



## RETURN MIGRATION AND HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL AREAS: EUROPEAN EXPERIENCE AND CHINESE PRACTICE

Liu Zhaoyang<sup>1</sup>  
Samuel Esteban Rodríguez<sup>2</sup>

### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** The purpose of this study is to explore and propose strategies to promote the return of rural population and effective human resource development in China, and to learn from the successful experience of European countries, especially their education and training systems, social security mechanisms, characteristic industries and infrastructure construction, in order to facilitate the implementation of the rural revitalization strategy.

**Theoretical framework:** Based on literature review, SWOT analysis, and international comparative research methods, this study builds a theoretical framework to identify the key elements of rural population return and human resource development, including vocational education and training, social security system, the cultivation of characteristic industries, the construction of infrastructure, etc., and reveals the similarities and differences between China and Europe in these fields through comparative analysis.

**Design/Methods/Approach:** Adopt a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods, firstly, through an extensive literature review to build a theoretical foundation; Second, data from official and international agencies are used for quantitative analysis, including processing and visualizing data on rural residents' incomes, investment in education, and population structure. Subsequently, SWOT analysis was used to assess the current state of human resource development in China's rural areas. Finally, the data obtained are exhaustively analysed, combined with European cases and specific strategic suggestions are proposed.

**Significance:** The results of this study will provide a comprehensive strategic framework for human resource development in China's rural areas, emphasizing the implementation of multidimensional strategies such as optimizing investment in education, vocational training, and improving the social security system, which is of great practical importance to promote the healthy return of rural people and promote the sustainable development of the economy and economy. rural society. The proposed strategies can not only guide policy-making, but also provide a scientific basis for the development path of rural areas.

**Keywords:** Population Return, Rural Human Resource Development, Rural Revitalization Strategy.

### MIGRACIÓN DE RETORNO Y DESARROLLO DE RECURSOS HUMANOS EN ZONAS RURALES: EXPERIENCIA EUROPEA Y PRÁCTICA CHINA

### RESUMO

**Objetivo:** El propósito de este estudio es explorar y proponer estrategias para promover el retorno de la población rural y el desarrollo efectivo de los recursos humanos en China, y aprender de la experiencia exitosa de los países europeos, especialmente sus sistemas de educación y capacitación, mecanismos de seguridad social, industrias características y construcción de infraestructura, con el fin de facilitar la implementación de la estrategia de revitalización rural.

**Marco teórico:** basado en una revisión de la literatura, un análisis FODA y métodos de investigación comparativos internacionales, este estudio construye un marco teórico para identificar los elementos clave del retorno de la población rural y el desarrollo de los recursos humanos, incluida la educación y capacitación vocacional, el sistema

<sup>1</sup> Universidad de Zaragoza, España. E-mail: [867767@unizar.es](mailto:867767@unizar.es) Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-2387-3773>

<sup>2</sup> Universidad de Zaragoza, España. Ministerio de Geografía y Ordenación del Territorio. Instituto de Ciencias Ambientales de la Universidad de Aragón IUCA. E-mail: [sestebanr@unizar.es](mailto:sestebanr@unizar.es)  
Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5282-1930>



de seguridad social, el cultivo de industrias características, construcción de infraestructuras, etc., y revela las similitudes y diferencias entre China y Europa en estos campos a través de un análisis comparativo.

**Diseño/Métodos/Enfoque:** Adoptar una combinación de métodos de investigación cualitativos y cuantitativos, en primer lugar, a través de una revisión extensa de la literatura para construir una base teórica; En segundo lugar, los datos de agencias oficiales e internacionales se utilizan para análisis cuantitativos, incluido el procesamiento y visualización de datos sobre los ingresos de los residentes rurales, la inversión en educación y la estructura de la población. Posteriormente, se utilizó el análisis FODA para evaluar el estado actual del desarrollo de los recursos humanos en las zonas rurales de China. Finalmente, se analizan exhaustivamente los datos obtenidos, se combinan con casos europeos y se proponen sugerencias estratégicas específicas.

**Importancia:** Los resultados de este estudio proporcionarán un marco estratégico integral para el desarrollo de recursos humanos en las áreas rurales de China, enfatizando la implementación de estrategias multidimensionales como optimizar la inversión en educación, capacitación vocacional y mejorar el sistema de seguridad social, lo cual es de gran utilidad práctica. importancia para promover el retorno saludable de la población rural y promover el desarrollo sostenible de la economía y la economía. sociedad rural. Las estrategias propuestas no sólo pueden guiar la formulación de políticas, sino también proporcionar una base científica para el camino del desarrollo de las zonas rurales.

**Palabras clave:** Retorno de la Población, Desarrollo de Recursos Humanos Rurales, Estrategia de Revitalización Rural.

## **RETORNO DE LA POBLACIÓN Y DESARROLLO DE LOS RECURSOS HUMANOS RURALES: LA EXPERIENCIA EUROPEA Y LA PRÁCTICA CHINA**

### **RESUMEN**

**Objetivo:** El propósito de este estudio es explorar y proponer estrategias para promover el retorno de la población rural y el desarrollo efectivo de los recursos humanos en China, y aprender de la experiencia exitosa de los países europeos, especialmente sus sistemas de educación y capacitación, mecanismos de seguridad social, industrias características y construcción de infraestructura, a fin de facilitar la implementación de la estrategia de revitalización rural.

**Marco teórico:** Sobre la base de la revisión de la literatura, el análisis SWOT y los métodos de investigación comparativa internacional, este estudio construye un marco teórico para identificar los elementos clave del retorno de la población rural y el desarrollo de los recursos humanos, incluida la educación y la formación profesional, el sistema de seguridad social, el cultivo de industrias características, la construcción de infraestructura, etc., y revela las similitudes y diferencias entre China y Europa en estos campos a través del análisis comparativo.

**Diseño/Métodos/Enfoque:** Adoptar una combinación de métodos de investigación cualitativos y cuantitativos, en primer lugar, a través de una extensa revisión de la literatura para construir una base teórica; En segundo lugar, los datos de organismos oficiales e internacionales se utilizan para el análisis cuantitativo, incluido el procesamiento y la visualización de datos sobre los ingresos de los residentes rurales, la inversión en educación y la estructura de la población. Posteriormente, se utilizó el análisis SWOT para evaluar la situación actual del desarrollo de los recursos humanos en las zonas rurales de China. Finalmente, se analizan exhaustivamente los datos obtenidos, se combinan con casos europeos y se proponen sugerencias estratégicas específicas.

**Importancia:** Los resultados de este estudio proporcionarán un marco estratégico integral para el desarrollo de los recursos humanos en las zonas rurales de China, haciendo hincapié en la aplicación de estrategias multidimensionales como la optimización de la inversión en educación, la formación profesional y la mejora del sistema de seguridad social, que es de gran importancia práctica para promover el retorno saludable de la población rural y promover el desarrollo sostenible de la economía y la sociedad rurales. Las estrategias propuestas no sólo pueden orientar la formulación de políticas, sino también proporcionar una base científica para el camino de desarrollo de las zonas rurales.

**Palabras clave:** Retorno de la Población, Desarrollo de los Recursos Humanos Rurales, Estrategia de Revitalización Rural.



RGSA adota a Licença de Atribuição CC BY do Creative Commons (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).



## 1 INTRODUCTION

In the current wave of globalization and rapid urbanization, rural China faces unprecedented challenges and opportunities. With the acceleration of industrialization, large numbers of rural workers have flocked to cities in search of larger space for employment and development, leading to the widespread problem of population loss in rural areas, that is, to the "rural exodus"<sup>3</sup> (Dai, Zhu, 2023). The decline in the rural population not only weakens the stability of the rural social structure, but also directly affects agricultural production, the vitality of the economy. rural and the continuation of traditional culture, which has become a key problem that must be urgently resolved in the process of promoting the rural revitalization strategy. The Rural Revitalization Strategy, as an important deployment to solve the "three rural problems" and promote the integrated development of urban and rural areas in China's new era, aims to activate the potential of rural development, improve the quality of farmers' lives and realize the vision of strong agriculture, beautiful countryside and rich farmers through a series of comprehensive measures. Faced with the challenges posed by the loss of rural population, how to effectively promote the return of population and harness and cultivate rural human resources has become one of the fundamental issues in the implementation of the rural revitalization strategy. In this context, it is particularly important to learn from international experience, especially from Europe's successful practices in the areas of rural population return and human resource development. Rural Europe, faced with population loss, has launched various strategies to attract talent and promote social progress. These regions focus on improving education and training systems (Mehmet, Guney, Celbis, 2022) (Svetlana, Georgievna, Golovina, et al., 2021), supporting innovation and entrepreneurship (Julia, Weiß, , Christin, Heinz-Fischer., 2022), strengthening social security mechanisms and developing public infrastructure and services (Ingrid, Kofler., etc.),2020. By addressing the challenges of labor market shortages, population aging and highly skilled migration, these regions aim to improve their talent attraction and competitiveness in Europe (Thomas, Dax., Michael, Fischer, 2018). Through these efforts, rural areas seek to diversify their economies, create jobs, and

---

<sup>3</sup> The rural exodus or peasant exodus refers to the emigration, generally of young people (adolescents and young adults) from the countryside to the city.



improve overall patterns of well-being. By adopting multidimensional policies that take into account education, entrepreneurship, social welfare and infrastructure development, rural Europe strives to reverse demographic decline and promote sustainable growth and progress. These experiences provide valuable inspiration and models for China's rural revitalization strategy.

Therefore, this study aims to explore the specific strategies of rural repatriation and human resource development in Europe, analyze their success factors, and explore how to localize these international experiences in light of the real situation of rural areas in China, in order to provide practical paths and strategies for China's rural revitalization strategy. Through comparative analysis, this study hopes to provide theoretical support and practical guidance to solve the problem of rural population loss in China, optimize the allocation of human resources and promote the all-round development of rural economy and society, and promote the transformation, improvement and sustainable development of rural China under new historical conditions.

## **2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1 TENDENCIAS DE LA MOVILIDAD DE LA POBLACIÓN RURAL**

Many domestic and foreign studies have shown that the trend of rural population flow is closely related to the economic development and urbanization process of the country. After the reform, China's rural workforce migrated to urban areas in search of better opportunities. Social protection for migrant workers has gradually improved, but challenges remain (Tobias, ten, Brink, 2022). Despite differences in historical contexts and mechanisms, European countries are witnessing a significant trend of rural-urban migration. This phenomenon has been observed in several regions of Europe, with factors such as quality of life migration, countercultural movements and economic opportunities influencing rural-urban migration patterns (Doris, Schmied, 2022). In recent years, with the reduction of the gap between urban and rural areas and the promotion of rural revitalization policies, the phenomenon of rural population return has begun to occur in some countries and regions, providing a new perspective for the study of dynamic changes in the flow of rural population.



## 2.2 HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

As the main driving force of rural development, extensive attention has been paid to human resource development. Strengthening rural vocational education is essential for China's rural revitalization, correcting outdated concepts, and integrating industry and education to meet the needs of economic and social development. (Zhao, Zhe, 2023), In China, the key to rural revitalization lies in the revitalization of talents, and it is necessary to put the development of rural human capital in the first place, increase investment in rural human capital, and continuously improve the physical fitness, knowledge level and technical ability of rural residents, so that rural residents can efficiently accept new policies, new technologies, new ideas and new business opportunities (Li Lili, Yu Jian et al., 2021) . The European experience focuses on the development of lifelong education systems and the improvement of professional skills and innovation of farmers through platforms such as cooperatives and agricultural education centers.

## 2.3 DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES IN THE RURAL REVITALIZATION STRATEGY

The Rural Revitalization Strategy (hereinafter referred to as the "Strategy") is an important national strategy proposed by China to comprehensively promote the modernization of agriculture and rural areas and solve the "three rural problems", in which development of rural human resources is a key component to achieving the goal of rural revitalization.

Improving the Quality and Skills of Rural Labor: Views of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council on the Implementation of the Rural Revitalization Strategy<sup>4</sup> (hereinafter referred to as the "Opinions") pointed out that it is necessary to give priority to the development of rural education and promote the balanced development of urban and rural areas, the overall progress and integration of urban and rural areas. As a powerful weapon to close the gap between urban and rural education and achieve educational equity, the modernization of rural vocational education is the value purpose of

---

<sup>4</sup>See the "Opinions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council on the Implementation of the Rural Revitalization Strategy", which is the 20th since the reform and opening up and the 15th since the new century to guide the work of the document Central No. 1 of the "three rural areas", which has carried out extensive deployment for the application of the rural revitalization strategy. On January 2, 2018, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council issued the "Opinions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council on the Implementation of the Rural Revitalization Strategy", which entered effective January 2, 2018.



coordinating the balance of urban and rural educational resources. The modernization of rural vocational education has swept away a series of information-based educational methods such as "Internet+" to establish itself in rural vocational education, and the public welfare education road built will effectively reduce the gap between cities and villages and expand the extent of rural vocational education talent training.

Promote the return and introduction of talents: In order to address the problem of rural population flight, the strategy encourages and supports migrant workers, university students, veterans, etc., to return to their cities of origin to start businesses, and provides business guidance, financial subsidies, tax incentives and other policy supports to attract talents to return to rural areas and activate the vitality of the rural economy. At the same time, through the establishment of a talent introduction mechanism, we will attract urban professionals and technicians to work in rural areas, so as to contribute fresh blood to rural development.

In recent years, with the advancement of urbanization, young people with higher educational qualifications have been migrating to cities and towns, the aging of the rural population is intensifying, the overall quality of farmers is not high, and the rate of Rural illiteracy has even increased in some years. According to the "Yearbook of Population and Employment Statistics of China"<sup>5</sup> According to the data provided, from 2013 to 2016, the proportion of illiterates aged 15 years and older in rural areas increased from 7.21% to 8.58%, of which the female illiteracy rate increased from 10.43 % to 12.53%, and in 2018 it increased slightly compared to the previous year. To this end, it is necessary to put the acceleration of peasant modernization on the important agenda, strengthen the training and continuous education of farmers in multiple ways, improve the scientific and cultural literacy of peasants in a comprehensive manner, and vigorously advocate for the construction of a rural learning society that meets the needs of agricultural and rural modernization and digital transformation (Li Zhou, Wen Tiejun et al., 2021). Emphasis is placed on establishing a talent team of various levels and types, including cultivating rural governance talents, agricultural technology experts, rural medical and education workers, etc., to form a strong talent base to support rural revitalization. By establishing rural talent pools, the allocation of human resources will be optimized to ensure the rational distribution and efficient use of talents in rural areas.

---

<sup>5</sup> " China Population and Employment Statistics Yearbook" is an informative annual magazine that comprehensively reflects the population and employment situation of China, the book is divided into eight parts, the book collects the main data of population statistics and employment of the entire country and provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the central government, and aggregates relevant data from some countries and regions of the world.





Promote the professionalization of farmers: encourage and support farmers to develop in the direction of professionalism and specialization, improve the social status and professional honor of farmers through certification systems, evaluation of professional titles, etc., and promote the transformation of farmers' identity. At the same time, we should develop new agricultural business entities, such as farmer cooperatives and family farms, to provide farmers with more space for career advancement and income channels.

Strengthen the construction of rural social security system: Improve the rural social security system, including endowment insurance, health insurance, minimum life security, etc., to alleviate the worries of farmers and improve the capacity of rural areas to attract and retain talent. By providing a good living and development environment, rural areas will become fertile ground for talented people to stay and develop.

Reshaping culture and values: The rural revitalization strategy also attaches importance to the reshaping of rural culture and values, and cultivates the collectivist spirit and awareness of innovation and entrepreneurship of villagers by promoting excellent culture traditional, the stimulation of the internal motivation of self-development of farmers and the formation of good rural social custom.

## 2.4 EUROPEAN EXPERIENCE IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The experience of rural development in Europe has provided the world with many valuable lessons to promote the return of people and the development of human resources: LEADER <sup>6</sup> This approach features particularly prominently as a key component of EU rural development policy.

### 2.4.1 LEADER (Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale)

This is a bottom-up development strategy that encourages residents, businesses and local organizations in rural areas to participate in the decision-making process and to design and implement integrated development projects that adapt to local characteristics.

---

<sup>6</sup>The LEADER approach is a community-driven bottom-up development strategy, LEADER (Liaison Entre Actinos de Développement de l'Économie Rurale), which has been introduced by the European Union since 1991 to promote integrated development in rural areas through local action groups (LAGs). This approach encourages local communities to design and implement innovative projects that balance economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection, based on their own characteristics and needs.



## **2.4.2 Community-driven development with LEADER at its core Local Action Teams (LAGs)**

The LEADER approach ensures that the planning and execution of projects are closer to the real needs and potential of rural communities through the creation of LAGs composed of representatives of local governments, businesses, civil society and citizens, and improves community autonomy and participation.

**Diversified project implementation:** These projects cover various fields, such as agricultural innovation, tourism development, ecological protection, cultural heritage, and support for small and micro-enterprises, which not only promote the diversification of the rural economy, but also They also improve the attractiveness of rural areas and the quality of life of residents.

**Promoting the return to rural integration:** By creating new jobs and improving the quality of life, the LEADER program indirectly promotes the return of the rural population, especially by attracting young people and professionals to the countryside, helping to alleviate the problem of aging. the population.

## **2.4.3 Implications for rural development in Germany**

**Land consolidation and village regeneration:** Through careful land management and village renewal programs, Germany has not only optimized the use of agricultural land, but also improved the living environment of rural residents, making it more livable and attractive.

**Nature conservation and rural-urban integration:** While conserving natural resources, the German countryside actively promotes urban-rural integration, reducing the gap between urban and rural areas by improving transport connections and public services, and achieving complementary functions between urban and rural areas.

**Endogenous development:** The endogenous development model of the German countryside emphasizes the improvement of spatial quality and the exploration of local characteristics on the existing basis, which finds a new development direction and role for the countryside and promotes the restoration of rural vitality.

After World War II, Germany's rural development has undergone more than half a century of evolution, and changes in industrial structure and cultivation mode have gradually developed the function of the countryside from food production to meeting the needs of ecology, culture, leisure and tourism. Since the beginning of the 21st century, the structural adjustment





of the industrial structure in rural Germany has triggered the reconstruction of rural functions, and at the same time, the structural changes of the population have been superimposed, resulting in the general contraction and low vitality of the field. In the context of the comprehensive completion of the construction of hardware infrastructure, the current approach of German countryside renewal is to focus on endogenous development (Innenentwicklung) to improve the quality of space and seek new functional positioning and roles in the reconstruction process of urban and rural function. The resulting new round of rural revitalization in Germany is considered one of the important tasks in promoting the equivalence of urban and rural living conditions, which involves all aspects of rural life and production, and is also closely linked to the goal of sustainable renewal, injecting new vitality into the role of the countryside in urban-rural relations (Lingyan, Q., Liang, G., & Li, Z, 2020).

#### **2.4.4 The prominence of agritourism and organic farming in France**

Development of characteristic industries: Through the development of agritourism and organic farming, France has not only protected the ecological environment of rural areas, but also added new growth points to the rural economy and provided abundant employment opportunities.

Support of the EU Common Agricultural Policy: These developments in rural France are supported by the CAP, which encourages the versatility of agriculture and promotes the diversification and sustainability of the rural economy.

#### **2.4.5 Political support and integration of resources at EU level**

Continuous adaptation of the CAP: The continuous adaptation of the Common Agricultural Policy reflects the EU's sensitivity to rural development needs, ensures long-term investment and policy continuity in rural areas and provides a solid basis for the cultivation and attraction of rural human resources.

Interregional cooperation: Europe also encourages cross-border regional cooperation, through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)<sup>7</sup> and the European Agricultural

---

<sup>7</sup>In 1975 the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) was created and the main elements of regional policy began to exist. The Single European Market (SEM) process posed a serious challenge to the backward regions of the European Union, and the ERDF carried out reforms between 1989 and 1993 to address them, and the reforms achieved notable results.



Fund (EAFRD)<sup>8</sup> promoted agricultural cooperation, tourism development and infrastructure construction, and improved the competitiveness and attractiveness of rural areas.

### 3 METHODOLOGY

This study uses a combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis, literature review, case study, policy analysis and comparative analysis to explore the current situation, challenges and opportunities of rural population return and human resource development of China, and its relevance to the European experience, with the aim of providing a scientific basis and practical guidance for the rural revitalization strategy.

#### 3.1 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Firstly, through an extensive review of the literature, this article reviews the results of theoretical and empirical research on the mobility of the rural population, the development of human resources, rural revitalization strategies and the European experience in matters of rural development in the country and abroad. On this basis, the theoretical framework of this study is built and the key elements, influencing factors and evaluation indicators of population return and human resource development are clarified, in order to provide theoretical support for the follow-up analysis.

#### 3.2 DATA COLLECTION AND QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

Source: Official statistics: The latest data released by the National Bureau of Statistics, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs and other authorized departments, including income of rural residents, educational contributions, population structure, labor mobility trends, etc.

International comparative data: Consult reports issued by international organizations such as GOVET and Eurostat for practical data on rural population returns, education and training, and social security in European countries.

---

<sup>8</sup>The European Fund for Agricultural and Rural Development (EAFRD) is a CAP financing instrument that supports rural development strategies and projects. It is also part of the European Structured Investment Fund (ESIF Fund).



Data visualization: QGIS software is used to perform data processing on the distribution of higher education institutions in China and the number of rural population in China.

### 3.3 POLICY ANALYSIS AND APPLICATION OF THE SAPO FRAMEWORK <sup>9</sup>

Based on the SAPO analysis framework, this paper systematically evaluates the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of China's rural human resources development, and analyzes the effectiveness and shortcomings of China's current relevant policies on the basis of the European experience. Through comparative analysis, policy instruments and practical strategies are identified that can be used as a reference, in order to provide a basis for formulating more precise and effective policies for the development of rural human resources and the return of the population.

### 3.4 COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS AND STRATEGIC SUGGESTIONS

Finally, this paper integrates the results of quantitative and qualitative analysis, comprehensively considers the actual situation of rural China and the European experience, and puts forward specific and operational strategic suggestions. These suggestions will cover multiple dimensions, such as optimizing investment in education, vocational training, improving the social security system, cultivating characteristic industries and building infrastructure, with the aim of promoting the effective development of human resources. rural areas and the healthy return of the population, and provide a specific path to achieve the strategic objective of rural revitalization.

Through the comprehensive application of the above research methods, this study aims to provide a comprehensive and in-depth analytical framework for human resource development and population return in rural China, and provide support to the decision making and practical guidance for policy makers, academics and practitioners.

---

<sup>9</sup>The so-called SWTO analysis, that is, based on the internal and external competitive environment and the analysis of the situation under competitive conditions, consists of listing the main advantages, disadvantages and internal opportunities and threats closely related to the object of research through the research, and organize them in the form of a matrix, and then use the idea of systems analysis to match various factors with each other to analyze, and draw a series of corresponding conclusions, and the conclusions usually have a certain decision-making.

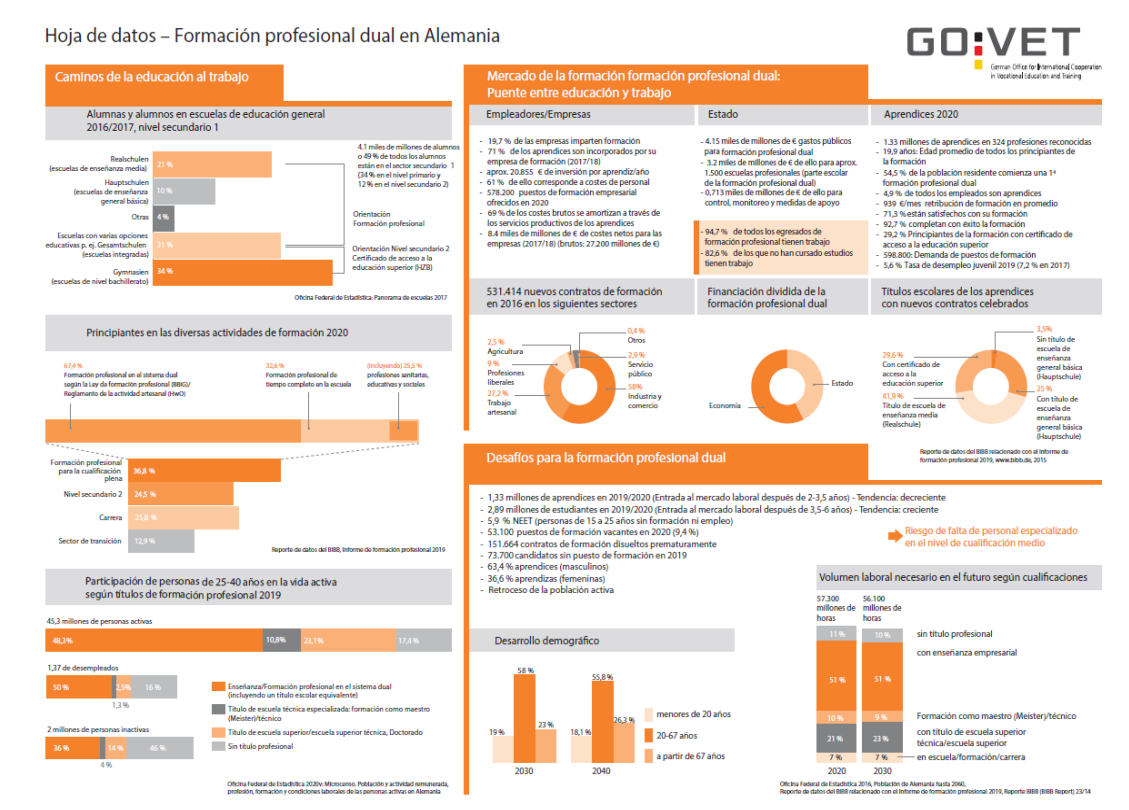


## 4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF THE RETURN OF THE RURAL POPULATION IN EUROPE

**Figure 1**

#### Dual vocational training in Germany



Source: GOVET: <https://www.govet.international/en/73896.php>

Education and training policies: The importance of education and training in improving the skills of the rural workforce is widely recognized in European countries. For example, Germany's "Dual Education System" combines theoretical research with practical training to improve the employability of rural youth by aligning education with market demand, promoting professional development and competitiveness (Min, Wu., Ping-yu, Liu, 2023). In France, by creating agricultural schools and continuing education centers, farmers are trained in a wide range of fields, from basic agricultural knowledge to modern agricultural techniques, and promote specialization and diversification by the hand of agricultural work.

Social security and well-being: Europe attracts and retains the rural population through well-established social security systems, such as universal health insurance, pension systems



and unemployment insurance, to ensure that rural residents enjoy the same level of social welfare than urban residents. In Denmark and the Netherlands, governments have also implemented flexible retirement policies and family-friendly benefits to make rural areas more attractive and desirable places to live and work for the long term.

**Agricultural modernization and development of characteristic agriculture:** European countries use scientific and technological innovation to promote agricultural modernization and improve agricultural competitiveness. Smart farming techniques and precise practices in Spain have improved the quality and yield of crops, facilitating the development of organic farming and GI products, thus establishing unique brands of agricultural products (M., Martínez-Arnáiz et al., 2022). The Netherlands, the world's largest exporter of flowers, relies on high-tech greenhouse technology and hydroponic farming to achieve high efficiency and high added value in agriculture.

**Rural tourism and cultural industries:** Rural areas in Europe use natural landscapes and cultural heritage to enhance rural tourism, providing attractions such as historical sites, works of art and local customs, contributing to sustainable development (Muyan, Tang., Hongzhang, Xu, 2023). The Austrian Alps and the French region of Provence attract large numbers of domestic and foreign tourists and promote the local economy through music festivals, art exhibitions and traditional festivals. At the same time, these activities also deepen tourists' understanding and appreciation of rural culture, and improve the dissemination of rural culture.

**Regional cooperation and synergies:** European cross-border regional cooperation projects, such as the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Agricultural Fund (EAFRD), promote cross-border agricultural cooperation, the development of tourist routes and the construction of infrastructure, and They reinforce internal and external links in rural areas. These collaborations have not only increased economic opportunities in rural areas, but have also promoted cultural exchanges and understanding, improving the region's overall competitiveness.



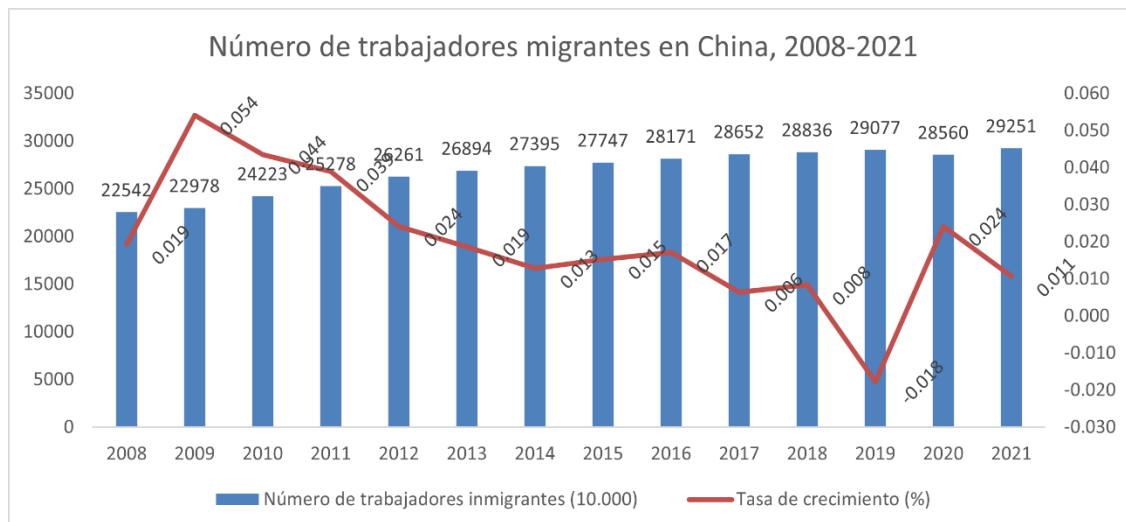
## 4.2 THE CURRENT SITUATION AND CHALLENGES OF HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL AREAS OF CHINA

### 4.2.1 Demographic mobility trends and the status quo of rural human resources

In recent years, there has been a significant trend of rural migration in China, and the short-term and unidirectional migration pattern of rural labor from rural to urban areas has given rise to obvious complexity in the migration pattern. unidirectional and short-term nature of rural labor in China. The main goal of rural migrants seeking to increase their monetary income is to improve their family life (Ma Rui, Xu Zhigang et al., 2011). According to data from the National Bureau of Statistics, there are hundreds of millions of surplus rural workers in China, who frequently move between urban and rural areas, forming a unique "migratory bird" migration phenomenon, and this group is called "migrant workers" in China. The current situation of rural human resources is manifested in the fact that although the total amount is large, but it is unevenly distributed, and the age structure tends to age, the skill structure is unique, and the shortage of talents highly qualified is serious, which seriously restricts the transformation, improvement and sustainable development of the rural economy.

**Figure 2**

*Changes in the number of migrant workers in China between 2008 and 2021*



Source: Oficina Nacional de Estadísticas



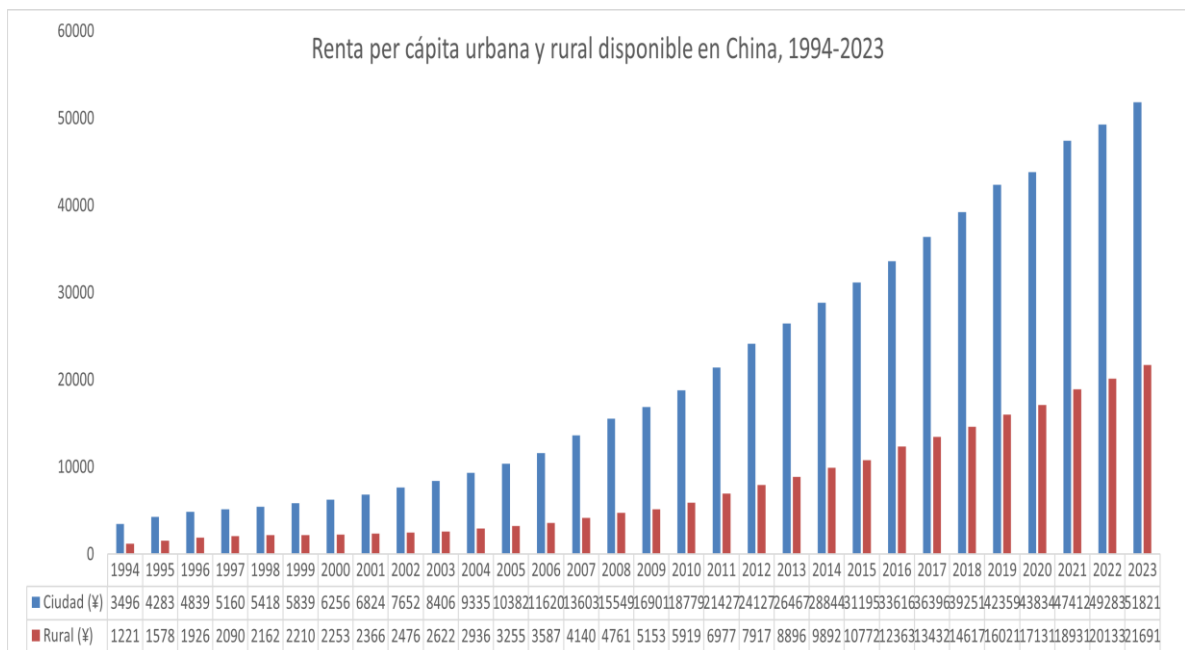


#### 4.2.2 The magnitude, causes and effects of rural population loss

The magnitude of rural population loss is enormous, driven primarily by economic factors such as the income gap between rural and urban areas, limited employment opportunities in rural areas, and the provision of more education and health care resources. health in cities. From 1994 to 2023, China's urban-rural disposable income statistics clearly show the persistence and change of the urban-rural income gap. Although the per capita disposable income of rural residents increased from 1,221 yuan in 1994 to 21,691 yuan in 2023, the income gap between urban and rural areas is still huge compared with the increase in per capita disposable income of urban residents in 3,496 yuan to 51,820.75 yuan in the same period. In 2023, per capita disposable income in urban areas will be approximately 2.4 times that of rural areas, and this difference constitutes an important economic driver for the continued migration of rural people to cities.

**Figure 3**

*Per capita disposable income in urban and rural China, 1994-2023 (100 million yuan)*



Source: Oficina Nacional de Estadísticas

#### 4.2.3 Issues related to the structure of human resources: analysis of age and the structure of competencies

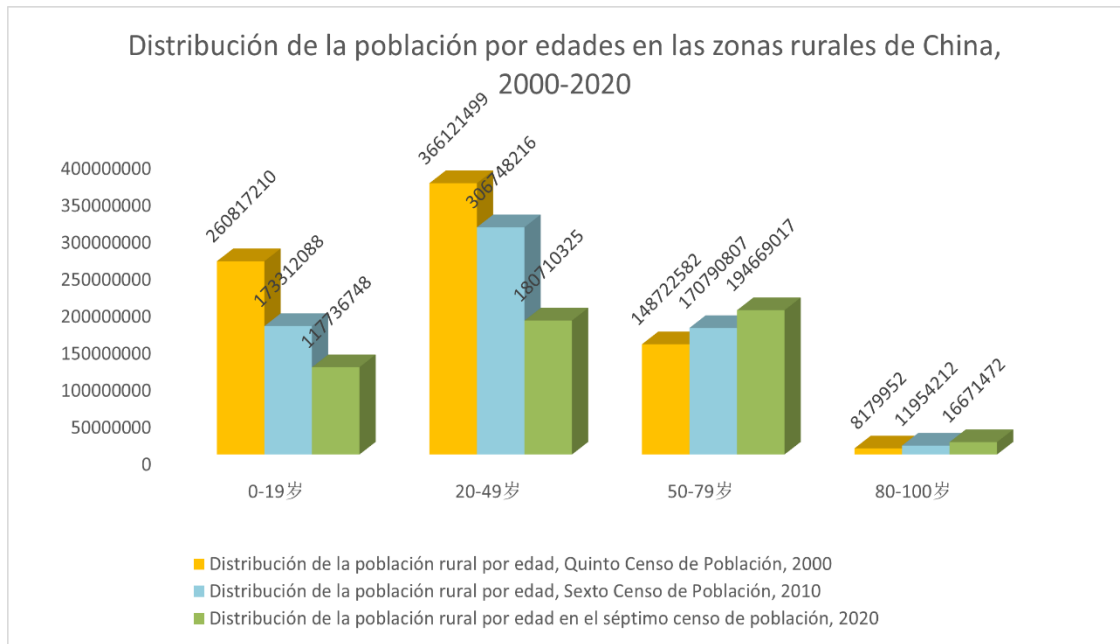
China's rural human resources face an imbalance in age structure, and the departure of



young and middle-aged workers has left behind a large number of the elderly and children, resulting in a "hollowing out" phenomenon. ". In terms of skill structure, the rural workforce is often poorly educated, lacks professional skills such as modern agricultural technology and management, and is difficult to adapt to the needs of modern agricultural development, which restricts the improvement and innovation of rural industries.

**Figure 4**

*Population distribution by age in rural China, 2000-2020 (5th-7th Population Census).*



Source: Oficina Nacional de Estadísticas

#### 4.2.4 Lack of resources for rural education and training

According to the number of rural illiterate population in the fifth to seventh population censuses of the National Bureau of Statistics of China, the total number of rural illiterate population decreased from 69.3 million to 26.62 million between 2000 and 2020, and the proportion of rural illiterate population also decreased from 0.086% to 0.052%, a significant decrease that reflects China's progress in improving the basic education level of the rural population. However, behind this positive trend, the lack of rural education and training resources remains a key factor restricting the development of rural human resources.

As of 2021, there are 3,012 higher education institutions in China's higher education system, including 1,238 undergraduate regular schools, 32 undergraduate-level vocational schools, 1,486 higher vocational schools (university colleges), 256 adult colleges and

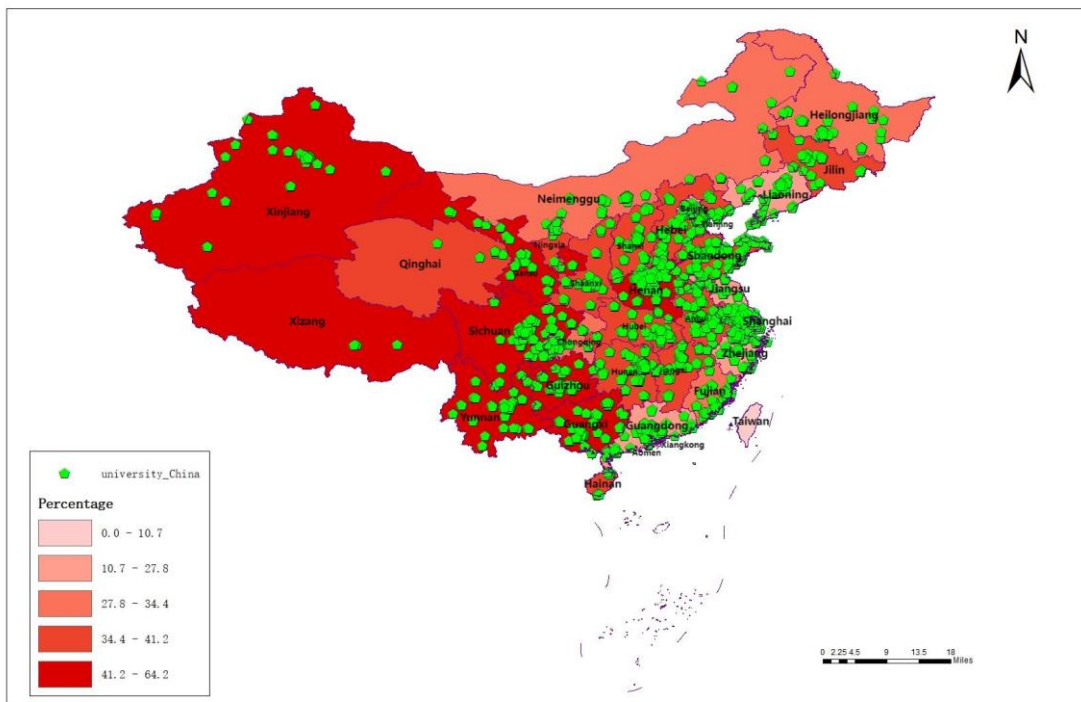


universities and 233 scientific research institutions for postgraduate training. In this educational panorama, it can be seen that the geographical distribution of higher education resources is extremely unequal. China's major universities and research universities are concentrated on the eastern coast and some inland cities such as Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou, which are rich in higher education resources, which are closely related to their high level of economic development and its solid scientific research base. According to statistics, these areas have attracted greater investment in education, created a first-class educational environment and research conditions, and provided students with high-quality academic resources and a broad platform for development.

**Figure 5**

*Distribution of China's rural population by higher education institutions in 2021*

Distribución de la población rural y de los recursos educativos universitarios en China 2020



Source: National Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China

However, in contrast to provinces with a large proportion of agricultural population, such as Henan, Shandong, Sichuan, Guangdong, Hebei, Hunan, Anhui, Yunnan, Guangxi, Jiangsu and Hubei, although some of these provinces have considerable economic development, The overall quantity and quality of higher education resources are often not comparable to those in developed eastern regions. The relatively low number of universities in these regions, especially the lack of top-tier universities and research institutes, limits students' access to high-



quality education. The "rural talent" training system of China's applied universities needs to be improved, and its talent training objectives are not suitable for national needs (Gao, Y., & Shen, T., 2023). This unequal allocation of resources not only limits the learning and development potential of local students, but also exacerbates the flow of talents to economically developed areas, forming a "talent diversion effect." In the long term, it will have an adverse impact on the economic and social development of these regions, hinder the formation of a stable pool of high-quality talents, affect industrial transformation and modernization and the improvement of innovation capabilities, and will not be conducive to balanced and sustainable development of the regional economy.

#### 4.3 POLICIES AND PRACTICES WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE RURAL REVITALIZATION STRATEGY

In response to these challenges, the Chinese government has proposed a rural revitalization strategy aimed at promoting rural development through a series of policy measures, in line with the Strategic Plan for Rural Revitalization (2018-2022)<sup>10</sup> issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council of the People's Republic of China. These include: Business loans and financial support: In accordance with relevant policies, national and local governments provide business loans to entrepreneurs who return to their hometowns, reduce the threshold and interest rate of loans, extend the repayment period, and in some places, business guarantee funds are also established to reduce financial pressure in the initial phase of entrepreneurship. For example, China's Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, the National Development and Reform Commission and other departments jointly issued the "Opinions on How to Do a Good Job in Employment and Entrepreneurship at Present and in the Future" to provide business support to rural migrant workers who return to their hometowns to start businesses, and provide support through subsidized loans, small guaranteed loans, etc., and these policies are also applicable to young people who qualify to return to their hometowns after graduating from universities.

---

<sup>10</sup>In June 2018, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council of the People's Republic of China published the Strategic Plan for Rural Revitalization (2018-2022), which (hereinafter referred to as the "Plan") narrowly focuses into the overall requirements of industrial prosperity, ecological livability, civilized rural customs, effective governance and prosperous living, and clarifies the phased objectives and key tasks of the rural revitalization strategy. All localities and relevant departments have made concerted efforts to implement the detailed "Plan", and significant achievements have been made in rural revitalization.



**Tax Reduction and Exemption:** The State Administration of Taxation and the Ministry of Finance jointly published the Notice on Implementing Preferential Tax Policies to Support the Development of Small and Micro Enterprises and Industrial and Commercial Households, and the Notice on support and promotion of fiscal policies for entrepreneurship and employment of key groups, and other relevant policy documents to support migrant workers and other entrepreneurs returning to their places of origin. According to the regulations, migrant workers who return to their places of origin to become self-employed can enjoy the same preferential tax policies and industrial and commercial registration as laid-off workers with their unemployment registration certificates, including exemptions. and exemptions from value added tax and income tax, as well as simplified industrial and commercial registration procedures.

**Preferential policies for land circulation:** Encourage and support land circulation, allow farmers to transfer management rights on the premise of maintaining land contracting rights, and provide land resources to entrepreneurs returning to their places of work. origin. The relevant land circulation policies are mainly based on the "Land Management Law of the People's Republic of China", the "Rural Land Contracting Law" and other laws, as well as provisions on land system reform rural areas and the circulation of use rights contained in the Central Committee document No. 1 (the central policy document focusing on the "three rural issues" over the years).<sup>11</sup>

**Reform of the Vocational Training System for Farmers:** In 2018, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council of the People's Republic of China issued the Opinions on the Implementation of the Rural Revitalization Strategy and other documents, indicating that the The State will continue to increase investment in rural education and vocational training, promote the establishment of a multi-level and wide-scope farmer training system, and vigorously cultivate new types of professional farmers. Establish a system of professional farmers comprehensively and improve the supporting policy system. Implement the new cultivation project of professional farmers. Support new professional farmers to participate in secondary and higher agricultural vocational education through a flexible school system. Innovate training mechanisms and support professional farmer cooperatives, professional and technical associations, leading companies and other entities to carry out

---

<sup>11</sup>Central Committee Document No. 1 originally referred to the first document published each year by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council of the People's Republic of China. Since most of the No. 1 documents focus on rural agricultural issues, they have become an appropriate term for the CPC Central Committee to attach importance to rural issues.



training. Guide new qualified professional farmers to participate in the social security system, such as pension and medical care for urban workers. Encourage all localities to carry out pilot projects for the evaluation of farmers' professional qualifications.

Attracting external talents: With the proposal and implementation of the "rural revitalization" strategy, there are some problems in the talent training model, such as lack of professional theoretical foundation, lack of practical experience, insufficient support for talent and talent shortage, and talent is the key to the implementation of the rural revitalization strategy (Zhang, J., & Gu, L., 2022). In 2011, the Organization Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, the Ministry of Resources and Social Security of China, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, the Health Commission and the Poverty Alleviation Office of the State Council jointly issued a notice on how to continue doing good work in implementing the Three Branches and a Support Plan for University Graduates. Implement the "three supports and one support" (education, agriculture, medicine and poverty alleviation), university students and village officials and other programs.<sup>12</sup>

Attract university graduates to provide services at the grassroots level in rural areas, and give certain preferential policies in terms of living subsidies, installation subsidies and professional qualification evaluation, so as to introduce external talents to participate in construction rural.

The implementation of these policies has not only provided substantial assistance to returning migrant workers and foreign talents, but also promoted the optimization and improvement of the rural economic structure and improved the self-development capacity of rural areas.

#### 4.4 ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Based on the above data and related research, we conduct a SWOT analysis (S (Strengths), W (Weaknesses), O (Opportunities) and T (Threats)) of the current situation of rural population loss in China, the level of expenditure of the rural population and the

---

<sup>12</sup> On May 30, 2014, the Organization Department of the CPC Central Committee held a national symposium on the work of university student village officials, which further clarified the positioning of the work of university student village officials, and The work of university student village officials is a national selection project carried out by the state. The nature of the village official position for university students is a "special position of village-level organizations", which is the status of non-public official, and the corresponding expenses to be paid for their work, subsistence allowance and enjoyment security benefits will be borne jointly by central and local finances.





distribution of educational resources, and combined with the European experience in rural development and delaying the loss of rural population in the research process Table 1.

**Table 1**

*SWOT analysis of human resource development in rural China*

Sort out	Element	Description
<b>Advantage (Strengths)</b>	Education spending continues to grow	From 2007 to 2022, the State has continuously increased its financial investment in education to improve rural educational infrastructure and teachers.
	Rural incomes have increased steadily	From 1994 to 2023, rural residents' disposable income continued to grow, improving purchasing power and attracting talent to return.
	Trend of return of migrant workers	After 2019, the total number of migrant workers fluctuated and decreased, showing opportunities for rural return, which is conducive to the reorganization of human resources.
<b>Bottom position (Weaknesses)</b>	Income disparity between urban and rural areas	Rural residents' incomes have increased, but there is a significant gap between them and urban residents, affecting quality of life and talent retention.
	Educational resources are distributed unevenly	High-quality educational resources are concentrated in cities, which restricts the quality of rural education and the improvement of human competencies.
	Population aging and workforce structure	The aging of the population and the departure of young labor affect the structure of human resources and the long-term development of the economy.
<b>Chance (Opportunities)</b>	Technology and Digital Transformation	The application of technologies such as Internet + agriculture and smart agriculture offers opportunities for industrial modernization and promotes highly skilled jobs.
	Policy support and rural revitalization	National policy guidance and financial support to assist rural education, entrepreneurship and overall development.
	Green Economy and Rural Tourism	The demand for green food and rural tourism has grown, and the development space for rural characteristic industries has expanded.
<b>Threats</b>	The global economy fluctuates	The destabilization of the global economy affects agricultural exports, reduces rural incomes and shocks the rural economy.
	Acceptance of Education and Technology	Conservative perceptions and acceptance of technology limit the popularization of new technologies and affect the modernization of human resources.
	Environmental and resource limitations	Environmental pressures and the challenge of rational use of resources require the integration of rural development and sustainable objectives.



Sort out	Element	Description
<b>Learn from the European experience</b>	Learn from the European experience	The German dual system model combines theory and practice to improve the employability of the rural workforce.
	Infrastructure and Innovation	Infrastructure construction and technological innovation in rural Europe, such as smart agriculture, can serve as a reference for China's rural modernization.
	Social security is perfect	Improving social security systems in European countries has implications for rural areas and helps attract and retain talent.
	Cultivation of characteristic industries	The agricultural and rural tourism model characteristic of Europe is an example of rural economic diversification.

By combining the above SWOT analysis with the detailed data discussed above, we can obtain a deep understanding of the multi-dimensional status and future orientation of human resources development in rural China. Although the continuous growth of investment in education has provided the necessary material support for the construction of rural education equipment and software in terms of total amount, the unequal distribution of educational resources remains a disadvantage that needs to be resolved. urgently. This problem interacts with the income gap between urban and rural areas, which not only affects the quality of life of rural residents, but also further exacerbates the flow of talent from rural to urban areas and hinders retention. and effective use of human resources. However, the constant increase in the disposable income of rural residents, especially the significant growth rate in some years, offers hope of reversing this trend, showing the potential of the rural economy and the positive sign of the increase in the purchasing power of rural residents. rural residents, which favors the return of talent and the reallocation of human resources.

In terms of opportunities, technology and digital transformation have opened new paths for the development of rural human resources. With the wide application of emerging technologies such as Internet + agriculture and smart agriculture, rural labor can be transferred to more skilled and higher value-added jobs through vocational training, which forms a synergy with the national rural revitalization strategy and political support for rural education and entrepreneurship, and build a solid foundation for the comprehensive improvement of rural human resources. The rise of the green economy and the rise of rural tourism not only respond to the growing consumer demand for organic food and natural experiences, but also provide a broad stage for the diversified development of the rural economy, creating abundant employment opportunities. and entrepreneurship.



Faced with the threat of global economic volatility, rural economies must become more resilient to external shocks, especially with regard to agricultural exports, and reduce dependence by diversifying markets and improving the quality of products. At the same time, increasing the acceptance of education and new technologies in rural areas is another challenge, which requires the gradual elimination of conservative attitudes and the acceleration of the popularization of new technologies and the application of innovative ideas to through cultural orientation, educational dissemination and social incentives. Furthermore, environmental protection and rational use of resources are not only limitations to development, but also an opportunity to promote the transformation and improvement of the rural economy.

## 5 CONCLUSION

China's rural human resource development and population return strategies should be closely integrated with international experience, especially Europe's experience in promoting rural prosperity and demographic balance. China's rural areas are at a critical stage of urban-rural integration and in-depth implementation of the rural revitalization strategy, and challenges and opportunities coexist. The SWOT analysis reveals that the advantages of rural human resource development lie in the growth of investment in education, the increase in rural income and the emergence of the return trend of migrant workers, while the disadvantages are reflected in the income gap between urban and rural areas, the imbalance of educational resources and the aging of the population. Opportunities lie in technology and digital transformation, support for national policies and the rise of the green economy, while threats come from global economic fluctuations, low acceptance of educational technology and environmental resource limitations. Deepen education and training reform, promote the German dual vocational training model, and combine theoretical learning and practical operation to improve the professional skills and job competitiveness of the rural workforce. At the same time, we must optimize the distribution of educational resources, reduce the gap between urban and rural education, and improve the quality of rural education through distance education and digital learning platforms. Improve the social security system, establish and improve the rural social security system that is in line with the city, including endowment insurance, health insurance, etc., to alleviate the concerns of rural residents, improve the quality of life in rural areas and attract talent to return. Promote the development of characteristic industries, learn from the experience of cultivating characteristic industries in Europe, develop green agriculture, rural tourism and other characteristic economies, create more high-value-added employment



opportunities for rural areas, and achieve economic diversification . Strengthen infrastructure and technological innovation: Invest in rural infrastructure, including transportation, communications and internet access, to provide the material foundation for rural economic development. At the same time, promote smart agriculture technologies to improve agricultural productivity and sustainability. Promote policy innovation and environmentally friendly development, and introduce more preferential policies to encourage entrepreneurship, land transfer and talent introduction in combination with the national rural revitalization strategy, paying attention to environmental protection environment to guarantee the harmonious coexistence of rural development and nature. Strengthen international cooperation and exchange of experience, strengthen exchanges and cooperation with Europe and other countries in the field of rural development, share successful experiences, introduce advanced technology and management concepts, and promote the international vision of resource development rural humans of China.

In summary, the strategy of human resource development and population relocation in rural China should be multidimensional and internally linked, not only based on local realities and solving specific problems at present, but also open and inclusive, actively absorbing advanced international experience and laying a solid foundation for the comprehensive revitalization and sustainable development of rural economy and society.

### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

En primer lugar, me gustaría hacer una declaración a la República Popular China, al Consejo de Becas de China (China Scholarship Council) Me gustaría expresarles mi gratitud por patrocinarme para estudiar un doctorado y, en segundo lugar, quiero dar las gracias a Shiyuan Wang por corregir la parte inglesa de este documento.! Me gustaría expresar mi más sincero agradecimiento a mi director de doctorado, el Dr. Samuel ESTEBAN RODRÍGUEZ, por guiarme en mi camino académico. Por último, quiero “REVISTA DE GESTÃO SOCIAL E AMBIENTAL” La revista desea expresar su gratitud por aceptar mi artículo y por sus valiosos comentarios.

### **REFERENCES**

Dai, Zhu. (2023). The Loss of Rural Labor Force during the Urbanization Process. Lecture Notes in Education Psychology and Public Media, Doi: 10.54254/2753-7048/5/20220711



- Mehmet, Guney, Celbis. (2022). Unemployment in Rural Europe: A Machine Learning Perspective. *Applied Spatial Analysis and Policy*, 1-25. Dio: 10.1007/s12061-022-09464-0
- Svetlana, Georgievna, Golovina., Ivan, Nikolaevich, Mikolaychik., Ekaterina, Abilova., Lidia, Nikolaevna, Smirnova. (2021). Demographic basis of rural territories state support in the EU countries. Doi: 10.33920/VNE-04-2107-03
- Julia, Weiß., Christin, Heinz-Fischer. (2022). The More Rural the Less Educated? An Analysis of National Policy Strategies for Enhancing Young Adults' Participation in Formal and Informal Training in European Rural Areas. *Youth*, 2(3):405-421. Doi: 10.3390/youth2030030
- Ingrid, Kofler., Elisa, Innerhofer., Anja, Marcher., Mirjam, Gruber., Harald, Pechlaner. (2020). ¿Can Rural Regions Compete for Talents? A Case Study From South Tyrol, Italy. 83-95. Doi: 10.1007/978-3-030-42871-6\_7
- Thomas, Dax., Michael, Fischer. (2018). An alternative policy approach to rural development in regions facing population decline. *European Planning Studies*, 26(2):297-315. Doi: 10.1080/09654313.2017.1361596
- Tobias, ten, Brink. (2022). Social Protection for Migrant Workers in China. Doi: 10.1007/978-3-030-86645-7\_38
- Doris, Schmied. (2022). Incomers and Locals in the European Countryside.141-166.Doi: 10.4324/9781351143080-10
- Zhao, Zhe. (2023). The Dilemma and Countermeasures of Rural Vocational Education in China under the Background of Rural Revitalization Strategy. *The Frontiers of Society, Science and Technology*, Doi: 10.25236/fsst.2023.050811
- Lili Li, Jian Yu y Zhonggen Zhang. (2021). Inversión en capital humano en las zonas rurales de China: una revisión de políticas y perspectivas. *Revista de la Universidad de ZheJiang (Humanidades y Ciencias Sociales)*, 51(1).
- Qi Zhanyong y Wang Yufei. (2020). Sistema de indicadores y lógica de acción de la modernización de la educación profesional rural en el contexto de la estrategia de revitalización rural. *Revista de la Universidad del Suroeste (Ciencias Sociales)*, 46(4), 67-77.
- Li Zhou, Wen Tiejun, Wei Houkai, Du Zhixiong, Li Chenggui y Jin Wencheng. (2021). Acelerar la modernización de la agricultura y las zonas rurales: los expertos de "Tres zonas rurales" interpretan el espíritu del documento n.º 1 del Comité Central del Partido Comunista de China. *Economía rural de China*, 4, 2-20.
- Lingyan, Q., Liang, G., & Li, Z. (2020). The functional restructuring and endogenous development of rural areas in Germany. *Urban Planning International*, 35(5), 6-13.
- Min, Wu., Ping-yu, Liu. (2023). German “duale ausbildung” vocational education and its enlightenment to China’s vocational education. *SHS web of conferences*, Doi: 10.1051/shsconf/202316601001



- M., Martínez-Arnáiz., Eugenio, Baraja-Rodríguez., Daniel, Herrero-Luque. (2022). Multifunctional Territorialized Agri-Food Systems, Geographical Quality Marks and Agricultural Landscapes: The Case of Vineyards. *Land*, Doi: 10.3390/land11040457
- Muyan, Tang., Hongzhang, Xu. (2023). Cultural Integration and Rural Tourism Development: A Scoping Literature Review. *Tourism and hospitality*, Doi: 10.3390/tourhosp4010006
- Ma Rui, Xu Zhigang, Qiu Huanguang y Bai Junfei. (2011). Movilidad ocupacional, cambio urbano y dependencia familiar y factores que influyen en los migrantes rurales. *Observación Rural de China*, 1, 2
- Gao, Y., & Shen, T. (2023). Research on the training path of rural talents in public art landscape under the background of beautiful countryside construction. *Revista De Gestão Social E Ambiental*, 17(1), e03154-e03154.
- Zhang, J., & Gu, L. (2022). Research on the Optimization of Landscape Design Talent Training Mode Under the Background of Rural Revitalization Strategy. *Revista De Gestão Social E Ambiental*, 16(2), e02979-e02979.