principal Long have been working together and working hard towards the same goal, namely, to ensure all children finish school.

# 贵州苗寨受助学生家访

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杨建

高扒苗寨，是贵州省黔东南州具有悠久历史的古苗寨，全村有 356 户，总人口 1826 人，分为 8 个自然寨，6 个村民小组，距榕江县城 30 公里，寨子散落在县城至乡镇公路河谷的深山高坡之中。由于远离城市交通不便，又是高寒山区，村民投入劳力多但农产品收益不高，经济收入少，适龄儿童失学情况非常严重。经过当地政府、村寨小学校长和老师、村委以及滋根等社会公益组织的不断努力，学校和村庄状况得到改善，学生辍学比例明显下降。

2016 年 8 月，我们在苗寨高扒小学龙校长的带领下，来到了高扒六组的一个自然寨，走访在乡镇中学就读初二的滋根生小努。穿过草丛中的小路，我们看见一座和牛圈、猪圈连在一起的房子，看到我们来了，小努和两个弟弟都非常害羞地躲在屋里。

小努和母亲、两个弟弟住在由牛圈改建的木制小棚子里，住房条件很差。小努的两个弟弟，一个即将升初二，一个在村寨小学读六年级，开支不小。为了养活一家人，小努父亲去了外地的铁路工地打工，母亲在家照料子女和农务、牲畜。小努 9 月就读初二了，是一个喜欢笑的小姑娘，也是龙校长民族文化遗产的学生，尽管自己学习成绩不太好，但是小努还是希望能够完成学业。滋根资助小努和弟弟助学金，不仅能帮助她和弟弟完成学业，也使小努不会像本村寨同龄女孩一样早早嫁人。

除了支持助学金项目，滋根在高扒苗寨的学校里还开展了女童健康教育、班级图书角、乡土文化进课堂、代课教师能力提升培训等项目，滋根和龙校长的有着同样的心愿，希望村寨的教育越来越好，辍学的孩子越来越少！