An Analysis of the Experiences Accessing Healthcare in Rural Morocco

Morocco has faced distinct challenges in creating equality in access, quality, and positive work environments in health. There are great discrepancies between what is available to urban populations as compared to rural villages, not only with physical resources but also with access to information. Members of the general population do not have access to information about biomedical healthcare—much less the system of power that molds the institution of healthcare and the means of experiencing it—leaving them less able to advocate for themselves or fully understand diagnoses and medications prescribed. I conducted several focus groups with both healthcare workers and residents of a small town, two illness narratives, and participatory observation of a clinic in a small village while serving in the Peace Corps in Morocco. Common concerns across the groups were issues of access, ability to provide adequate care, and funding. A potential cause for these concerns was determined to be the lasting effects of a Structural Adjustment Plan (SAP) implemented by the World Bank and IMF. Larger scale protests have erupted across the country as a result of the neoliberal factors at play within the government. Although the King has made promises of change, outcomes of healthcare legislation have not achieved projected levels. As Morocco continues to develop the lack of support for the healthcare system is becoming more obvious the citizens are becoming more outspoken about their dissatisfaction. The modern contexts that this struggle exists within will only allow it to grow and potentially connect with other similar movements happening in other areas of Africa or globally and enable groups of healthcare workers or residents of small towns and villages to come together to push back against their healthcare system.

Sarah Blakeney received her Bachelor of Arts in Sociology with a concentration in Anthropology from Christopher Newport University in Newport News, Virginia. She also pursued minors in Biology and Leadership Studies. Upon entering the Master’s International Program at American University in Washington, D.C., Sarah served in the Peace Corps from September 2016 until November 2018. While abroad, she conducted research on the healthcare system in Morocco for her capstone project. In August 2019, she graduated with an M.A. in Public Anthropology and is currently the Employment Services Coordinator for the Refugee and Immigrant Services department at the Catherine McAuley Center in Cedar Rapids.