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WATSI

2013 Nominet Trust 100 Winner

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CONNECTING DONORS WITH PATIENTS IN NEED OF LOW-COST MEDICAL CARE.

Project URL: watsi.org

Project Twitter: [@watsi](https://twitter.com/watsi)

One To Watch

- Economic Empowerment
- Health
- Data
- Social Software

Chase Adam has what he describes as an epiphany sitting at the back of a bus in a small village in Costa Rica called Watsi. At the front of the bus a woman in tattered clothing, holding a red folder, was speaking to the passengers near her. Adam thought she was one of the many people who boarded buses to sell sweets and cosmetics. Yet as the woman approached him, her plastic bag already full with money, he realised this was something different. The red folder the woman was holding contained a photograph of her son, a long incision stretching across his stomach, and next to the photograph was an explanation of the medical treatment he needed. The woman was raising donations to save her son's life.

Adam decided he had to find a way to connect women like this with people in the developed world, who could help fund decent healthcare: a kind of person-to-person healthcare development programme.

In much of the developed world the poorest people have little option but to rely on private healthcare. Public services are chronically underfunded, overcrowded, often poor quality and inaccessible to people in rural areas. Yet private insurance and savings systems for healthcare are rare: this means most poor people pay for medical expenses directly out of their own pocket. They often pay over the odds for the care they get. As a result people are dying of treatable illnesses because they can't afford basic medical care.

Watsi aims to address this through a global crowdfunding platform which connects donors with patients in need of low-cost medical care to fund high-impact treatments with high-quality providers. Donors can give as little as \$5 to help someone, and Watsi pledges that 100% of every donation funds medical care. Donors can get regular updates on patients' treatment.

Watsi was launched in 2012 as the first non-profit funded by seed accelerator Y Combinator, and plans to become financially sustainable by 2015, when it hopes to be able to help a million people in need of care.

Watsi has rapidly expanded its operations to 18 countries, with 1000s of patients being given the funding they need for their treatment. The company is also being 'radically open' with an impressively comprehensive [transparency spreadsheet](#) published on the web.

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