

Rare & Roll: Access China and Culture

Start: May 2018

Finish: April 2019

Funding: Booking Cares Fund, 2018

Awarded to Ms. Xun Ji, Influencer and Changemaker,
in collaboration with ENAT non-profit association



Photo: Xun Ji, Moroccan Desert

Background

In China, there are an estimated 83 million people with disabilities¹, and 220 million people aged 60[1] or above who desire to travel as much as anyone else. Catering for people with access needs is becoming increasingly important for mainstream tourism service providers, entrepreneurs and NGOs alike.

Objectives

The project, wholly financed by a grant from the Booking Cares Fund awarded to Ms. Xun Ji, a young disabled Chinese woman, will provide accessible tourism information services and cultural experience opportunities for both Chinese and foreign travellers with particular access needs, while at the same time engaging professionals in the travel industry, preparing them for the new caring economy.

The project consists of:

- 1. An online information portal/database**, available in both English and Chinese, listing providers in selected destinations that are certified to receive travelers with access needs;
- 2. Free and paid webinars/online courses**, sharing practical accessible travel information, answering questions, and training professionals to serve clients with access needs;
- 3. On-site cultural experience/training workshops.**

¹ Second China National Sample Survey on Disability, 2006

Activities

First, by providing information services and relevant content, this project will bridge the information and knowledge gap for potential travellers. We understand the habits of Chinese and overseas users and will therefore adopt appropriate strategies. For example, we will make more use of **WeChat**-based programmes, knowledge-sharing platforms and online payment functions in Chinese context, and blogs/online portals in an English-language context. We will work extensively with the mainstream media and local organizations, so as to reach larger audiences and communicate the ideas to more people. The result will be more people accessing the information they need to travel with confidence.

Second, we will actively engage our **clients [2]** – both travellers and **professionals[3]** – in our carefully-devised online and offline workshops. The workshops will be both cultural and educational. This means we will invite travellers to experience cultural and accessible activities in Chinese and overseas destinations, accompanied by invited travel professionals so each can learn from the other. We will also have specific training workshops targeting only professionals.

The project also aims to generate work opportunities for people with disabilities in the travel industry in the future.

Note that not all the service is free: taking advantage of **current trends in China regarding paid-for courses and content[4]**, we will make the project more sustainable.

Know-how, training content and global networking in the field of accessible tourism will be provided in collaboration with the **European Network for Accessible Tourism (ENAT)**, the world's leading authority in accessible tourism. Marketing, travel information and outreach will be enhanced through close collaboration with Lonely Planet, the world's leading guidebook publisher and travel information provider.

It should be noted that 2018 is designated as the **EU-China Tourism Year**. The project will receive the attention of both countries through ENAT's contacts with the **European Commission** and contacts in China.

Project Deliverables

1. A bi-lingual (English-Mandarin) online platform with *Access China* suppliers' database, knowledge-sharing platforms, and user community/social media presence;
2. WeChat-based e-learning programmes for Chinese clients and user community;
3. European Accessible Tourism Study Tour to Madrid, Spain, for Chinese Overseas Tour Operators;

4. On-site workshops with local communities in China, targeting public opinion leaders, decision makers, business actors and NGO stakeholders.

Ms. Xun Ji – Profile and Partnerships

As a Chinese woman with a disability, Xun Ji is always keen to explore the world. However, due to her physical limitations and the stigma of disability, her journey turned out to be full of challenges and setbacks. Despite all the difficulties, she spared no effort to apply for scholarships to study abroad and gained the very first opportunities to travel abroad on educational programmes. Academic success not only renders her great creative and critical thinking skills, but also resilience and perseverance, which she considers as the most important qualities in achieving success.

Xun shares her experience in social media and she always proactively pitches posts to more influential media. Xun was not only covered by some famous domestic media like FT and Vice - she has also made herself part of their creative team as a special reporter. Her work with the media expands her network and raises her visibility, so she is often invited to blog trips and to speak at conferences held across the world. This is how Xun made herself a world traveller. Her strong skills in PR and communications will be a great asset to the project.

Xun has been invited to speak at several EU events and meetings, sharing her experience as a disabled Chinese traveller in Europe, and has built an extensive network across private and public sectors in both China and Europe.

Xun Ji works with **Lonely Planet** as a translator of their guides into Chinese, as well as a contributor to their Accessible Travel Phrasebook. She has also worked as a copywriter and translator with **Global Blue**, providing information services to Chinese travelers coming to Europe. Xun has mainly worked with the media industry and she advocates to make stories of people with special needs available in the mainstream Chinese media. Xun writes for some famous media in China, such as **FT China**, **Vice China**, **Caixin**, **NetEase** and **Tencent**, and she now serves as the columnist in accessible tourism for Vice China. Xun also blogs about accessible tourism and has over 4000 followers in social media.

Xun Ji is the **ENAT Contact Point for China** and works with ENAT as the partnership specialist for this new project. ENAT manages the **Pantou Directory** (<https://pantou.org/>), which identifies accessible tourism suppliers around the world and provides customers with a user-friendly platform to access these resources. The technical team at [EWORX S.A.](#) which maintains Pantou, provides the project with technical support for digital platforms and design.