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## China Today documents story of Weaving a brighter future

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A typical high plateau area, the district of Puge is essentially agricultural, and hosts a concentrated population of minority ethnic groups. According to the national classification the area is categorized as "severely impoverished". But armed with their needles and threads, the women of the village of Deyu have decided to take their destiny in their own hands and have managed to bid farewell to poverty.

For generations, the villagers of Deyu have attempted to cultivate tobacco on their patchy stretches of arable upland, in an effort to eke out a living. However, conditions in the village have remained extremely harsh.

At the end of 2017, Wang Xin was assigned to the position of first secretary of the Party Committee in Deyu Village. After taking up the post, he noticed that many women in the village possessed useful embroidery skills. And since the village is located near a national level 4A tourist site - Luoji Mountain and Jiushijuli Hot Spring Waterfalls - he began to investigate the possibility of using embroidery to boost employment and increase the incomes of poor households.

Yi embroidery, a craft that dates back one thousand years, is listed at national level as an item of intangible cultural heritage, and represents an important carrier of Yi culture. By offering relevant training, the Yi embroidery workshop serves as a channel to preserve traditional culture; it also provides additional skills to poor households which can be practiced at home and at times convenient to the locals.

In March 2019, the village of Deyu established the first professional rural tourism cooperative, which roused the villagers' entrepreneurial spirit and encouraged them to develop the village's collective economy. Since then, a whole range of cultural products and local specialties have emerged. In July 2020, the village of Deyu launched a project to consolidate thematic tourist activities at the foot of the Luoji Mountains.

Yi embroidery is an intangible cultural asset that must be urgently protected and enhanced, especially with the help of the younger generation. But the inhabitants of Deyu village have already taken matters into their own hands, and are busy weaving themselves a brighter and more colorful future.

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