



CHINA

A site that saves lives

According to UNICEF, 50 percent of all the children who die before the age of five would survive if the healthcare system and the new parents had better knowledge. A Swedish-Chinese collaboration has joined forces to create an online healthcare guide for pregnant women and parents of young children in China.

“There is a lot of knowledge in the field of maternal care and child health, the problem is that it’s not equally spread across the world and that’s what I want to change. This site is very important, it can save lives,” says Bonnie Roupé, Founder of Bonzun.com.

She came up with the idea in 2008 when she became a mother herself, and was searching for reliable information on the internet.

“If there is a need for it here in Sweden, there’s probably an even greater need for it in countries with high levels of poverty,” thought Bonnie Roupé.

She has always been an ambitious entrepreneur. She was one of the founders of Red Tee, a golf magazine for women, and created her first website for Ericsson back in 1998.

The plan is to eventually launch Bonzun

worldwide, but Bonnie Roupé chose to start in China, where 20 million children were born last year.

In recent decades, maternal and infant mortality rates have gone down in China, thanks to economic growth, but many women in poor and rural areas still lack access to skilled care.

“Also, Chinese people use the web frequently, making China a good country for us to test and establish our business,” says Bonnie Roupé.

Bonnie Roupé started up the project in 2011, and launched the first version of the website in 2012. The website is best described as a mix between the Swedish online health guide Vårdguiden and a “nixed Google”.

Bonzun addresses both professionals, who can access the latest research, and pregnant women as well as parents of young children.



The editors collect research papers and write articles reviewed by experts in Sweden and China. The web service, which is free of charge, also provides consultation on mobile phones and a forum where the users can share their experiences. In the future, users will also be able to chat with midwives.

The site is particularly important to women who live in rural areas far from the nearest hospital, women without permanent jobs who therefore lack employer-sponsored health insurance, as well as women living in poverty without access to medical care.

“For these women, the information on the site can help determine whether or not they seek care in time, but it can also help them to refrain from seeking care when it’s not necessary,” says Bonnie Roupé.

Bonzun is a partnership between her company Bonzun Health Information AB, Karolinska Institute and Barnmorskeförbundet (the Association of Midwives) on the Swedish side, and the Chinese Medical Association, UNICEF, WHO and three different universities on the Chinese side.

“The collaboration is a success. I believe it’s because we are all working towards the same goal, as well as constantly focusing on what’s best for women and children,” says Bonnie Roupé.

She adds that the support from Sida has been invaluable.

“Having Sida’s support is a seal of approval that really means a lot in China. They also



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PHOTO: MARIE THERESE KARLBERG SHAY

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/BONNIE ROUPÉ

helped me a lot with contacts and financial support in the early stages,” she says.

Now that the site is launched, the work is financed by the involved partners and advertisements. The goal is to become China’s largest portal for pregnant women and parents of young children, and to have at least five million users within three years. All pregnant women in China already receive information about Bonzun during the mandatory parenting course.

One of the women using the site is Xiaoyun Li, a 28 year old teacher. She is pregnant and says that she usually peeks through Bonzun when she has questions about her pregnancy.

“I feel like I can trust this site. You can tell that the information is carefully controlled,” she says.

THE FACTS

PARTNERS

Bonz Unlimited AB, Karolinska Institute, Association of Midwives, Chinese Medical Association, Peking University, WHO, UNICEF and others.

COST

337,000 SEK

SIDA CONTRIBUTION

287,000 SEK

PARTNER CONTRIBUTION

50,000 SEK

TIMEFRAME

2011–2013

RESULTS

■ The website Bonzun, with advice on maternal care and child health, has been established in China and is used by health workers, pregnant women and parents of young children.

■ Information about Bonzun has become part of the the mandatory parenting course in China.

■ Thanks to the planning grant a collaboration between Bonzun and UNICEF Beijing has been initiated. Through this partnership, hospitals in 35 of China’s poorest districts, with populations of 15–20 million people, will get Internet access and qualified prenatal care information. The information will be illustrated to make it available to illiterates.