



GENERAL ACUPUNCTURE

## Acupuncture Out on the Border

HOW YOU CAN SPREAD THE GOOD WORD ABOUT AOM AROUND THE GLOBE.

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We all know our profession is blessed with many wonderful and special people. However, an exceptional few are true social entrepreneurs, dedicating their skills and knowledge to people around the world who would otherwise have no access to the healing benefits of AOM. I would like to see them receive more support from all of us.

### Guatemalan Acupuncture Project (GUAMAP)

Begun in 1994, this is one of the oldest and most established acupuncture NGOs (non-governmental organizations). In association with the Guatemalan National Association of Community Health Services, (ASECSA), GUAMAP provides acupuncture training using traditional Chinese medicine for health promoters thoroughly trained in basic health care concepts. Health promoters then use what they learn to treat patients in their home communities. Since 1995, GUAMAP has trained almost 100 health promoters, reaching nine different communities. GUAMAP personnel and health promoters have recorded more than 5,000 acupuncture treatments and are developing a method of data collection to note the outcomes. Requests for training come from the communities themselves through local health committees. Some communities already have been trained in working with emergency situations employing acupuncture. Trainers and staff have produced two training manuals (both in Spanish): one in basic acupuncture and the other in emergency medicine.

Acupuncturists interested in volunteering need to meet specific criteria. Volunteers teach a basic course and treat community members for at least a one-month period. Requirements include:

- NCCAOM certification/or equivalent;
- minimum one-year in practice after graduation;
- experience teaching acupuncture;
- experience with Third-World conditions;
- ability to speak Spanish sufficient to teach acupuncture;
- knowledge of Guatemala; and
- contribution toward round-trip airfare to Guatemala City through joint fundraising.

Interested acupuncturists who meet these requirements can contact them through their Web site, [www.guamap.org](http://www.guamap.org) for more information.

### PanAfrican Acupuncture Project

Founded in 2003, the PanAfrican Acupuncture Project (PAAP) seeks to increase knowledge of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Africa and providing knowledge that acupuncture is able to address some of the signs and symptoms of the disease. The founder, Richard Mandell, was previously involved with the creation of an acupuncture clinic in Boston and knew the great benefits of acupuncture in this population.

The current mission of PAAP is to partner with and train local health care providers in Africa to use simple and effective acupuncture techniques to help manage common symptoms and improve the quality of life of the individuals affected by HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.

Richard Mandell is the main person running this organization. *Acupuncture Today* columnist Beth Sommers helped to develop the program and traveled to Uganda on the initial scouting visit. She now focuses on research and data collection. PAAP is a volunteer-run organization, depending on the availability of those who choose to participate as trainers. Volunteers help as fundraisers and, of course, as trainers in Uganda and Kenya.

So far, PAAP has trained 164 health care practitioners in Uganda and Kenya. In Uganda, the trainings have been conducted in the capital city of Kampala, as well as in six other rural districts. PAAP has developed close collaborations with the Ministry of Health, Makerere University/Institute of Public Health, The AIDS Support Organization (TASO), the Society of Women against AIDS in Africa (SWAA), the African Palliative Care Association (APCA), and THETA, an organization bridging together traditional healers and conventional medical providers.

As a 501(c)(3) organization, PAAP welcomes acupuncturists and students to participate as trainers and always encourages help in raising funds, getting supply donations, maintaining the overall functioning of the organization and developing associations with other organizations here and abroad.

One of the strengths of PAAP is the fact that it empowers local providers by teaching them how to use acupuncture, thereby acknowledging this treatment belongs to the people. It's Richard's opinion that the greatest thing professionals can do is to help others through teaching.

So far, this work has been very well-received here and especially, abroad. The obstacle has never been receiving interest and support of the mission, but rather the ability to get adequate funding. This includes getting enough seed money to be able to hire people to work on getting major donations to sustain and expand PAAP. To help with PAAP's work, contact Richard Mandell at [rmandell@panafricanacupuncture.org](mailto:rmandell@panafricanacupuncture.org).

Yayasan Bumi Sehat (Healthy Earth Nonprofit)

This community clinic in the mountains of Bali was founded by midwife Robin Lim in 1994 to offer prenatal and birthing assistance on a donation-only basis for Indonesian women, as well as health education for their families. A UNICEF study showed that hemorrhage after childbirth was the leading cause of death on the island of Bali.

In 2003-2004, these services were expanded to include general medical and pediatric services with the addition of Bobbi Aqua, LAc, Wayan Sudiarsasna, MD, and Soma Glick, a pediatric-acupuncture specialist. There also is a youth education center offering both computer skills and English classes to Balinese children and teenagers, giving people a chance at jobs in an economy crippled since the terrorist bombings in 2002 and 2005.

The clinic now operates full-time, seeing general medicine patients and birthing mothers. Our Bali health center saw 6,307 general patients in 2006, and 8,350 in 2007. The number of babies delivered at the Bumi Bali Birth Center jumped from 364 in 2006, to 521 in 2007.

Bumi Sehat operates entirely on donations and uses whatever supplies can be carried in by volunteers and locals visiting from other countries. This includes needles, of course, but also Chinese herbal medicines, homeopathic remedies and nutritional supplements.

The clinic treats every condition imaginable as its reputation has spread. Because it is the only clinic of its kind on the island, people come with their families from all over Bali and neighboring islands to be treated for everything - low back pain, epilepsy, headaches, infertility, high blood pressure, etc. Acupuncture during birthing also is offered, which has significantly lowered the rate of caesarean delivery. This year, due to the recent withdrawal of government help for the poor, the number of volunteers is increasing.

Bumi Sehat also operates a full-service clinic/birth center in Aceh, very close to the epicenter of the earthquake that caused the December 2004 tsunami. Soon after the tsunami, Bumi Sehat sent a crew to treat survivors for ailments ranging from unhealed wounds to psychological trauma. The Bumi Sehat Tsunami Relief Clinic still is in operation today.

Long-term goals for the Bumi Sehat include expanding to include inpatient facilities, a hostel for families of birthing mothers, more educational and treatment facilities, and the "ARK" storage barn for disaster-relief survival and medical supplies. The biggest dream is to set up a maternal/child health clinic in Timor Leste, where the maternal mortality rate is the highest in Asia.

Many volunteers have visited Bumi Sehat and the Aceh clinic. Volunteers might even receive NCCAOM credits. Most acupuncture volunteers stay for three to four weeks, but shorter stays are also fine. The clinic can arrange inexpensive home-stays or guesthouse stays for volunteers. Advance approval is now needed to be a volunteer.

Because Bumi Sehat operates on donated materials and funds, it constantly needs financial help for operational expenses, as well as to purchase land for its required relocation within the next few years. To volunteer or donate supplies, send an e-mail to Bobbi Aqua at [drbobbi2003@yahoo.com](mailto:drbobbi2003@yahoo.com). Anyone who wishes to donate money can visit the Bumi Sehat clinic Web site, [www.bumisehatbali.org](http://www.bumisehatbali.org).

#### Acupuncturists Without Borders

AWB was established after the devastating hurricanes of 2005. In Louisiana, AWB volunteers treated 8,000 people including relief workers, survivors, emergency responders and more. It worked with grassroots organizations, churches, free medical clinics, shelters, civil servants, government organizations and the military.

AWB's mission is to provide immediate relief-and-recovery acupuncture services to global communities in crisis from disaster or human conflict. AWB also seeks to provide training and services that promote and sustain local, self-sufficient, proactive and long-term recovery, rebuilding and trauma resolution.

In addition to the work in Louisiana, AWB is now engaged in a project to treat veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan and their families with free community acupuncture. The intention is to help in the recovery process from the enormous impact of war and intervene in the cycle of violence. New clinic locations currently are being initiated in cities across the U.S., and AWB is providing regular training and support to the leaders of these unique free clinics. Please go to their Web site ([www.acuwithoutborders.org](http://www.acuwithoutborders.org)) for information on current clinics.

In addition to this project, more than 400 acupuncturists have been trained at Acupuncturists Without Borders Healing Community Trauma trainings held around the country and hundreds of others have applied to work with AWB in the field. Non-acupuncturists also can participate in these projects. Those interested in volunteering or participating in some other way can e-mail [info@acuwithoutborders.org](mailto:info@acuwithoutborders.org).

The major obstacles AWB has encountered are the restrictions on bringing out-of-state licensed acupuncturists into disaster areas. Many people don't realize if there is an emergency in their state, local acupuncturists also might be victims of the disaster and unable to respond to help their community. In this case, it's very important out-of-state acupuncturists can help out.

According to AWB Executive Director Diana Fried, the organization would like to have a major global presence by 2012, in helping individuals and communities recover from trauma due to conflict, poverty and disasters. It would like to have a stable source of funding and projects implemented all over the world. AWB is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and you can donate and receive a tax benefit for those donations.

#### Donna Caplan's Honduras Project

Donna Caplan, a naturopathic physician, has been the director of Vermont Integrative Medicine for 13 years and has practiced midwifery for nine years. She founded the Gar Tibet Health Project, an educational and health outreach program to aid women in Eastern Tibet. In the last two years, Donna has visited Honduras 13 times, recently practicing in La Cuenca, a very poor section of central Honduras, and working mostly with women and children. She goes to the clinic regularly to keep the momentum of this program, her goal being to spend eight months out of the year at the clinic.

David Tucker helps her get donations from supplement companies for these patients and these contributions have been of great benefit to the people of La Cuenca. The Barre Vermont Rotary club is assisting Donna with shipping the product as well as fund-raising.

Donna's mission is to create access to basic health care services, especially for women, and to empower families to take responsibility for their own health. To accept tax-deductible donations, Donna has organized a relationship with a local nonprofit, Helping Honduras Kids. She also is interested in donations of product or needles. To donate or volunteer, contact her at [donnacaplan@vermontintegrativemedicine.com](mailto:donnacaplan@vermontintegrativemedicine.com) or care of David Tucker at [davidshawnee@mac.com](mailto:davidshawnee@mac.com).

All of these groups are doing work we should not just applaud, but support in whatever ways we can. They were started by people who asked, "If not now, when? If not me, who?"

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