



2015 Global Diaspora Week LAUNCH EVENT
October 9, 2015
Session Notes

Session Title: Diaspora Driven Capacity Building in Health

Speakers: Ms. Elizabeth Jordan (Opening Remarks), Dr. Joseph Nwadiuko (Moderator), Dr. Neeraja Nagarajan, Dr. Bijay Acharya, Dr. Bisrat Hailemeskel, Dr. Aelaf Worku

Session Summary:

Today, one in four doctors and one in six nurses were born or trained abroad as a result of a mass unidirectional migration of health workers. This panel highlighted the efforts of four diaspora doctors working to reverse the unidirectionality of this “brain drain” and improve health care infrastructure and provider expertise in Low- to Middle-Income Countries (LMIC). All physician speakers presented their projects and partnerships to demonstrate how they are giving back to their home countries through different programs, institutions, and partnerships. The panel stressed the unique position of these diaspora doctors to affect change in LMICs through forging global partnerships that combine their firsthand knowledge of the countries’ health care system, culture, and individual needs with their institutional backing in their host country.

Key Themes:

- Theme 1: Framing necessary medical changes in a positive, culturally sensitive light is crucial to bring about constructive, durable change.
- Theme 2: Start with the basics. Teams and programs working in LMICs have a wealth of resources and advanced medical training, but the basics must be conquered before attempting more advanced training techniques and practices.
- Theme 3: Accountability and transparency are crucial to strong, durable, and effective relationships.
- Theme 4: In such an interconnected world, leveraging networks can bring about incredible results.

Participants and Discussion Topics:

- Dr. Joseph Nwadiuko (Moderator) is a Nigerian-American Resident in Internal Medicine at Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center. He has worked in 7 countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin



America, including surgical missions in Nigeria and Bolivia and at a drug rehab center in North India.

- Dr. Neeraja Nagarajan is a physician and aspiring surgeon trained in India. She serves as the Director of Research for Diaspora Health Network and has worked with colleagues to develop and pilot –test a comprehensive research seminar and workshop for medical students/residents in LMIC with the goal of improving research outputs from these countries.
- Dr. Bijay Acharya is an Assistant in Medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital and Instructor in Medicine at Harvard Medical School. Born, raised, and educated in Nepal, he currently leads three non-profits: Possible, SharedMinds, and the American Nepal Medical Foundation. Dr. Acharya and these organizations work to provide high quality medical care, support mental health initiatives, and reconstruct health centers in Nepal after the devastating earthquake in April 2015.
- Dr. Bisrat Hailemeskel is an Associate Professor and Director of Drug Information Services at Howard University in the College of Pharmacy. Dr. Hailemeskel is the Principle Investigator for the Howard University-Addis Ababa University Twinning Partnership.
- Dr. Aelaf Worku is a Clinical Associate of Medicine in the Department of Medicine at the University of Chicago. He has served as both a quality improvement advisor at Debre Berhan Referral Hospital in Ethiopia and a medical education advisor to the Ethiopian Federal Ministry of Health, helping to launch thirteen medical schools and strengthen primary health care systems.

Audience Questions:

- Directed towards Dr. Aelaf Worku: How did you manage to double the number of medical schools in Ethiopia in only a year?
 - Dr. Worku responded, stating that “all health is global, but all good leadership is local”. This goal could not have been achieved without the phenomenal in-country leadership and vision that was pushed for promoting health.