Health Equity through Medical Education: The Gambella Medical School Story

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Gambella Medical School

• Disclaimers: Barry Bacon MD, Gatbel Chamjock PA, Yohanes Tot PA, Yien Duoth M Sc & Eng, Andrew Dolfie PA, and Gabriel Wakow PharmD have no commercial relationships to disclose.

GMS: Introduction

Barry Bacon MD
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Health Equity through Medical Education

Teaching objectives:
At the end of this session the learner will be able to:
- Personally define health equity
- Describe what each is committed to doing in their practice and life to improve health equity for the world
- Advocate for locally accessible medical education in health disparate regions of the world
Health Equity: Definition

How would you define health equity?
Why does it matter to you?

Health Equity: Numbers that matter

Refugee crisis
Refugee education access

GMS: Refugees continued

We are now witnessing the highest levels of displacement on record.
An unprecedented 70.8 million people around the world have been forced from home. Among them are nearly 25.9 million refugees, over half of whom are under the age of 18.

There are also millions of stateless people who have been denied a nationality and access to basic rights such as education, healthcare, employment and freedom of movement.

UNHCR

GMS: The State of Refugee Health and Education

As of 2017, 65.6 million individuals have been forcibly displaced worldwide because of persecution, conflict, violence, or human rights violations, per the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Of these, 5.4 million were Palestinian refugees, which are not under UNHCR but under UNRWA’s mandate.

Middle East and North Africa: 2.739 million
Africa: 4.413 million
Asia and the Pacific: 3.830 million
Europe: 4.391 million

Refugee crisis - Wikipedia

GMS: Refugee Camps

97% of refugees never make it out
Average length of stay in refugee camp is 17 years
(UNHCR 2004)
1% of refugees have access to higher education vs 32% of non refugees
UNHCR’s goal is 15% access by 2030
(UNHCR)
Higher education opportunities exist for refugees in host countries (Idaho/Germany)
Higher education opportunities for refugees in origin countries are rare and limited (Kakuma camp 47/150,000)
Health Equity: The Region
Numbers that matter: the reality of health equity
*Brain drain
Gambella as a hardship area
Education access inequity
Refugee crisis
*South Sudan crisis

Health Equity and Medical Education
What does health equity look like in Gambella?
What if we could change the health outcomes for an entire region?
What does it feel like to live where the population to physician ratio is 100,000 to 1?
What if we invited refugees to be part of their solution?

GMS: Background
2013 trip to Gambella: An encounter with one patient

Health Equity: Gambella Site Visit
We met with local, regional and national leadership
We visited local university, hospital and health center
We traveled to remote rural health center and school
We identified like minded partners
Gambella Site Visit: Findings

Turnover of staff at hospital is dramatic
MSF has expanded their services at the hospital
Tribal conflicts common in region
Significant population shifts across the border
Ethiopian leadership supportive of refugee inclusion
Local leadership willing to provide site for teaching hospital
Gambella Site Visit: Summary

Findings:
- Hospital
- Health Center
- University
- Leadership support
- MSF and other potential partners
- Community health
- Infrastructure
- Need

Gambella Med School: Challenges

- US partnerships
- Infrastructure
- Distractions
- Regional instability

Gambella Med School: Strengths

- US Med School Partnership
- GMTC
- Core Faculty Development
- Curriculum development

Gambella Med School: Next Steps

- Faculty development
- Partnership development
- Supplemental faculty identification
- Conversations with Campbell leadership
- Launch the medical school
Gambella Med School:
Summary
- Unique med school
- Inclusion of local students and refugees
- Healing process
- Peace initiative
- Partnership with service-minded US med school
- Core faculty are diaspora

Gambella Med School:
Discussion/questions