

Healthcare Partnerships in Northern Iraq

Thoughts from a Site Visit
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Northern Iraq is an ancient mountainous land and home to the Kurds. Post World War I politics led the Kurds to be minorities in five different countries.

Erbil Library Map of Kurdistan



Iraqi Kurdistan has enjoyed protected freedom and democracy since 1992

Ancient Carvings in Cave above Dohuk



Undated prehistoric messages in one of many caves that dot landscape

Abraham slept here ...



Erbil Citadel inside courtyard, 7000 BC

Assyrian Christian Church



Village Mosque



Synagogue dating from 300 AD, Amedy



The mountaintop town and fortress is rich in religious history

Iraqi Kurdistan has suffered from conflict since the 1960s. Saddam has laid waste to the region several times.

Since 1992 the region has been protected from Saddam's armies by the US enforced No Fly Zone.

Halabja Memorial Diorama



Where Saddam killed 5,000 in 45 minutes with chemical and biological weapons

Halabja Memorial



“The air smelled sweet like apples...”

Escape of the Kurds before Saddam's gunships and tanks



Student art at Sulymania University

Grim Reminder: Bullet Pocked Buildings



70% of GDP under Saddam was military spending

There is leadership and vision alive in the region. Children and young professionals appreciate the freedom brought by the United States.

Children welcoming ETSU visitors in public park



What struck the visitors was the friendliness and smiles of children

Young lady who presented flowers at rural hospital



A survivor and new generation who will maintain the distinctive local culture

Secondary student exams: Sunday morning in the park



College admission and professions are pre-selected based upon exams

Medical student martyr



One who stayed to protect university during 1991 massacres

Medical and nursing staff at Rosanna Hospital



One-two year obligatory rural service for all medical school graduates

Map study of health districts at Bardarash Hospital



Northern Iraq has centralized, fully integrated but underfunded health system

Sulaimani Nurses Association



Leaders create a profession from a history of under training and underuse

Women's Freedom Statue



Using higher education to promote societal change

Symbols of new hope: From Annihilation to Rose Garden



Erbil's new public rose garden, built on remains of notorious Iraqi army base

There remain many regional challenges, particularly in health care. Investment in the North is accountable and will produce tangible results.

One of 10,000 land mines



**Land mine to population ratio = 3:1.
The outcome = death and amputees.**

Children playing downstream from cattle



Diarrhea disease is biggest killer of children.

New Bakaresh Maternity Center



Over 50% of births at home. There are no health statistics for region.

Regional breastfeeding campaign and malnutrition efforts



Ministry of Health breastfeeding program is reducing infant mortality rates.

Region has a fully integrated centralized health delivery system



Tertiary hospitals in cities linked to district hospitals throughout region

Most hospitals are old, poorly equipped but impeccably clean



Doctors quarters in rural hospital. Some primary health centers lack water.

Pharmacies in all hospitals and most primary health centers



There are shortages of drugs and no quality control

Symbol of the past: Peshmerga hospital guard



Health centers seen as care for the public

*International partnerships can play
in role in assisting Kurds to help
themselves. ETSU's role in
Healthcare Partnership in
Northern Iraq is an example.*

Develop first Internet centers at medical schools



Use of the internet was prohibited under Saddam. Bandwidth is still an issue

Adding to the CD Libraries



ETSU faculty share lecture materials in basic sciences and CME

Dr. Olsen's lecture on post graduate OB-GYN curriculum



Kurdish and ETSU faculty have exchanged ideas via site visits and e-mail

Install the region's first radio communication system

- There was no communication system within the region
- Phones are limited, internet bandwidth oversold, and mountains prevent decent cell and satellite reception
- Partnership and DC visit provided equipment and funds for installation
- The first radio is presented to Dr. Jamal Abdulraheem, Minister of Health



Faculty users at Dohuk CD Library



Faculty did not have computer access, projectors and lacked adequate teaching supplies for anything but traditional lecture style

Students : “We hear bullets and screaming while we study...”



- Deans moved teaching to rural teaching health centers using ETSU model
- Students learn both clinical and community health skills
- Erbil's center is in Iraqi concentration camp village where 7500 men were taken South to their deaths

*The North could lead
the way in Iraq's new freedom:
in economy, for tolerance,
supporting democracy
and of new ideas.*

Flags over Sulymania

- Kurds appreciate Americans and other liberators
- Small businesses like mobile stands thrive
- Homemade American flag flies proudly at mountaintop picnic area above Sulymania



Well protected visitors



Kurds protect their freedom by maintaining their own army and police force

Freedom to roam: exploring rural health, Iraqi style



NRHA President Dr. Wayne Myers finds the way off the beaten path

New housing construction



Reinvestment being made by those forced to escape years ago

Symbol of the
new North:
The country's
only operating
amusement
park attracts
visitors from
all across country,
assuring safety
and freedom for
their families



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