

The case for Tanzanian healthcare and the Touch Foundation

THE HEALTH CRISIS

- Tanzania has one of the lowest doctor to patient ratios in the world: 1 doctor for every 30,000 people.¹ In the United States there is 1 doctor for every 300 people.²
- To provide even basic healthcare, Tanzania is 89,000 healthcare workers short. In 2019 without intervention, the gap is expected to exceed 100,000.³
- One out of every nine Tanzania children does not live to see their 5th birthday.⁴
- One out of 24 Tanzanian mothers will die during child birth.⁵ In the developing world, for every mother that dies giving birth, another twenty will suffer long term disabilities.⁶ With relatively simple interventions, 75 percent of maternal death and disability is preventable.⁷
- The life expectancy in Tanzania is 52 years.⁸ Tanzanians have a 44 percent probability that they will not live to see their 40th birthday.⁹
- The Tanzanian government commitment to improving healthcare: current healthcare spending is 10.6 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), but the country has pledged to increase this commitment to 15 percent over the next few years.¹⁰ For comparison, countries like the US, Canada, Mexico and the UK that are members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) spend an average of 8.8 percent on healthcare.¹¹

THE ROLE OF THE TOUCH FOUNDATION

1. Provide management capacity

- Workers spend an average of 40 percent of their time on patients; the rest is spent on administrative, managerial, or unproductive activities.¹²
- The Touch Foundation works alongside hospital and university leadership to develop a comprehensive strategic plan to prioritize infrastructure, equipment, and operational systems needs.

2. Fund major health institutions

- Weill Bugando University College of Health Sciences (WBUCHS) is the second largest health training center in Tanzania and is located in the Lake Zone region. The university is training 776 students across eight disciplines, including 277 medical doctors as well as nurses, laboratory scientists, pharmacists, anesthetists, assistant medical officers, and radiologists.

¹ Tanzania Service Provision Assessment Survey, 2006.

² Doctor density from AMA, 2006. Population from U.S. Census Bureau, 2006.

³ World Health Organization, 2006.

⁴ UNICEF, 2006.

⁵ UNICEF, 2006.

⁶ UNFDP, 2008.

⁷ “Catalyzing Change”, Touch Foundation/McKinsey report, 2009.

⁸ UNICEF, 2006.

⁹ UNDP, 2005.

¹⁰ Government of Tanzania, 2006.

¹¹ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2003.

¹² “Catalyzing Change”, Touch Foundation/McKinsey report, 2009.

- Bugando’s hospital is the sole referral hospital for 15 million people in the Lake Zone region. The hospital admits over 60,000 patients a year.
- The Touch Foundation funds roughly 80 percent of the operating costs of Bugando’s university as well as supporting specialists and resident exchange programs at Bugando’s hospital.

3. Planning and solutions

The Touch Foundation is currently in the process of publishing two major studies in partnership with McKinsey & Company.

- **The Lake Zone Initiative:** We researched and developed eight pragmatic initiatives to improve health care delivery in the Lake Zone region, including addressing management capacity, health worker training and retention, resource supply chains, and worker productivity.
- **The Twiga Initiative:** At the personal request of the Tanzanian health minister, we conducted a nationwide assessment of health worker training capacity, enabling the government to develop a realistic plan to double the number of students entering medical training schools.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Training a doctor in the U.S. costs ~\$500,000, whereas training a doctor in Tanzania can cost as little as \$30,000-\$40,000, including post-graduate training.¹³
- Training a health worker in Tanzania is over seven times cheaper than importing one from abroad.¹⁴

Cost breakdown for training health workers					
Cadre	Training	2009 total enrollment	Yearly cost per student	Total program cost per student	
MD students	5 years	277	\$6,500	\$32,500	
Nursing	4 years	136	\$2,500	\$10,000	
Lab Technicians	3 years	104	\$3,000	\$9,000	
Pharmacy	3 years	99	\$2,500	\$7,500	
Post-graduate	3 years	27	\$9,200	\$27,600	
Radiography Assistant	3 years	42	\$2,500	\$7,500	
Medical Officer	2 years	83	\$3,000	\$6,000	
Anesthesia	1 year	8	\$2,400	\$2,400	

MAKING AN IMPACT

- Bugando has grown from an entering class of ten medical students in 2003 to nearly 800 health worker students today.
- Over the next five years, Bugando will produce 287 medical doctors. This will more than double the total number of doctors in the Lake Zone region. There are only 268 doctors in the Lake Zone and only 1,339 doctors in all of Tanzania.¹⁵
- Trained doctors generally stay in Tanzania to work. A study of doctors that have graduated between 1968 and 2005 in Tanzania shows that over two-thirds were still in the workforce in 2006.¹⁶

¹³ “Investing in Tanzanian Human Resources for Health,” Touch Foundation, 2006.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Latest figures available from ‘Tanzania Service Provision Assessment Survey’, 2006.

¹⁶ Tanzania Labour Market Survey, 2006.

- According to a McKinsey & Company report, each health worker trained will save, conservatively, around 350 lives in his or her career.¹⁷ At current capacity, Bugando will train around 1,000 health workers over the next five years, enabling them to save some 350,000 lives.

¹⁷ Ibid.