



An Introduction to Global Health Delivery

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The Roots of Global Health Inequity

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This chapter outlines the historical roots of health inequities. It focuses on the African continent, where life expectancy is the shortest and health systems are weakest. The chapter describes the impoverishment of countries by colonial powers, the development of the global human rights framework in the post-World War II era, the impact of the Cold War on African liberation struggles, and the challenges faced by newly liberated African governments to deliver health care through the public sector. The influence of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund's neoliberal economic policies is also discussed. The chapter highlights the shift from the aspiration of "health for all" voiced at the Alma Ata Conference on Primary Health Care in 1978, to the more narrowly defined "selective primary health care." Finally, the chapter explains the challenges inherent in financing health in impoverished countries and how user fees became standard practice.

Keywords: health equity, colonialism, racism, neoliberalism, human rights, Alma Ata, Bamako Initiative, selective primary health care

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