

BAREFOOT ACUPUNCTURISTS AND BAREFOOT.SLUMS

for welfare and solidarity in healthcare



THE BAREFOOT ACUPUNCTURISTS PROJECT

May 2007. Two acupuncturists, Jacques Beytrison (Switzerland) and Walter Fischer (Belgium) go to Mumbai. They face the evident lack of access to healthcare in the poor areas of the city and decide to use their skills to provide some solutions.

Acupuncture brings an efficient and low cost solution to frequent and troublesome health problems, like chronic and acute pain, for these populations whose daily tasks are mainly physical.

January 2008. Walter Fischer decides to set up a small clinic in a slum of Bandra east. Ujwala Patil, a young social worker, joins his efforts and together they open a first rudimentary acupuncture clinic (7 square meters, two treatment beds, no running water).

In response to the positive results, acupuncture begins to gradually spread its way across the poor areas of the city.

Few months later Ujwala creates her own NGO, "Barefoot.Slums" that will be in charge of running the acupuncture centres in Mumbai, in association with Walter and his "Barefoot Acupuncturists".

May 2009. Due to the increasing crowd of incoming patients, the acupuncture clinic moves to a larger facility offering 5 beds and, at last, a toilet and running water.



TODAY...

Since its inception, «Barefoot Acupuncturists» has treated over 600 patients.

The average rate of 15 patients treated per day in the previous location has increased to 25 patients per day in the new health center.

While acupuncture can treat many more disorders, physical pain makes up about 90% of the cases in our slum clinic.

100% of patients discover and experience acupuncture for the first time. Women, who deal with the large majority of heavy domestic tasks, represent 65% of the patients.

The nominal fee requested of each patient is 20 Indian rupees (0.45 dollars) per treatment. The actual cost is approximately 10 times this amount.



... AND TOMORROW ...



The goal of Barefoot Acupuncturists project is to develop more acupuncture clinics in other slums. We hope to open two more facilities by the end of 2012 in even less privileged areas as our first and constant objective is to reach the poorest populations.

In order to reach this goal, we must achieve local autonomy and thus train Indian acupuncturists through our own training center in Mumbai.

Classes should start in 2010 with the participation of Chinese, Indian, Canadian, Belgian, and Swiss practitioners.

« Having been established for two years in a slum of Mumbai, we would now like to open our project to others : acupuncturists, doctors, herbalists, financial partners... to transform an individual's adventure into a collective project. »



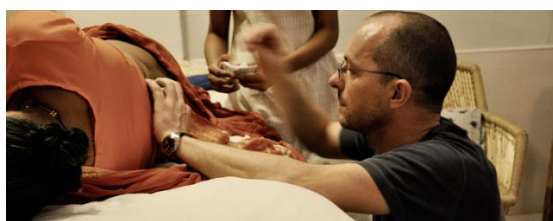
WHO ARE OUR PATIENTS ?

A slum, beyond the big difference in social class, is characterized by a set of precarious houses where poverty and associated social problems are concentrated. In Mumbai, slums represent 50% of the population's living environment, around seven million people.

Most of our patients come from families that struggle on an average of 8,000 rupees (150 dollars) salary per month, whose members often take on several jobs to be able to make it. It is not rare to see families of 6 or 8 people occupying less than 25 sq. meters with running water only a few hours a day, and no toilets.

Overcrowded, unhealthy houses, poor sanitary conditions, heavy work demands, daily stress, lack of sleep, etc. can explain the majority of the numerous pathologies encountered in the clinic.

Many slum inhabitants have an insufficient access to healthcare; either too expensive, or not adapted to their problems. The Barefoot Acupuncturists' health center brings a local solution accessible to all.



... it is here in the hutments of Bandra East, that the sprightly Walter Fischer treats the economically disadvantaged with his magical needles.

... From 40-plus Mahananda to 75-year-old Laxmi, they all have tales of relief from chronic physical ailments. Mahananda, who suffered from rheumatism, tells you happily that she doesn't need to wake up her daughter at night now to use the community toilet. Seventy-year-old Prema, who has brought chowchow made from noodles from her native Nepal for Fischer, has regained sensation in her right foot and no longer suffers from insomnia. Snehal's school going gaughter pronounces proudly in English : " My mother is ninety percents better"...

(Alpana Chowdhury, "Sunday Times of India")



"Everyone should try to offer real humanity to others. That's what the future of the world depends on."

Albert Schweitzer



WHY HUMANITARIAN ACUPUNCTURE ?

Acupuncture from an economic perspective :

- Allows treatments at a low cost (acupuncture equipment is cheap).
- Is highly adaptable to many places and situations due to its simplicity and portability.
- Brings an alternative to expensive and sophisticated treatments.

Acupuncture from a healthcare perspective :

- Offers a natural and holistic solution to health problems
- Can help in cases that have not been successful with conventional medicine.
- Can reduce the excessive use of chemical drugs and their potential side effects.

Acupuncture from a human perspective :

- Requires a detailed evaluation, global approach and a real attention to the problems of the patients who know they are being listened to and understood.
- Allows patients to gather together in a health center, as a place to share with others.



“ Because acupuncture is adaptable and inexpensive, it is an extraordinary medicine for the poor. Unfortunately it is too often reserved for the rich.

Our objective is simple : bring acupuncture to those for whom healthcare is an inaccessible luxury. Poverty and its inevitable suffering are a reality, but they are not set in stone. We can and should take action.

YOU CAN PARTICIPATE TO OUR PROJECT

“ At a more global level, the approach of Barefoot Acupuncturists responds to an emergency : the need to share, absolutely. Because it is the way to a fairer, more open, “livable” society.

Our tool to make a difference is acupuncture. With your own means, your own “tools” you can support us or even join us.

**We need funds and acupuncturists.
With your help, we can continue to help.**

If you want to support us :

- Barefoot Acupuncturists :
Account : 4928310 (Hottinger, Switzerland)
IBAN : CH86 0876 6492 8310 7560 2
BIC : HOTTCHZZ
- Barefoot.Slums :
Account : 008710110005250 (IFSC, India)
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« Barefoot Acupuncturists » and « Barefoot. Slums » are non-profit organizations :

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Walter Fischer
Acupuncturist
in Mumbai.
Founder of “Barefoot
Acupuncturists”

Ujwala Patil
Founder of Indian NGO
“Barefoot.Slums”



Jacques Beytrison
Acupuncturist and member of
“Barefoot Acupuncturists”



Britta Jaegde
Member and treasurer of
“Barefoot Acupuncturists”