

Healthcare Waste Management in Nepal: Lessons learned

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Content

- Learning from mistakes, disappointments and innovations
- Tackling healthcare waste management requires a systemic approach
- What is required to improve healthcare waste management?
- Health institutions can lead by example

Learning from mistakes, disappointments and innovations elsewhere

- From isolated quality management approaches to integrated waste management
- Shifting from a narrow medical/clinical focus (little ownership) to a broader public health approach
➔ environmental, occupational and planetary health
- People are realising the win-win situation (including financial aspects) ➔ higher ownership
- http://health.bmz.de/events/News/no-time-to-waste-in-nepal/giz_Nepal_NoTimeToWaste_2020.pdf



Tackling healthcare waste management requires a systemic approach:

Start with a situational analysis which covers:

- Existing legislation, standards, rules and regulations, guidelines etc.
- Coordination and collaboration
- Intersectoral approaches
- Capacity development at all levels (institutional, individual, and networks)
- Financial aspects (waste = \$\$, investments)
- Cooperation with the private sector

Improving healthcare waste management:

- requires everyone to do their part
- can start with simple, practical and safe solutions – and then build upon early successes
- (existing) change agents are showing the way

Engaging development partners:

- global health initiatives are leading to greater waste generation
- DPs must be part of finding solutions to a new waste treatment and disposal challenges

Using opportunities, e.g.:

- Covid-19 pandemic with its focus on hygiene
- strategic alliances - for funding and increasing reputation
- media platforms for advocacy
- growing (youth) activism around climate change
- political changes (e.g. federalism in Nepal)
- heightened awareness of planetary health

In Nepal, as elsewhere, health institutions can lead by example:

- Thinking of **waste as a resource**, rather than a problem
- Better managing existing waste can help to **minimise overall volumes of waste** in the future

And – later – Nepal should also address **healthcare without harm / green procurement**

- Procuring materials that are more energy efficient, less polluting and higher in recycled content
- Starting to eliminate the use of items that are toxic for workers, patients or the planet

The **global waste crisis**, of which healthcare waste is but one part, can only be resolved through a **fundamental rethinking of how we use resources** → **circular economy**

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