



Guizhou “Village Super League”: A Journey to Rongjiang

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From November 8 to 11, 2025, members of the International Association for Popular Cooperation (IAPC) joined a research delegation organized by the Global South Academic Forum (GSAF) to visit Rongjiang County, Qiandongnan Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture, Guizhou Province. This small town, which skyrocketed to fame due to the “Village Super League” (Cun Chao), has attracted scholars and social activists from home and abroad. They all share a common curiosity: What exactly is “Cun Chao”? And how did a single football use its leverage to pivot the development of an entire county, spreading from rural China to the global stage?

An Overview of Rongjiang and “Cun Chao”

Located in southeastern Guizhou, Rongjiang County sits on the watershed of the Pearl River and Yangtze River systems. Positioned at the junction of Hunan, Guizhou, and Guangxi, has historically been known as the “key to Southeastern Guizhou.” The county spans 3,316 square kilometers with a population of 385,000, where ethnic minorities (including the Miao, Dong, Shui, and Yao) account for 83.9% of the total population.



¹Formerly a key county for national poverty alleviation, Rongjiang successfully lifted itself out of poverty by late 2020 and is now a focal point for national rural revitalization. However, its geography, characterized by "eight parts mountain, one part water, and one part farmland", has historically hindered large-scale agriculture and industrial layout.



Aerial view of Rongjiang (Source: Eyes on the World)

Since going viral in 2023, Rongjiang "Cun Chao" has centered itself on the core philosophy of "organized by the people, shared by all," creating a model for international outreach through the deep integration of sports, culture, and tourism.

"Cun Chao," officially the Rongjiang (Sanbao Dong Village) Harmonious Countryside Football Super League is a grassroots event. Known as the "Village FA" by netizens, it has become a landmark brand for Chinese rural sports and tourism. It is defined by three key characteristics:

1. **Grassroots Ownership:** Organized by villagers, teams represent individual villages. Players include farmers, vendors, and teachers. Residents lead everything from operations to referee selection.
2. **Cultural Fusion:** Football serves as a medium for ethnic heritage. Halftime shows feature Dong Grand Choral songs and Miao silver jewelry dances. Prizes consist of local products like yellow cattle and black-haired pigs, while the sidelines are lined with batik and silver craft stalls.
3. **Shared Prosperity:** The "traffic" generated by the event is shared by all, boosting the collective economy, promoting local products, and creating flexible employment.

¹ Official Website of Rongjiang County People's Government, An Introduction to Rongjiang County: https://www.rongjiang.gov.cn/zjrj_5903491/rjjj/



Scene of Guizhou Village Super League (Source: Official Website of Guizhou Village Super League)



Ethnic cultural performance at the Village Super League opening ceremony (Source: Official Website of Guizhou Village Super League)

Visiting Recording

On the morning of November 10, the IAPC team visited Yuezhai Village in Guizhou Town. At the village entrance, the "Yuezhai Niangniang Group" (an agricultural cooperative formed by local middle-aged and elderly women) greeted the team in vibrant Dong embroidered attire, offering handmade sticky rice, red eggs, and hand-stitched insoles.

At the livestreaming base, village officials shared their "Dang-led + Villager Autonomy" governance model, where the local Party branch provides the infrastructure and technical training that empower residents to lead their own development. A vivid case is the "Niangniang Group", a circle of women who once spent their days primarily on domestic chores but have now evolved into skilled new media influencers. Supported by government-led digital workshops, they began marketing local navel oranges to a national audience. This shift perfectly illustrates the rural digital transformation, where "smartphones serve as the new farm tools, and livestreaming is the new farm work." Their journey highlights the indispensable role of women in Guizhou's ethnic communities, as they master modern e-commerce while continuing to anchor their



families and traditions, balancing everything from childcare and cultural performances to flood relief efforts.

When asked why Cun Chao attracts such diverse participation, the locals gave a consistent answer: "Cun Chao belongs to the people; it comes from the people and goes to the people".



Group photo of the research delegation with the local female livestreaming team, the "Yuezhai Niangniang Group" (Source: GSAF)



The Yuezhai Niangniang Group livestreaming on-site (Source: IAPC)

At the Rongjiang New Media Industrial Park and the Cun Chao History Museum, we saw how new media and sports have activated county-level development. The museum displays a focus on patriotism, local heritage, and the "Cun Chao Story," illustrating how a single town and its people united with one goal to pave a new path forward—enhancing both spiritual life and local governance.



A corner of the Village Super League History Museum (Source: IAPC)

In the afternoon at Toutang Village, the "Southern Commune" (南方公社) and the "Fieldwork China Workshop" (田野中国工作坊) were inaugurated. Experts from the Global South gathered to discuss rural revitalization and international communication. The launch of the book *Cun Chao in My Eyes* and a documentary premiere further revealed the heart of the movement: it is more than a game; it is a spark for rural development.



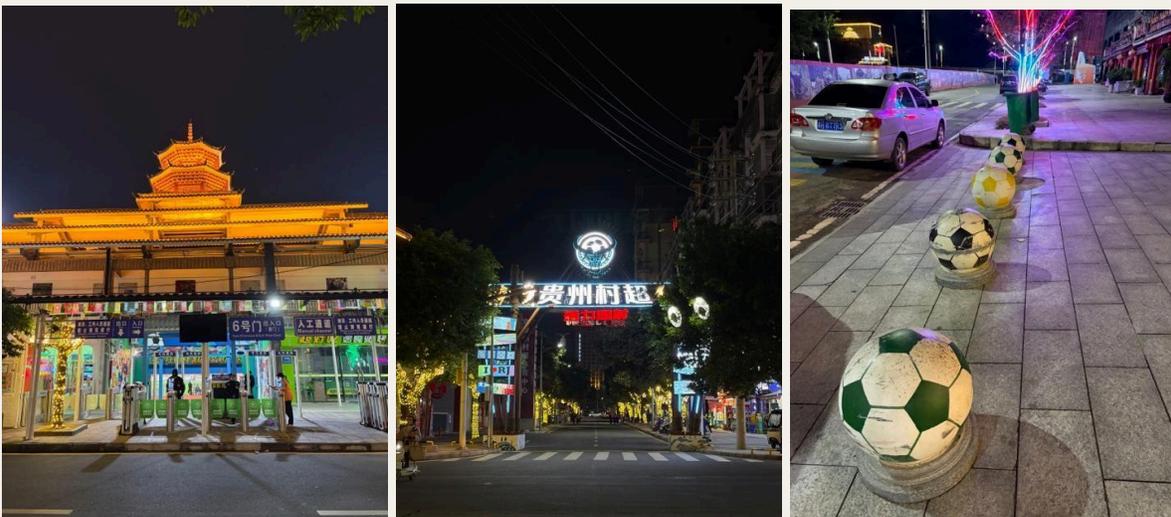
Group photo at the workshop (Source: Global South Academic Forum)

On November 11, the team visited Lexiang Village in Zhongcheng Town to observe the application of AI technology in rural industry, governance, and public services. Surprisingly, AI has been deeply integrated into daily life even in this remote village. Officials explained that the "traffic dividend" from *Cun Chao* is being converted into development momentum through technology. A Brazilian guest noted that this "tech-down-to-the-countryside" model offers a practical reference for Brazil's own rural digital transformation.



The Village Super League stadium at 11 PM (Source: IAPC)

Today, Rongjiang is no longer just a tourist destination. It is a blueprint for returning sports to their essence, revitalizing culture, and bringing prosperity to the countryside. If Cun Chao is the "business card" of Rongjiang, then behind that card lie the villagers' passion, the innovation of tradition, and the infinite possibilities of rural revitalization.



Village Super League elements can be seen everywhere. (Source: IAPC)

By connecting with the world through international exchange, Rongjiang is using a "small football" to move "big development," ensuring the long-term sustainability of rural growth.