

The Mobility and Identity of Teachers of the Remote and Minority Regions of China

Chi Yao Chen

Abstract

This research article primarily focuses on the factors influencing teachers' mobility and professional identity in rural China. The investigation was conducted through interviews with several remote teachers and students, followed by a summary of their key findings and concerns. The main discovery from the research identifies four major components affecting teacher mobility and identity, including economic development, the subtle connections between remote areas and the educational resources of other regions in China, personal pursuit and village environment, and the mentality of dedicating to remote education.

Keywords: Remote Teachers, Teacher's Identity, Remote/Rural Education, Mobility

Introduction

I.1 Big picture of the social phenomenon of remote areas and minority regions (MRF) of China

In modern China, the minority regions are places filled with distinct cultures and heritage (Here, the minority regions are counties, cities, or provinces with many people not part of the mainstream Han ethnicity. There are an estimated 56 ethnic groups in China). For example, a lot of them have their own dialect and clothing. In addition, their peculiar livelihood and community structure have also formed who they are. However, their living inside their world drifts and disjoints them away from mainstream society.

Furthermore, the remote areas of China usually have less developed infrastructure, including a lack of hospitals, low living conditions, etc. The poor transportation system and precipitous geographical locations frequently cause inconveniences. Also, compared to big cities like

Shanghai and Beijing, primary sectors dominate those regions instead of tertiary sectors, causing them to have a bleak economic outlook. Consequently, these factors lead to comparatively weak education development in the MRF.

I.2 Teachers in MRF regions of China

When it comes to education, teachers are an indispensable component. According to the Journal of Xinyang Normal University, based on data collected from 540 surveys answered by teachers with an average age of 35.48 years old, nearly half of the current teachers would not continue their careers as a teacher if there were better job opportunities (Yang & Zhao, 2021). By observing this data, two connected problems emerge: Lack of satisfaction of the teachers in rural areas for their job causing mobility of teachers. Teachers' frequent and long-term mobility causes unstableness in the educational system, which may be an essential factor that causes the gap between students' academic performance between developed cities and the MRF regions.

Although the Chinese office of the state council has executed the Rural Teacher Support Program from 2015 to 2020 (China State Council, 2015), and the general state has been improving, the mobility problem of teachers still exists. This problem is critical in China, as it already attracts the attention of the Chinese government; so this research paper will guide you through the possible reasons causing this issue, some firsthand data collected, and finally, some attainable solutions to improve the situation.

I.3 General State of Xi-Chang City

China is a huge country so this research will focus on a county-level city in a mountainous region in the South of Sichuan province- Xi Chang. Xi Chang City is an autonomous Yi ethnic-dominated region, covering about 2882.9 square kilometers and an estimated 966,000 population. In terms of education, the city has 342 schools including all levels; around 10,000 teachers across different fields and statuses; along with about 200,000 students. The city's GDP is around 92 billion US dollars, with a 5% increase compared to 2022 (Xichang gov, 2023).

Literature Review

I.4 Research on education for minor ethnic regions in China

According to the “research on ethnic education” in 2019, Professor Wan-Ming-Gang from Northwest Normal University stated that although there is a great improvement in terms of the penetration rate of

compulsory education (9 years) in the minority regions in China, the average quality of education in those regions are still lower than education in developed cities. In addition, due to the severe deficiency of educational resources and quality of teachers, English lessons and science-based subjects become a disadvantage for these students. Due to this social phenomenon, a lot of minority ethnic students choose to major and work in the humanities; however, these minority regions need more STEM-based workers to develop their technology.

Another major problem is the language and life experience. In the minor ethnic areas, people still use their dialect more often than Mandarin. Meanwhile, the educational resources made by the Ministry of Education of China are written in Chinese. After careful consideration, he finds out that the language barrier is the biggest conflict regarding education for minor ethnic children. In addition, a lot of life experience in cities might not be the same for rural areas. For example, the skyscrapers written in Chinese textbooks are unfamiliar to these children, as they haven't seen one before.

Furthermore, he also mentioned the problem of sensitivity to this issue. Professor Wan stated that in modern society, many people have begun to consider minor ethnic education as a “sensitive” topic in academic research. The sensitivity drives several negative consequences: a decline in graduate applicants in the minor ethnic education field, a decline in the funding for research papers on this topic, and educators starting to shift their focus to other fields. He considers that people shouldn't focus and highlight the sensitivity in this field, or else the cascading effects hinder the research on minority ethnic education and discourage ethnic cohesion in China. Ethnic cohesion in this context means integration and the build of connections between different ethnic groups.

I.5 Research on education for remote areas in China

Mr. Zhang-Li-Zhi, the head of the trade union at Xiang Hai School in Jilin province, proposed an article in 2013 about his understanding of the state of education in China's remote districts. At the time, he emphasized the importance of instructor quality and quantity for students. Thus, he goes on to discuss the issue of a shortage of high-quality teachers in rural areas. This results in an influx of less-accomplished teachers with little teaching experience, causing significant challenges in the classroom. Some teachers, for example, swear in front of their students creating a negative influence. He then expresses his concern that if most teachers are

unethical, how can they foster high achievers to compete with pupils from metropolitan cities?

Another contemporary research essay investigating the phenomenon of rural education and quality education is by an undergraduate student Ms. Liu-Zi-Qi from Jilin Normal University in 2022. From a more recent perspective, she mentions that China has made some progress and accomplishments in developing quality education in rural areas, but challenges are still present. One problem is the value of education to parents in remote areas. Since many of the parents there are illiterate or uneducated, a substantial number of them cannot understand how essential education is for development in developing regions. Some even believe that education is worthless, so they make their children quit school and work after middle or primary school.

Another problem is the deficiency of educational funding in remote areas. The lack of school supplies impedes progress, causing inefficient learning. For instance, Liu-Zi-Qi mentions the lack of chemical supplies. This is an issue because some chemistry knowledge needs application to get a more profound understanding. In addition, rural students would be comparatively weaker at applying their knowledge to real life than children from developed cities.

An additional problem is the topic associated with the mobility of rural teachers. She said that China has implemented policies to improve the level of education in remote areas. For instance, “San-Zhi-Yi-Fu” is a policy introduced in 2006 that encourages undergraduate students to teach in remote areas for 2 to 3 years by giving work subsidies and life insurance. However, there are still many young teachers who leave immediately after the contract ends and seek jobs in cities. She explains that a big part of the reason is the lack of confidence in students in rural schools.

I.6 Research on education for remote areas in China
Research related to the mobility of teachers

The problem associated with the mobility of teachers is spotlighted through the continuation of urbanization and the growing economic and educational gap between the major cities and remote areas. The rise of this problem caused many scholars to begin their research and investigation on this issue and find the severity and adequate explanation for the presence of this issue.

Dr. Miao-Chun-Feng, the associate professor of sociology at the Jiangxi University of Finance and Economics, has raised the possible

reasons for the ordinary change in teachers for rural schools in 2008. She indicated that one of the reasons is the multiple obligations imposed on teachers. Unlike in major cities, one educator might have numerous jobs, such as collecting school fees and family planning work. Consequently, it is genuinely hard for the teachers to specialize in teaching if they have to multi-task, resulting in a drop in the quality of education.

Another reason is the “city orientation” concept in that era, even today. In the minds of Chinese people, major cities belong to the wealthier individuals of the country, “the scent of cities makes people liberated”; villages and rural areas are for failures, people with no accomplishments and capability. Due to this, most of the children are not educated in remote areas, as the teachers are desperate to leave the “corner of failures” and work in big cities.

Another piece of research comes from a lecturer at Henan Normal University, Ms. Wei-Qian-Ping, in 2011. Ms. Wei-Qian-Ping found that the outflow of middle and young teachers to developed cities demolished the quality of education in remote areas of China. The village schools resultantly are facing a severe existential crisis.

First, she gave an overview of the status of mobility. She states that the flow of teachers is mostly one-sided; a big flock of teachers move from rural areas to urban districts, and very few do the opposite. In addition, by surveying the teachers who still lecture or have already moved, they are inclined to either go to stable public schools or private schools with higher salaries.

Subsequently, she started to analyze the reasons that cause the mobility of teachers in remote areas. Although the gap between the salary of a remote area and city teacher has become more trivial, there is still a huge gap in terms of fringe benefits between the two places. These include elder insurance, medical insurance, unemployment insurance, etc. The difference between the fringe benefits motivates the one-sided move of teachers from rural areas.

Another possible explanation is the bureaucracy within rural schools. Therefore, when it comes to designating awards for teachers and bonus rewards, teachers with seniority get chosen rather than teachers who did excellent work in teaching; the system is not fair.

Moreover, she states that due to the remote geographical locations, teachers have fewer opportunities to participate in training programs for teachers. This limits the teachers’ ability to self-improve, which encourages ambitious teachers to move to cities, where there are more opportunities for self-development.

Dr. Wang-Yan-Cai, a professor of education at Hainan Normal University in 2014, wrote an article about the reasons for the mobility of teachers in primary and middle schools in Hainan province.

One problem she mentions is the low recognition of teaching as an occupation. This job has longer work hours and higher stress levels than most other jobs, and there is inequality between the actual pay and effort spent at work. Therefore, job satisfaction is low in general. She stated that studies and research have shown that there is low recognition and a sense of identity for this job, and there is quite a lot of desire to change their occupation.

Another issue she mentioned in her article is the low living conditions of rural schools. There are huge flaws in remote schools regarding the standard of living due to the poor conditions of the local region, which include the lack of clean water resources, deficiency of electricity, network issues, and no cafeteria, causing inconvenience for teachers lecturing there. Except for the local teachers or teachers who can't teach in urban schools, it is genuinely hard for other teachers to stay in rural areas for a long period of time. In addition, a questionnaire that investigates the main factor to consider when applying to teach at middle and elementary schools, the standard of living is considered the most important component along with salary.

Finally, the flawed teacher communication mechanism adds another layer of difficulty. In order to become senior teachers of special grade (a title of highly-experienced and qualified teachers in China), the teachers are required to teach in remote areas and share their teaching experience for a year. However, some urban schools are concerned about the downfall of the grades of urban students, caused by the absence of prominent teachers. Resultantly, they are reluctant and sometimes prevent the move of their teachers. Furthermore, some teachers may simply go through this process as an obligation and make little effort to teach kids in rural areas. As a result, schools in isolated regions have few opportunities to improve and develop, which encourages teachers to leave the countryside.

An additional piece of the investigation comes from Dr. Wang-Yan-Ling, a professor of education at Yunnan Normal University written in 2016. She, along with two others, collaborates and writes about their investigation of the mobility of teachers using data collected from high, middle, and elementary school teachers with an age below 35 years old (considered "youth teachers" in China) who came to Yunnan Normal University for training. From the questionnaire, the general trend she found is that almost all (95%) youth teachers once had or always had the

desire to change to other schools or change what they do. Specifically, teachers who just graduated from college or stepped into work have the greatest desire to leave. In addition, elementary school teachers are more inclined to leave than high school teachers.

She then stated a couple of reasons for these social phenomena. It is found that high schools are usually located downtown; on the other hand, elementary schools tend to be built in more isolated regions, and a few are even located right in villages. Hence, teachers in elementary schools must face more challenges in terms of basic infrastructure, increasing their willingness to leave.

Moreover, their family and family life also affect their willingness to move. One question on the survey was to rank the reasons for the desire to leave, and it was shown that, on average, 5 out of the top 10 reasons were family related. Many youth teachers are concerned about the distance they are from their partners and hometowns and want to care for their parents. Accordingly, they would like to find another job or school to teach at that is geographically closer to "home."

Following on from the data collected on the questionnaire, the youth teachers voted "poor personal development prospects" as the most important reason for the move. The "poor personal development prospect" includes the low social status of teachers and lower stability than civil servants. Besides, some teachers even commented on the rigid school systems; they think there are limited opportunities for promotion and that they cannot fully utilize their life values and potential.

Scholar	Influencing factors
Dr. Wan-Ming-Gang, 2019	Reasons for lower quality education for minor ethnic regions than major cities: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Deficiency of educational resources 2. Difference in language and life experience 3. Sensitivity of “ethnic education”
Mr. Zhang-Li-Zhi, 2013	Problem for education in remote areas: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shortage of high-quality teachers 2. Influx of low-quality and unethical tutors
Ms. Liu-Zi-Qi, 2022	Problems and challenges for education in rural areas: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Underestimation of value of education for parents 2. Lack of educational funding 3. Lack of confidence for rural schools -> teachers have strong desires to move to other school
Dr. Miao-Chun-Feng, 2008	Reasons why teachers want to move out of rural schools: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Multiple obligation implemented on teachers 2. Prevail of “city orientation” concept
Ms. Wei-Qian-Ping, 2011	Overview: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. One sided move from rural districts to urban regions for teachers Reasons why teachers want to move out of rural schools: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Huge gap in fringe benefits between two locations 2. Rigged bonus and award system 3. Less training opportunities due to geographic locations
Dr. Wang-Yan-Cai, 2014	Reasons for mobility of Middle and primary school teachers in Hainan: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Low recognition of teacher as a job 2. Low living conditions / Standard of Living
Dr. Wang-Yan-Ling, Su Ping, Yang Xiao, 2016	General trend: Most youth teachers want to teach in other cities or change jobs Reasons for it: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inconvenient and isolate geographic region 2. Family related reasons (partners, parents etc.)

Data Collection & Analysis

I.7 Interviews

(*Note: These are all the interviews made with the local teachers and students, not a representative sample)

Ms. Zhang is a local chemistry teacher who has taught in Xichang’s No.1 middle school for 22 years. She witnessed the rapid development of both

the economy and education in Xichang. For instance, the infrastructure improvement is due to the funds of the Chinese government. Back in the days when Xichang was less developed, local parents left their children to study in the city's local high school. Later, as the economy progresses, parents who have sufficient money send their children to the provincial capital for better educational resources. This resulted in the gradual decline of the accomplishments of local high schools because many of the prominent students who could afford undergraduate education left Xichang City. To alleviate this issue, Ms. Zhang hopes that there could be an influx of highly competent teachers to make parents and students reconsider their decision on whether to leave or not. Local governments have implemented policies and subsidies to attract more highly qualified teachers to come to their high schools in order to entice students to stay. For instance, improving living conditions and transportation systems to elevate convenience. From her perspective, in terms of job opportunities in the local area, she finds a possibility for young people to work in the satellite launching centers, which are the more STEM-based industries. Additionally, a lot of her students have the motive to develop and work in Xichang, either for community service, the improved infrastructure, or simply nostalgia.

From a chemistry teacher's point of view, the school could upgrade its infrastructure and specifically advance scientific equipment. In addition, the school should impose some actions to broaden the view of the students due to poverty. Many high school students may work hard; however, their eventual goals and potential outlook on their future are ambiguous. For wealthier families, students and their parents have discussions and have a clear plan for their future, such as their undergraduate major. However, for poorer families, children tend to have a less oriented future.

Mr. Song graduated from university in 2023 and is from Zhoukou, Henan province. The reason he came to the Crab primary school (name of a local primary school located in a mountainous region) in Liangshan, Sichuan province is due to his desire to contribute to society. Mr. Song thought this job would be a good opportunity to return something to society. He stated that volunteer teaching has appeared in several documentaries, and he is genuinely interested in the job. As a volunteer teacher, he needs help from the school by contacting and reaching out to experienced teachers. Also, most crucially, to spend more time with the local kids and develop a special relationship and a tight bond with the students. In terms of the whole local primary school system, the infrastructure has made substantial accomplishments and progress.

However, the issue of the deficiency in the quantity of volunteer teachers is still present. Many teachers must teach multiple subjects at the same time, which generally reduces the quality of teaching on a single subject.

Ms. Tang is a 23-year-old local teacher who graduated from Xichang Minzu preschool normal college. After graduating in 2022, she came to teach in the Crab primary school. As well as being the director of studies, she is a 4th-grade math teacher. A group of young volunteer teachers came to their school for two months when she was a sixth-grade student. When their bond and relationship started to grow, these teachers left their school, which became something substantial deep in her mind as a child. While she was an undergraduate student, a charity program went to her college to recruit volunteer teachers. This triggered her childhood memory, which motivated her to accomplish her childhood dream. Another reason is that she is from the local region and feels a stronger connection with the kids. She also discussed her decision to become a volunteer teacher with her parents, and her parents support her decision. As a teacher, she states that the quality of her teaching skills should be developed for a better education. Although the school does invite education specialists to communicate with the volunteering teachers, she still perceives that there is a lack of opportunities to communicate with people from other regions.

Additionally, she hopes that she could have a greater chance to connect to the outside world because she barely travels outside of Sichuan province. She believed that by traveling around China and meeting different people and broadening their experience and knowledge, they could bring diverse views to the children.

The Crab primary school had made remarkable progress because of the influx of volunteers and gifts from kind entrepreneurs. Ms. Tang, on the other hand, indicated that some emphasis and support may move to volunteer teachers, as the more advanced and developed the teachers are, the more likely kids are to attain high levels of success. Furthermore, she hopes that the students will have the opportunity to travel and meet people from different backgrounds so that their understanding of society is not restricted to Liangshan.

Principal Zhao, a.k.a. Papa Zhao, joined the Crab primary school in 2018 and worked in Shenzhen for 20 years. He decided to work in the primary school since both his partner and his parents work as teachers, and he heard that students from rural areas need help with education. His initiative to work as a volunteer teacher is the notion of exploring natural environments. Most remote schools are in the mountains, away from the metropolitan cities. He was also inspired by his elder friends, who told

him to live for a meaning, so he thought that being a volunteer teacher would be a good idea. Throughout the seven years of volunteering teaching, he found that he made vast self-improvement. For example, he found the purity of children, which was something he hadn't seen for many years. His life has become simpler, and he doesn't have to deal with the complicated relationships with workmates in big cities. He also began to contemplate the essence of education and whether the local students needed their help, not limiting it to the knowledge imprinted on textbooks.

In recent years, their school has attracted a greater amount of highly qualified teachers from all over China, especially teachers who recognize the potential of rural areas. The school has also received many essential supplies and materials that are rewarded for the accomplishments and progress the children have made.

Additionally, ten random grade 11 students from Xichang No.1 Middle School were also interviewed, and it is shown that they have a vast range of aspirations. Among them, three students expressed a desire to become teachers, one student hoped to pursue a career as a programmer, another aimed to become an herbalist doctor, while one student was interested in becoming an aerodynamic investigator. Being a psychologist also attracted one student, and another aspired to join the police force. Many of the students shared common dreams of traveling across China, with specific interest in places like Shanghai and Xizang, while others were passionate about giving back to their hometowns, with the goal of volunteering as teachers. When asked about their dream schools, the students chose Sichuan normal university, Sichuan minzu university, and Sichuan university, citing their connection to the region. The students also expressed admiration for teachers who were active, strict yet humorous, and particularly those from Liangshan, Sichuan, as they felt a deeper connection with their shared background.

I.8 Factors influencing the mobility and identity of teachers

Many ideas were explored through the interview process, mainly including the different reasons for teachers or potential future teachers to teach in remote areas. These ideas have been refined into four main reasons: the economic situation, the connection between outside educational resources and rural regions, the desire to devote to remote education, also any other personal pursuits, and the nature of village schools.

First, the local economic situation affects remote education, including a drop in the amount and quality of education resources in remote locations, a diversity of children's desired occupations, and infrastructural improvement. As Ms. Zhang stated, as local economies improve, many

parents with sufficient financial resources send their children to larger cities for a high-quality education. As a result of this situation, the most successful students in rural areas disappear. As these children leave, teachers lose faith in rural education, resulting in a decline in overall achievement. Furthermore, economic expansion and technical advancement broadened job opportunities, allowing pupils to pursue a diverse range of dream careers. Furthermore, as the economy grows and income inequality increases, the government begins to emphasize rural education. Furthermore, society has raised awareness of the issue, and prosperous entrepreneurs or industrialists sponsor remote schools, thereby strengthening the overall infrastructure of village schools, according to Ms. Zhang. The financial state has always been an important issue for teachers to consider when working and developed cities are likely to remain a desirable option.

Second, the sharing and connection between remote places and outer educational resources has an impact on the mobility and recognition of rural teachers. Ms. Tang from Crab Primary School emphasized a wish to become more acquainted with the outside world so that, as teachers, they could provide a broader perspective to their children. Her hope implies a social phenomenon: distant locations in China are typically more isolated and sealed. However, this problem is being addressed in a variety of ways, including raising awareness of remote teachers and education online, as well as collecting funding from various members of society. Additionally, it is appealing to professors from prominent universities to introduce majors in distant high schools. The relationship benefits teachers by providing them with a variety of self-improvement tips and opportunities to gain new experiences.

Third, the idea of devoting to remote education encourages teachers to work in villages. The shortage of instructors in rural areas has existed for many years, and it has been demonstrated through a variety of channels, such as Mr. Song, who stated that he became aware of this issue while watching a documentary series. In addition, several teachers came to help students change their everyday routines and skills, such as personal hygiene and traffic light knowledge. Many schools noticed this issue, including the principal of Crab primary school, Mr. Zhao, who expressed concern over the rural children's life education. This is due to the unsanitary conditions in the mountains. Many ambitious and altruistic individuals want to make a meaningful contribution to society. Thus, they choose to teach rural children.

Last but not least, personal pursuits and the nature of village schools impact the mobility of teachers. One crucial factor is the support obtained by one's family, which sometimes gives someone a greater sense of confidence. This may confirm someone's decision to become a teacher. Additionally, both Ms. Jiang and Mr. Zhao stated that they wanted to leave metropolitan cities because they were attracted to the natural environment of the villages and the naive children. The simplicity of life can be more appealing than the intricate interpersonal problems one must face sitting in an office.

I.9 Potential solutions for concerns of rural teachers

As modern technology continues to thrive and enhance daily life convenience, remote schools could begin leveraging it to improve rural education.

In section I.8, the lack of educational resource exchange remains an ongoing challenge for remote regions. This issue could potentially be resolved by establishing online connections with schools from other provinces and arranging regular virtual meetings to share teaching experiences, thereby saving time and travel costs. They could also make students from urban and rural schools cooperate such as working on joint STEM projects, and exposing rural students to broader perspectives. Additionally, schools could incorporate AI tools such as ChatGPT or Gemini to evaluate individual student performance. These tools can provide teachers with valuable insights into students' weaknesses, helping them address knowledge gaps more effectively. Students should also be taught about the presence of AI technology and their common uses, so they can use them effectively and appropriately to help with their studies.

Lesson materials and textbooks, although essential, often impose a significant financial burden on schools, reducing budgets for other critical areas such as food or infrastructure. However, many of these educational resources are now available online for free or through e-book platforms, where they are offered at more affordable prices. In addition, the lack of certain lab materials crucial for STEM subjects could be addressed through online scientific experiment platforms such as Labster or PhET Interactive Simulations. These platforms allow students to conduct virtual experiments and gain a deeper understanding of the concepts behind the experiments. This shift could help alleviate the financial strain on schools while ensuring access to high-quality learning materials.

Summary & Conclusion

Throughout the literature review, there are a few investigations: There is still a significant gap between urban and rural education. Although the situation has improved over time, a lack of educational resources remains in many distant places in China. These issues are attributed to a lack of financial resources and insufficient confidence as a result of several negative preconceptions about remote education. Aside from this issue, there are numerous challenges, such as the underestimation of education, which is embedded in the minds of many Chinese countryside families, and the one-way flow of teachers from rural areas to big cities due to poor infrastructure, remote geographical locations, and poor living conditions.

There are also several discoveries after interviewing teachers from the Xichang No. 1 middle school and the Crab primary school. From a macro view, four components influence the mobility and identity of rural teachers: personal pursuit, natural environment, which includes whether their family supports them or not, and preference for the natural environment. Additionally, a teacher's choice is significantly influenced by economic development. Some teachers emphasized the living conditions and the financial state of different regions. Also, how economic development impacts the diversity of occupations and, surprisingly, how it leads to attrition of the local education resource. Moreover, connections between remote areas and other regions in China are considered essential to some teachers, as they want to improve their teaching quality and desire more training opportunities. Finally, the mentality of devoting themselves to rural education is in some teachers' minds at different periods in life. The motivation to contribute to society became a factor that made many teachers decide to teach in less developed towns.

In contemporary society, the significant disparities between rural and urban education remain an unresolved issue. Many teachers still have prejudice, perceiving rural children as individuals of lesser potential than pupils from big cities. Nevertheless, there are still passionate and aspiring individuals who are willing to move from metropolitan areas to remote regions to educate these children. For many impoverished families, education is the only path for their children to succeed and break free from poverty. Countries must raise awareness of this issue and take concrete action to bring more possibilities to the lives of these children.

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