

King Abdullah Fellowship Program



Third Annual Report

July 2013 — June 2014

Hubert Department of Global Health

Rollins School of Public Health

Emory University

Atlanta, Georgia, USA

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We would like to offer our special thanks for the support provided by:

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Dr. Abdullah Assiri

Dr. Samar Alsagaf

Dr. James Curran

Dr. Carlos Del Rio



Photo: 2014 KAFP Graduation Reception

Executive Summary

Over the past 4 years, since signing the Letter of Engagement in May 2010, the King Abdullah Fellowship Program has grown in numbers and visibility. We celebrated the graduation of the first cohort of six in May of 2013 and were proud when one of its members was chosen by faculty and students to be the commencement speaker. In 2014, the second cohort of 12 KA fellows graduated, with a member whose thesis has already been accepted for publication.

Over the last year, the KA fellows have taken an active role in the life of the school: publishing their healthcare editorials in the campus newspaper; helping to organize Saudi Week; and leading the Saudi Students Association, the first on Emory's campus. This group was instrumental to the great success of the first Saudi International Week, which occurred the week of Saudi National Day. The main entrances, lobby, and primary walkway between the two school buildings were decorated with art, furnishings, and images from KSA. Hundreds of students, faculty, and staff enjoyed Saudi cuisine and the cultural events that were scheduled throughout the week.

The program has expanded its offering this past year, inaugurating English for KA Families, classes created especially for the spouses and siblings of KA Fellows. Seven participants who had little or no previous exposure to English worked with an ESL instructor on essential vocabulary and grammar points needed for real-life situations. The regular language practice throughout the school year and the trust and fellow feeling that developed between teacher and students eased family members' transition into American life.

In January, our staff traveled to Riyadh, where we presented a 3-week Rollins Application Workshop for 2014-15 candidates who had been screened by the MoH. At the workshop, we familiarized students with the basic of the curriculum, this program, and life in Atlanta. We guided them step-by-step through the application process, with hands-on help at every stage, including resume and personal statement composition and editing. We were thrilled to collaborate with KAFP alumni, five of whom participated by leading sessions. They enriched the workshop by giving presentations on facets of their personal and academic experiences at Emory, answering students' questions, and hosting a field trip to the National Museum.

This year, we welcome the largest KA cohort yet. As the program continues to grow, we work to identify and address areas of performance that could be improved. One of these areas is English proficiency. This fall, in addition to our standard language support services, we will offer incoming students more structured and intensive English classes so that they can reach their full potential in this demanding environment.

We are excited by the opportunities this program affords for scientific collaboration, cultural exchange, and knowledge building among public health professionals in both KSA and the United States.

Background

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) has made significant efforts to strengthen the healthcare infrastructure. The Kingdom faces public health concerns for infectious diseases (e.g., dengue, tuberculosis, hepatitis) and chronic diseases (e.g., diabetes, hypertension, obesity). Public health professionals play a critical role in combatting these diseases.

King Abdullah established an endowment to build human capacity in KSA, and in 2010, a Letter of Engagement (LOE) was signed between the MoH and the Rollins School of Public Health (RSPH). The LOE includes several areas of mutually beneficial scientific collaboration.

Objectives

The primary objectives of the King Abdullah Fellowship Program are to:

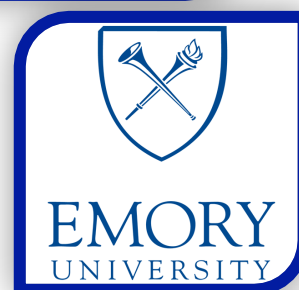
- Strengthen public health capacity in KSA;
- Engage in collaborative research activities; and
- Promote bilateral exchange of students and researchers.

Master of Public Health Education (2011 to present)

King Abdullah Fellows matriculate in the Hubert Department of Global Health (HDGH) and the department of Health Policy and Management (HPM). Fellows conduct their practicum assignments and thesis research in KSA.

Collaborative Research

KA Fellows engage in collaborative research as a part of their program and graduate from Rollins having produced publishable work on public health topics such as diabetes, tobacco, hepatitis, vaccine preventable diseases, and tuberculosis in KSA. RSPH faculty develop collaborative research or spend extended lengths of time in KSA performing program assessments.



Exchange of students

In 2009, the first American Emory MPH student spent her summer in Riyadh working on a tuberculosis research project. And her manuscript was published in the *Annals of Epidemiology*. In May 2011, four American Emory MPH candidates traveled to Riyadh on a Global Field Experience (GFE) to work on diabetes and smoking control, antimicrobial resistance, and hepatitis projects, in collaboration with KSA counterparts.

2013 – 2014 Timeline

- Oct – Nov 2013: Cohort of 90 candidates recruited and interviewed from the Ministry of Health (MoH)
- Jan 2014: Application workshop and preparation in Riyadh
- Mar 2014: Cohort of 16 accepted into the HDGH and HPM
- Apr 2014: Cohort of 12 enrolled in HDGH and 4 enrolled in HPM
- May – Aug 2014: Cohort of 2013 traveled to KSA to complete practicums
- Mar – Aug 2014: Administrative and logistical support for arrival of cohort of 2014
- Jul – Aug 2014: Cohort of 16 students arrived to Atlanta
- Aug 2014: Cohort began studies
- Aug 2014 – May 2015: English, epidemiology, accounting and biostatistics tutoring provided

Highlights

- First King Abdullah Fellowship cohort's graduation in May 2013
(<http://bopvideo.com/KingAbdullahGraduation.html>)
- Fatima Al Slail's commencement address: In May 2013, Dr. Al Slail was nominated and then elected by peers and faculty members to give the commencement address at graduation before fellow students, faculty and staff, and family members and friends
(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oclsvBfPwnE>)
- Abdulaziz Aloufi (Global Health, Cohort 2012) published an editorial entitled “A Call for Universal Healthcare” in the March 28, 2013 edition of the Emory Wheel, the campus-wide newspaper (<http://www.emorywheel.com/a-call-for-universal-healthcare/>)
- Sulafa Al-Qutub (Health Policy Management, Cohort 2012) published an editorial entitled, *Technical Efficiency in Mammography Screening* in the March 24, 2014 edition of the Emory Wheel, the campus-wide newspaper
(<http://www.emorywheel.com/technical-efficiency-in-mammography-screening/>)

- Rania Al-Qudaihi (Health Policy Management, Cohort 2012) published an editorial entitled, *Intervention and Community* in the April 17, 2014 edition of the Emory Wheel, the campus-wide newspaper (<http://www.emorywheel.com/intervention-and-community-individual-approach-to-addiction-insufficient/>)
- Abdulaziz Aloufi (Global Health, Cohort 2012) published an editorial entitled, *Racism Denies Equal Health Care Access* in the April 15, 2014 edition of the Emory Wheel, the campus-wide newspaper (<http://www.emorywheel.com/racism-denies-equal-health-care-access/>)
- Abdulaziz Aloufi (Global Health, Cohort 2012) receives Award for Exceptional Global Master's Thesis poster.
- The Saudi Student Association (SSA) was founded by KA Fellows in September 2013
- The first International Week celebrating Saudi Arabia took place in September with a high level of participation and enthusiasm among the Rollins staff and student body



Photo: International Week Saudi Arabia 2013

Program Staff



Programmatic Support

Dr. McNabb serves as the program and academic advisor for the Fellows. From the time they arrive, the Fellows and their families receive social and academic support to adjust to life at Emory.

- Weekly meetings with Dr. McNabb to discuss academic and social issues
- Meetings with faculty, KAF staff, and instructors
- English language instruction and support
- Biostatistics, epidemiology, accounting, and data analysis instruction and support
- Transportation services during transition period
- Assistance with enrolling children in schools and daycares
- Cultural competency workshop for incoming and current students
- Administrative support for filing the necessary paperwork
- English classes for spouses and family members of Fellows
- Financial support for extracurricular activities inside and outside of Georgia

English as a Second Language for Families

This year, we offered beginning level “survival” English classes to KA Fellows’ family members to aid in the smooth transition into American culture. Classes focus mainly on conversation practice, building vocabulary, and teaching the grammar points needed to construct proper English sentences in real world scenarios, allowing for confident engagement in everyday conversation.



Photo: International Week Saudi Arabia 2013

Conclusion

The King Abdullah Fellowship Program continues to be successful due to the efforts of the Fellows and staff, as well as the commitment and ongoing support of the MoH, SACM, and Emory University. Through this partnership, the program has grown, and Fellows are continuing the pursuit of a rigorous education in public health. Exposure to Emory's extensive knowledge base and the exchange of experiences will lead to the development of skills that will allow these students to make significant contributions to the advancement of public health. The continuation of the program will allow stronger relationships to grow between public health experts in KSA and the United States.



Photo: Atlanta, Georgia, USA Skyline at Dusk by Fatima Al Slail, Cohort of 2011

Lessons Learned and Recommendations

Admissions

1. **Lesson Learned:** The candidates did not have sufficient time to prepare for and take the GRE and TOEFL tests.

Recommendation: The admissions process must begin in October (via email) with the KAFP team members. Recruitment and interviews through MoH should begin in September. Once the applicants have been screened, KAFP team members can send required information to applicants so they can begin preparing to apply (scheduling their tests and beginning to study for them). This will allow them to be better prepared for our session in January, where we will focus on editing resumes and SOPs as well as previewing the school's offerings and helping them finalize their applications. The fellows should submit their applications by March 1st at the latest. This must be the deadline and set cut-off date, no exceptions.

2. **Lesson Learned:** The candidates need to have strong English language skills, both oral and written, in order to succeed in Emory's demanding academic environment.

Recommendation: An English placement test (developed and reviewed by KAFP ESL Instructors) should be administered during the workshop in January. ESL instructors will evaluate this test and consider the score when making recommendations for admission. In addition, each candidate should be interviewed, and questions should be related to topics that candidates might encounter during their studies.



3. **Lesson Learned:** A communication gap exists between the ministries of KSA. This resulted in the delay of the release of papers and the students' arrival in the US.

Recommendation: Clearly defined start dates and deadlines. Starting the admissions process in September will allow them to gain more time and possibly avoid arriving late.

4. **Lesson Learned:** Poor communication between applicants in KSA and KAFP Team at Emory.

Recommendation: Circulate clearly-defined deadlines and cut-off dates. No exceptions should be made. If applicants do not respond in a timely manner to requests from Emory RSPH Admissions and KAFP Team, they will not be considered for admission.

5. **Lesson Learned:** KAF Program Services were not clearly understood by fellows.

Recommendation: Develop and review KAFP Agreement form and/or promotional materials, which should be presented to applicants in January.

Logistics

1. **Lesson Learned:** Difficult to accommodate all the fellows' transportation needs at the beginning of the school year.

Recommendation: The KAFP team should set aside two weeks for all the fellows for transportation (for shopping-related activities). A bus would be hired and different schedules developed. The fellows would have the choice of visiting different places only within the transportation schedule. Exceptions would be made for anyone whose visa or ministry papers had been delayed.

2. **Lesson Learned:** Several KA Fellows wanted to exchange their computers. The main reason was because they had ordered laptops that they found too large or heavy.

Recommendation: Provide two computer options (MacBook Pro 13" and Dell).

3. **Lesson Learned:** Communication, event scheduling, and coordination have proven more challenging with the program's growth.

Recommendation: Adopt a centralized student data and program management system that is specific to KAFP.

Thesis and Practicum Projects, Cohort of 2012-2014



Homoud Al Garni, MBBS, MPH
Trends of Reported Cases of Hepatitis B Virus Infection, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2009-2013



Abdulaziz Al Oufi, MBBS, MPH
Trends of Reported Human Cases of Brucellosis, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2004-2012



Rana Al Helali, MBBS, MPH
Evaluation of Home Respiratory Therapy Delivered to Patients in the Ministry of Health's Home Medical Program (HMP) and Administered through the Madinah HMP Center, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



Abdullah Al Shahrani, MBBS, MPH
Trends in the Reported Cases of Hepatitis C Virus Infection, Ministry of Health, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2008-2012



Amal Zaidan, MBBS, MPH
Analyses of Road Traffic Vehicle Crashes, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2007-2012



Yaser Al Dosari, BSc. Nursing, MPH
The Role of Language Barriers and Communication Skills in Providing Quality Health Care by Non-Saudi Nurses for Saudi Patients



Abdulaziz Al Enezi, MBBS, MPH
Diabetes Control During Month of Ramadan



Saad Al Johani, MBBS, MPH
Seat belt policy in Saudi Arabia



Rania Al Qudaihi, MBBS, MPH
Evaluation of Triage System in Dammam Medical Tower and Obstacles against Proper Implementation



Sulafa Al Outub, MBBS, MPH
Perceived Barriers to Infection Control Practice within Primary Health Care Centers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



Fatemah Al Zaghabi, MBBS, MPH
Healthcare Providers' (HCP) Perception of Influenza Vaccination, Especially after H1N1



Majed Alosaimi, MBBS, MPH