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GOVERNANCE AND POLITICAL DECISION MAKING

Foundation of a Maternity and Children's Healthcare Center For Displaced Syrians

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Background: The United Nations has declared the Syrian crisis the worst humanitarian crisis of the 21st century. More than 50% of Syria's population is currently displaced. As a consequence of the violence, the infrastructure has collapsed, especially affecting healthcare facilities. Many hospitals and the pharmaceutical industry has been severely damaged, leaving children without vital vaccines, and everyone without necessary medication. The healthcare for displaced Syrians and refugees is getting worse as the conflict continues. Women and children account for up to 75% of Syrian displaced and refugees and are the most vulnerable population groups, especially in the context of lack of access to maternal child health (MCH) services.

Methods: In view of the urgent need for women and children's healthcare, a group of Saudi Physicians, in partnership with a group of Syrian physicians, established a non-profit healthcare facility to serve women and children within a safe area in the Al-Rayhaniyah region, at Atimah (a small town on the Syrian -Turkish border near Antakya) named the Brotherhood Medical Center (BMC). Although there is a great enthusiasm and strong initial support from the donors, BMC continues to face many financial and operational challenges, including difficulties in transfer money to Syria, shortage of medical supplies markets and lack of qualified medical personnel as many of them were forced to flee outside the country.

Findings: Currently, the BMC provides antenatal care, emergency maternal and childcare, normal deliveries and postnatal care for mothers and babies living within a distance of 250 km. Although there were a great enthusiasm and strong initial support from the donors, BMC continues to face many financial and operational difficulties, including transferring money to Syria, shortage of medical supplies, and lack of qualified medical personnel. It is expected that if BMC had the sufficient amount of financial and operative support, it would function as a full secondary care medical center with the capacity to accommodate 100 OB/GYN emergency room visits, 25 Normal deliveries, 300 OPD cases, 10 Operative Cases and 25 In patient cases per day.

Interpretation: In spite of all challenges BMC and similar project still represent a promising hope for the needy displaced people.

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The Post-Conflict Colombia Public Health Project: A Global Health Diplomacy Case Study

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Program/Project Purpose: After 50 years of conflict, Colombia has seven million IDPs, second only to Syria. Medellín, once the most violent, was transformed into one of the most innovative cities through "social urbanism" initiatives addressing poverty, violence, and equality. These progressive policies serve as a reintegration model for the world. Granizal, located in the outskirts of Medellín, is home to the second highest IDP community in Colombia.

Objectives: Future public health leaders must be able to bridge nations and cultures through diplomacy with innovative strategies and partnerships. We describe a model for a multi-institutional, cross-cultural collaboration based on *The Post-Conflict Colombia Public Health Project*, a course developed between the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, Harvard School of Public Health, Open Hands Initiative, and the University of Antioquia.

Structure/Method/Design: The course examines the social development model of Medellín and its impact on peace, social equity, and health. It aims to educate and train Colombian and American students while providing direct services and fostering long-term sustainable projects. Seminars, skill building workshops, cultural experiences, and community engagement are used to build professional competencies and inform policy recommendations for future projects.

Outcome & Evaluation: Impact: The project serves the purpose of educating future public health leaders and yielding impact and outcomes for the community of Granizal. In the policy briefing reports and presentations, students apply their new skills and experiences to real world situations with the intent of influencing key stakeholders. This final project demonstrates the students' proficiency in formulating innovative, feasible, and sustainable policy initiatives as well as communicating effectively to high-level policy makers. The four briefing reports developed with the community were: Census and Mapping, Health and Access, Education, Women and Children. The students present these briefing reports before a panel of government officials and public health leaders in Bogotá. The course received top student evaluations.

Going Forward: The three major outcomes of this project are a white paper on the state of post-conflict Colombia; the development of an annual course to provide a sustainable collaboration with the University of Antioquia and the Granizal community; and the dissemination of a case study as a model for future use by academic institutions between countries.

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