



Amar

Capoeira Changemaker | Peru - Pakistan

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**“CAPOEIRA IS A TRANSFORMATIONAL ART OF SELF-EXPRESSION. IT TEACHES POSITIVE LIVING THROUGH INCLUSION IN COMMUNITY AS WELL AS PHYSICAL AND MENTAL CREATIVITY AND AGILITY.”**

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Amar has always been a humanitarian. First, he was going to be a doctor, then a computer scientist. Then a teacher of business, art and ethics. Somehow, he managed to find his way towards being a Capoeirista. From his experience living and growing up in Pakistan and his recent experience working in Peru, he has focused on showing the positive impact that capoeira can have on women and children.

**“It becomes particularly relevant to develop personal and social skills in vulnerable children with no access to such education.”**

Nonetheless, Amar says that things are slowly changing for the better as education becomes more accessible to all and with renewed efforts, there will be more girls and women playing and teaching Capoeira in Pakistan as time goes by. “I am sure that Peruvian and Brazilian female Capoeira teachers will be instrumental in helping to address this shortfall in conjunction with Pakistani female student Capoeira teachers.”

Amar first introduced Capoeira to Pakistan in 2007 as the pioneering teacher of this art, back when no one had any idea what it was. There was no cultural frame of reference beyond the acrobatics, music or references to a Tekken character available to connect to this ritual for most Pakistanis.





**“CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS FROM THE NEARBY SLUMS OR OTHER IMPOVERISHED AREAS WHO SAW WHAT I WAS DOING SEEMED TO INTUITIVELY UNDERSTAND THE NATURE OF THE GAME. THEY WOULD JOIN IN WITH MYSELF AND MY STUDENTS HAVING FUN, JUMPING AND PLAYING, MAKING CARTWHEELS AND MUSIC AND SINGING EXUBERANTLY. IT WAS AN AMAZING EXPERIENCE!”**

This inspiring experience though underscored the harsh reality of children forced to grow old before their time so they could survive harsh conditions of living. “It was for this reason that I became convinced that the need that this art and ritual could play a pivotal and positive role in their lives. Capoeira calls out to its own. Those who speak its language even though they have not been taught by any mentor. They have learned Capoeira’s lessons themselves through life’s harsh experience.”

“I discovered that this community of people, the Sidis in India and Pakistan, they play a primitive version of the berimbau, as a part of their socio-religious ritual. We Capoeiristas, use metal wires while they still use organic plant or animal fibres. In South Asia the instrument is called a Malunga. Historical connections to capoeira culture are easily discernible.”

Amar’s focus is not solely the sport of Capoeira, but the broad and colourful musicality, history and culture of Capoeira. This has led him to research the presence of communities in Pakistan that have kept alive traditions (such as making instruments or ritual songs) relating to Capoeira as well as associated Afro culture in South Asia on a wider level. Cultural preservation of these skills is necessary and Amar is planning to give workshops, gather and keep alive the specific knowledge of these communities and share them with the youth. He wants to create centres for education and training, including the theoretical, but also the vocational aspects.

Lyari in Karachi, while also being one of the oldest neighbourhoods of Karachi is also well known for its violence, lawlessness and



poverty. This slum is the historical center for the long resident urban Sidi population in the South of Pakistan. The Sidis are descendants of Bantu peoples settled in the area and whom have retained intimate connections to their African motherland through music and ritual. Lyari is also well known for producing athletes in football and boxing. However due to the historical marginalisation of Afro peoples in South Asia, this immense potential is wasted due to lack of opportunities of funding and training.

In his work, he would like to exemplify how Sidi culture links to capoeira, make allies, conduct awareness and technical workshops, help to observe and document rituals alongside more practical measures such as movement and music classes of Capoeira.

Amar discusses: “A wonderful paradox that has kept me deeply curious about Capoeira since I started playing almost 20 years ago. I have seen the same delight as mine on students faces as they discover more about what Capoeira is and what it means to them.

A game that offers a respite from their daily struggles where they can recover the spontaneity of childhood games. In so doing

they find a chance for an education and inclusion within a safe and encouraging community so they can learn and grow as part of something positive on their way to becoming productive and healthy members of society.”

Since that beginning over a decade ago, Amar has personally ensured that Capoeira in Pakistan grows into the small nascent community of students and student-teachers from all walks of life present today.

**“Orphans, diplomats, refugees, artists, students, business people, street children, professionals, foreigners, musicians, teachers and locals all training and performing together and collectively learning as part of a diverse community that not only accepts differences but knows they are a strength and not a weakness.”**

Amar has been lucky enough to experience much of the world through Capoeira. He has done all he can to help others progress on

their way as good friends and teachers have helped him along.

Being a Changemaker Fellow has helped him to achieve his dream of dedicating himself to utilising the transformational power of Capoeira in changing the lives of those who need and understand it. To the dispossessed and marginalised wherever he may be able to reach out to them through his work. Capoeira is most meaningful and useful to those who suffer prejudice and injustice.

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**THE MISSION IS STILL THE SAME AS IT EVER WAS, THOUGH NOW AMAR IS PART OF A GLOBAL NETWORK THAT CAN DO SO MUCH MORE THEN HE OR HIS STUDENTS EVER COULD ON THEIR OWN.**

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“I have known from the very beginning that my journey in Capoeira would be a lifelong

one. For now, it is enough to deepen my studies and continue to share knowledge in the hope that the students that I have taught and will teach, continue to grow and on their own path share what they have learnt in the spirit of giving to others what Capoeira has given to them. A family and a community in which they can grow and learn positive living.”

Amar is currently working in Peru and collaborating with other Peruvian Angoleiros who share a common vision of growing an active community of Capoeira Angola engaged with social work. Connecting Brazil, Peru and Pakistan through cultural and educational exchange is thereby part of a bigger plan.

After initiating and establishing work in Peru, he looks forward to returning home to Pakistan to expand and fortify connections between and within Brazil, Latin America and South Asia inside the roda of Capoeira.

**“We all need peace in our lives and Capoeira is a creative and relevant social tool to teach and preserve peace culture to all. Axé.”**

