

## Women man the fire brigade in remote village

Instead of a group of stereotypical young men defending their village from fires, a group of women whose average age is 50 years old are fighting fires in their village in East China's Fujian province, according to a report by Xiamen Evening News.



Wu Shuchun carries a firefighting hose at Shantou village, Dadeng Island in East China's Fujian province, on July 24, 2017. [Photo provided to chinadaily.com.cn]

Due to the village's remote location, professional firefighters cannot arrive in time at Shantou village in Dadeng Island once a fire is reported. Also, most male laborers in Shantou village work outside the community. So beginning in 2008, the women stepped in.

Called the Haixia Women's Volunteer Firefighter Brigade, the group has 12 members. The oldest is 69 years old, while the youngest is 36 years old.

Since most of the volunteer firefighters have grandsons or granddaughters, they nicknamed their group, "The Grandma Firefighter Brigade".

"In the early days, the brigade was poorly equipped. Nowadays, we have fire hoses, firefighting lances and other equipment. Since we are not professional firefighters, we are used to receiving more than two hours of relevant training twice or three times a week at night," said Zheng Shuxian, who organized the brigade in 2008.

The fire hoses they used before weighed 3.5 or 4 kilograms. Wu Shuchun, 53, a brigade member, said she ran about 10 kilometers a day to improve her physical strength.

In the past 10 years, the women have responded to almost 100 fires and have won praise from locals.