Neglected Tropical Diseases: Crafting Sustainable Programs in Developing Countries

Introduction
• Neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) are ancient diseases that debilitate and disfigure over a billion of the world’s most marginalized populations.
• USAID’s program (NTD Division) works with implementing and global partners, health workers, and country governments to provide medicines for mass treatment campaigns.

Objectives of Internship
At USAID, I assisted in the creation and implementation of several communications campaigns highlighting NTD burden in developing countries, focusing specifically on the sustainability of country NTD programs.

Reflection
• In the role, I ideated and implemented a social media campaign on USAID’s new results from treatment programs. I created a set of ‘NTD 101’ content for the team, including graphics, presentations, video scripts, and manuals. In addition, I assisted in the rewriting of website content.
• I created content around the restart of NTD programs amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

Work Profile
• I collaborated alongside division members to create messaging for USAID’s new pivot to a sustainability strategy.
• I engaged with communications tools like traditional and digital content, social media, and graphics.

Looking Ahead
• This internship has heavily impacted how I view the intersection of global health/access and politics/governance.
• I am motivated to pursue graduate school in Comparative Politics to analyze the government and interest group role in health disparities that impact states and regions’ most marginalized people.

Questions
• This internship has further sparked my academic interest in the role of government in health disparities.
• I have enduring questions about how international organizations like USAID can help to create sustainable health systems while empowering developing country governments.

Conclusion
• NTD burden is a serious issue for developing countries and must be addressed in a country-driven and sustainable way.

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