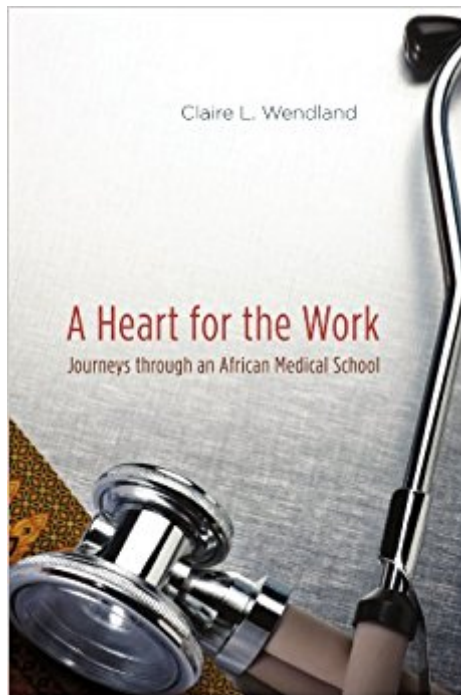




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A Heart For The Work: Journeys Through An African Medical School



Synopsis

Burnout is common among doctors in the West, so one might assume that a medical career in Malawi, one of the poorest countries in the world, would place far greater strain on the idealism that drives many doctors. But, as *A Heart for the Work* makes clear, Malawian medical students learn to confront poverty creatively, experiencing fatigue and frustration but also joy and commitment on their way to becoming physicians. The first ethnography of medical training in the global South, Claire L. Wendland's book is a moving and perceptive look at medicine in a world where the transnational movement of people and ideas creates both devastation and possibility. Wendland, a physician anthropologist, conducted extensive interviews and worked in wards, clinics, and operating theaters alongside the student doctors whose stories she relates. From the relative calm of Malawi's College of Medicine to the turbulence of training at hospitals with gravely ill patients and dramatically inadequate supplies, staff, and technology, Wendland's work reveals the way these young doctors engage the contradictions of their circumstances, shedding new light on debates about the effects of medical training, the impact of traditional healing, and the purposes of medicine.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Claire Wendland provides the reader with an inside account of her journey in West Africa, from her accounts of being a student and to later going back to research how young doctors continue to make it in this unfavorable system. In this work of fiction Wendland offers an insight into the

struggles that West African doctors and medical students face due to lack of funds, and a corrupt government. Although one has to persevere through the first chapter or two of the book due to its more technical aspect once one gets to the raw core of the book, it's hard to put it down. This is because of the student's eye witness accounts that are introduced. This book offered a glance into the medical world in West Africa, and how it is the complete opposite of what people know of in Northern countries. She lets readers know the struggles that come with working in a third world country, and how health is put on the back burner. However, she does allow the reader to see that even though funds are low, innovation is not. The doctors that the readers will meet, demonstrate a high level of intelligence as they make up for their lack of supplies with reused goods. She also allows the ignorance surrounding African health systems to be lifted, and shows just how difficult and consuming it is to take the responsibility of a doctor in this country. She allows the reader to see just how the lack of funds make saving lives an out of the ordinary experience, and how most people still turn to traditional means of health care such as herbs, and home remedies. This happens for one of two reasons. They are untrusting of biomedicine and also the cost is too much for them.

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