



When People Come First: Critical Studies in Global Health

João Biehl

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When People Come First critically assesses the expanding field of global health. It brings together an international and interdisciplinary group of scholars to address the medical, social, political, and economic dimensions of the global health enterprise through vivid case studies and bold conceptual work. The book demonstrates the crucial role of ethnography as an empirical lantern in global health, arguing for a more comprehensive, people-centered approach.

Topics include the limits of technological quick fixes in disease control, the moral economy of global health science, the unexpected effects of massive treatment rollouts in resource-poor contexts, and how right-to-health activism coalesces with the increased influence of the pharmaceutical industry on health care. The contributors explore the altered landscapes left behind after programs scale up, break down, or move on. We learn that disease is really never just one thing, technology delivery does not equate with care, and biology and technology interact in ways we cannot always predict. The most effective solutions may well be found in people themselves, who consistently exceed the projections of experts and the medical-scientific, political, and humanitarian frameworks in which they are cast.

When People Come First sets a new research agenda in global health and social theory and challenges us to rethink the relationships between care, rights, health, and economic futures.

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