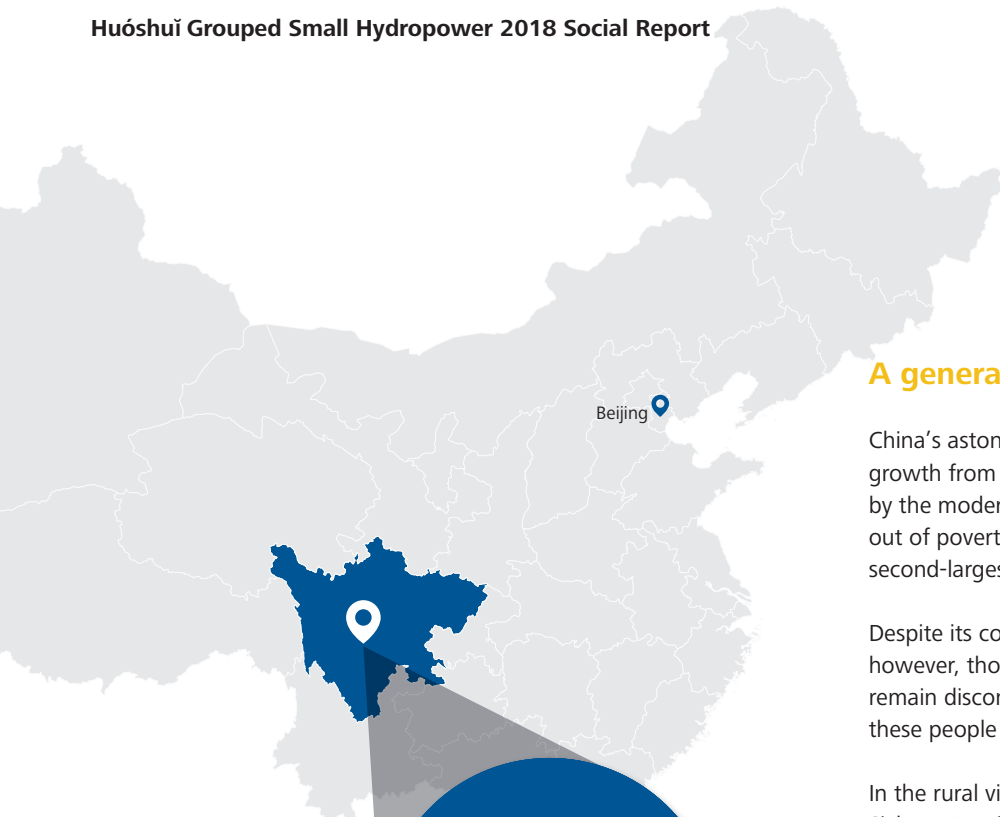


Huóshuǐ Grouped Small Hydropower 2018 Social Report

Connecting China's left-behind
children with the world outside





A generation left behind

China's astonishing development and rapid economic growth from the 1970s onwards has been unprecedented by the modern world – lifting more than 800 million people out of poverty, and elevating its economy to the world's second-largest today.

Despite its continued economic prosperity as a nation, however, those living in remote and rural China often remain disconnected from the modern world. Many of these people are children.

In the rural village of Miaogang in Southwest China's Sichuan Province there are little opportunities for employment. Here, hundreds of children live without a mother or father. Their parents have migrated to the cities to find work, forced to leave them behind with grandparents or extended family. These left-behind children are the hidden casualties of China's rapid industrialisation. And there are millions of others just like them.

In China, it is estimated that around one fifth of all children belong to this left-behind generation. More often than not, these children have little experience of the outside world beyond the stories they read or hear from their grandparents.



In the rural village of Miaogang in Southwest China's Sichuan Province, hundreds of left-behind children live without a mother or father



The 95 small-scale hydropower stations of the Huóshuǐ Hydropower project generate clean electricity for China's remote mountain communities

A glimpse beyond their doorsteps for the left-behind children of Miaogang village

Scattered across Southwest and South Central China are the 95 small-scale, run-of-river hydro stations that make up the South Pole Huóshuǐ Hydropower project. By harnessing the regions' powerful rivers, these stations together create enough clean electricity to power over half a million Chinese homes annually – including some in Yingjing County, where Miaogang village is located.

As well as connecting hundreds of thousands of rural people in these areas with sustainable electricity, the Huóshuǐ Hydropower project also works on the ground with local people and organisations to deliver further social impacts where they are needed most.

In November 2018, South Pole worked with local NGO, the Yingjing Sunshine Volunteer Association, to fund a field trip for 95 left-behind children from Miaogang Village Primary School.

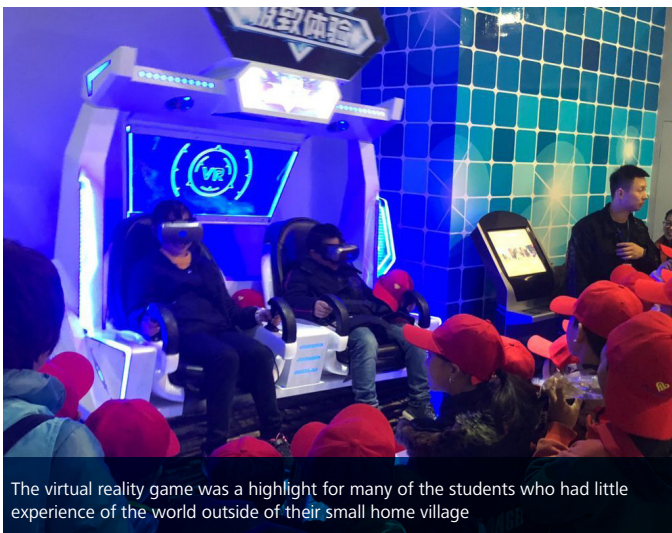
Travelling with their teachers alongside Yingjing Sunshine Volunteer Association staff and a community doctor, the children rode the big bus into town for a glimpse of the world beyond their tiny home village. The students visited the Yingjing Museum and the town library, where they saw cultural relics from the past and learnt of human history.

The adventure ended at the Yingjing Science Centre. Here, the children were charmed by the world of science and technology, and the day ended on a high with a ride on a virtual reality roller coaster.

It is these social impacts of the Huóshuǐ Hydropower project that really drive home its value. Its benefits go beyond global emission reductions and touch the lives of these children left behind, reconnecting them to the world beyond Miaogang village – and showing them the limitless possibilities that are theirs to explore.



At the Yingjing Museum, students learnt how much farther the world stretches beyond Miaogang village – and even beyond China



The virtual reality game was a highlight for many of the students who had little experience of the world outside of their small home village



"I like wearing the big glasses and riding the roller coaster, it's so real. This is my first time – and I want to play it again!"

Luo Chunyan
Miaogang Village Primary School student



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