

Karla Perez, 2023, Ecology & Evolutionary Biology
The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria
Funded by CHW under the Internships in Global Health program

Introduction

- The Global Fund (TGF) is an international organization that partners with fund recipients to battle AIDS, TB and Malaria, while working to improve health systems as a whole
- Worked with TGF's Resilient and Sustainable Systems for Health (RSSH) team to analyze the landscape of health care waste management (HCWM) in the light of the upcoming funding cycle

Objective of Internship

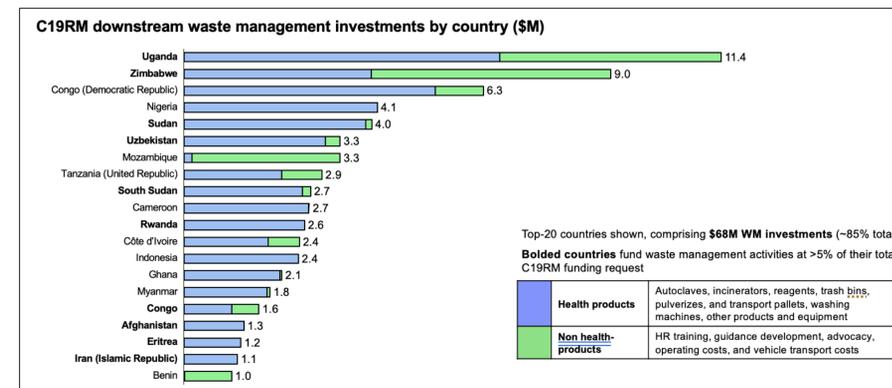
- My objectives were to expand my knowledge of global health systems at all levels through the lens of the Global Fund and to refine my technical skills in writing and data analysis.

Work profile

- The Global Fund raises funds and invests in three-year cycles, with a new cycle, NFM4, coming up for 2023-2025
- Conducted literature review to understand broad landscape of HCWM
- Analysed Nigeria and Zambia country data and conducted interviews with HCWM stakeholders to use as case study to understand past and current HCWM investments

Reflection

- Health products are critical in the fight against AIDS, TB, Malaria and COVID-19 but generate waste
- In 2020-2021, Global Fund spent over US\$2 billion on health products.
- In many low resource settings, the infrastructure, capacities, and management structures for Health Care Waste Management are weak.
- Systems overwhelmed by COVID-19 waste generation from PPE, packaging, PCR tests, etc.



Graphic adapted from: UNEP Compendium of Technologies for Treatment / Destruction of Healthcare Waste, 2012

- General trend of increasing interest in HCWM investments, especially on cleaner technologies from countries that already have been investing in HCWM in the upcoming funding cycle
- Majority of countries are not collecting systematic data on waste volumes, do not have an established Waste Management sector, and lack policy guidance or plans
 - For many facilities, there is ineffective segregation into hazardous, non-hazardous, or different types of waste streams (plastics, glass, cardboard/paper), thus many missed opportunities for effective recycling
 - No differentiation between downstream v upstream HCWM
 - Low use of waste calculators

Looking ahead

- This experience reinforced my motivation to have a career related to public health, to advance work in planetary health, and exposed me to career paths that I want to consider as I complete college.

Questions

- How can we best measure and evaluate progress towards better health care waste management without overwhelming systems that are already managing so much?

Conclusion

- There is a need for focused efforts on planning at country level to ensure cost-efficiencies of WM investments
- Setting standards for HCWM investments, such as 'minimum standards' for WM allocations, could improve HCWM systems
- HCWM is dealt with at multiple levels within the Global Fund, and could benefit from interdepartmental working group

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