AMR Policy Accelerator

HIGHLIGHTS *REPORT* 2023

Accelerating **global action against antimicrobial resistance for a healthier, safer, and more equitable future.**

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Sustainable Antimicrobial Use for All Is Possible

Sustaining the effectiveness of antimicrobials for everyone's benefit is a defining challenge of our time that can only be addressed by countries, communities, and citizens working together. This vision inspires me and the team at the AMR Policy Accelerator to do the vital work of bridging science and policy so decision-makers and their partners have the tools necessary for making evidence-informed policies on AMR.

When the Global Strategy Lab was awarded funding by Wellcome to establish the AMR Policy Accelerator, we knew we had an important opportunity to prove that our innovative model of combining rigorous scientific research with tailored policy advisory services would help accelerate progress on AMR.

I am proud to say that, since its creation, the Accelerator has been filling a critical gap in evidence-informed AMR policymaking. Our team has undertaken vital policy research, co-created context-specific solutions for AMR policymakers, and brought together researchers, policymakers, and other experts for collective learning and action.

There has never been a time when bridging science and policy has been more vital for tackling AMR. With a solid foundation established, the Accelerator is uniquely positioned to support countries and international agencies on AMR policy and governance, especially in the run up to the 2024 United Nations General Assembly's High-Level Meeting on AMR—a landmark event expected to shape the agenda for action on AMR for the coming decade. As we journey toward this event and beyond, the Accelerator stands ready to provide governments, international agencies, and community partners with the support required for effective, evidence-informed AMR policies, fortifying our collective fight against antimicrobial resistance for a healthier, safer, and more equitable future.

Steven J. Hoffman JD PhD LLD FCAHS FRSC

Director, Global Strategy Lab
Dahdaleh Distinguished Chair in Global Governance & Legal Epidemiology and Professor of Global Health, Law, and Political Science, York University

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Sustainable antimicrobial use transcends health sectors, recognizing the deep interconnection of human health, animal and food chain security, and environmental security. The AMR Policy Accelerator empowers decision-makers with the essential research, tools and support necessary for a One Health approach to evidence-informed AMR policymaking.

Professor Dame Sally Davies

Advisory Board Chair, AMR Policy Accelerator and UK Special Envoy on Antimicrobial Resistance.

Our vision:
Sustainable antimicrobial use for all.

Our mission:
We bridge science and policy to advance evidence-informed AMR policymaking by governments and international agencies.

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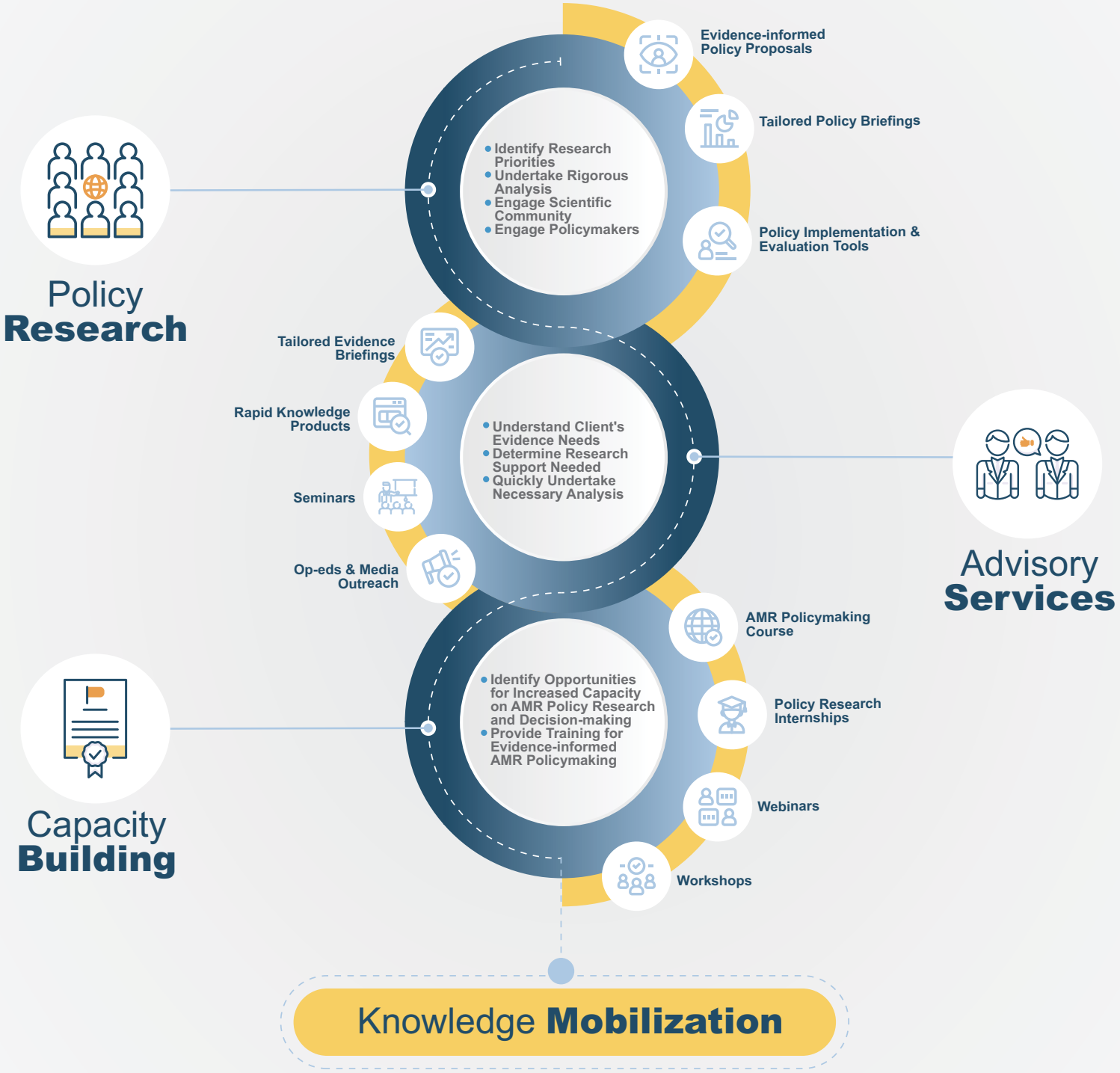
An Innovative Model for Policy Impact

The AMR Policy Accelerator champions evidence-informed AMR policymaking. We work closely with national governments, international agencies, and civil society organizations to understand and respond to their AMR policy concerns.

Our innovative model provides a comprehensive offering: rigorous research, customized consulting services, capacity building, and an integrated approach to knowledge mobilization. Leveraging this model, the Accelerator delivers context-specific support for the development or renewal of AMR National Action Plans and One Health policies, alongside offering best practice guidance and methodological support.



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Engaging for collective action on AMR

The Accelerator's network has quickly expanded through engagements with international agencies, national governments, researcher networks and civil society organizations.

Through collaborations on publications, advocacy efforts, and events, the AMR Policy Accelerator has partnered with **88** AMR experts from **26** countries, including **13** low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).

INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE SOLUTIONS

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CARB-X
Combating Antibiotic-Resistant Bacteria

The Fleming Fund
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88
Collaborating AMR experts

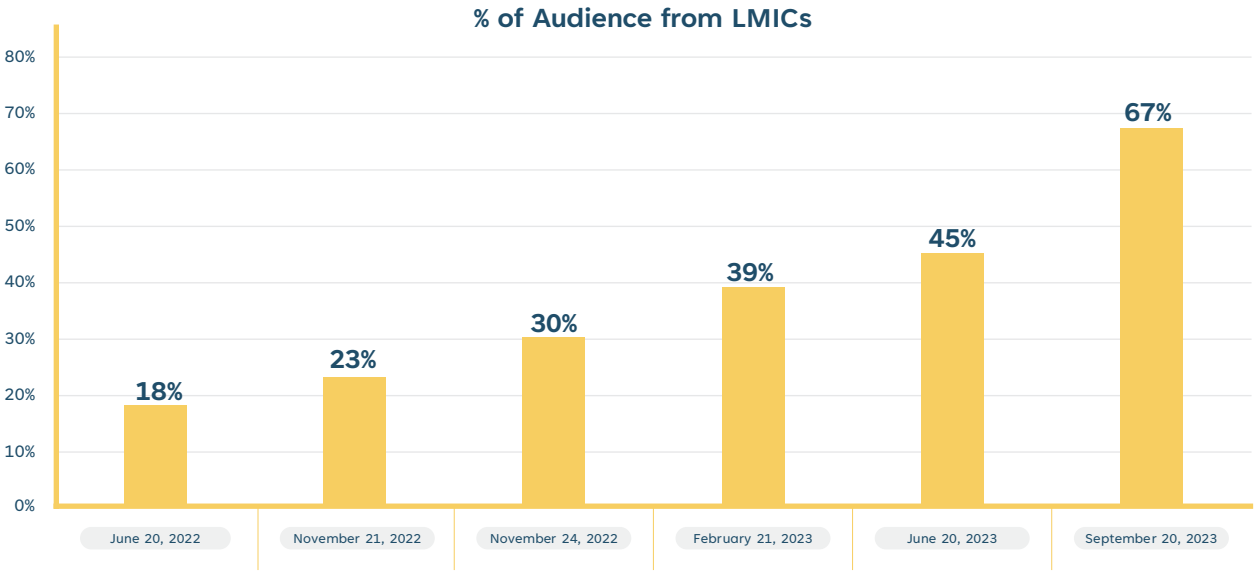
26
countries

13
Low- and middle-income countries (LMICs)

Raising awareness through knowledge mobilization

Through online knowledge mobilization webinars and publications, the Accelerator has increased awareness and capacity on AMR policy issues. By focusing on topics pertinent to LMICs, the proportion of webinar attendees from these countries has steadily grown from an initial **18%** of attendees to **67%** of attendees.

A growing audience from LMICs for knowledge mobilization webinars



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8
Academic Articles

15
Presentations and panels

9000+
Op-ed views

Dr. Susan Rogers Van Katwyk and Professor Dame Sally Davies discuss the impact of AMR on the attainment of the SDGs during the UNGA SDG Summit. Credit: Creative Commons UN Partnerships/Pier Paolo Cito

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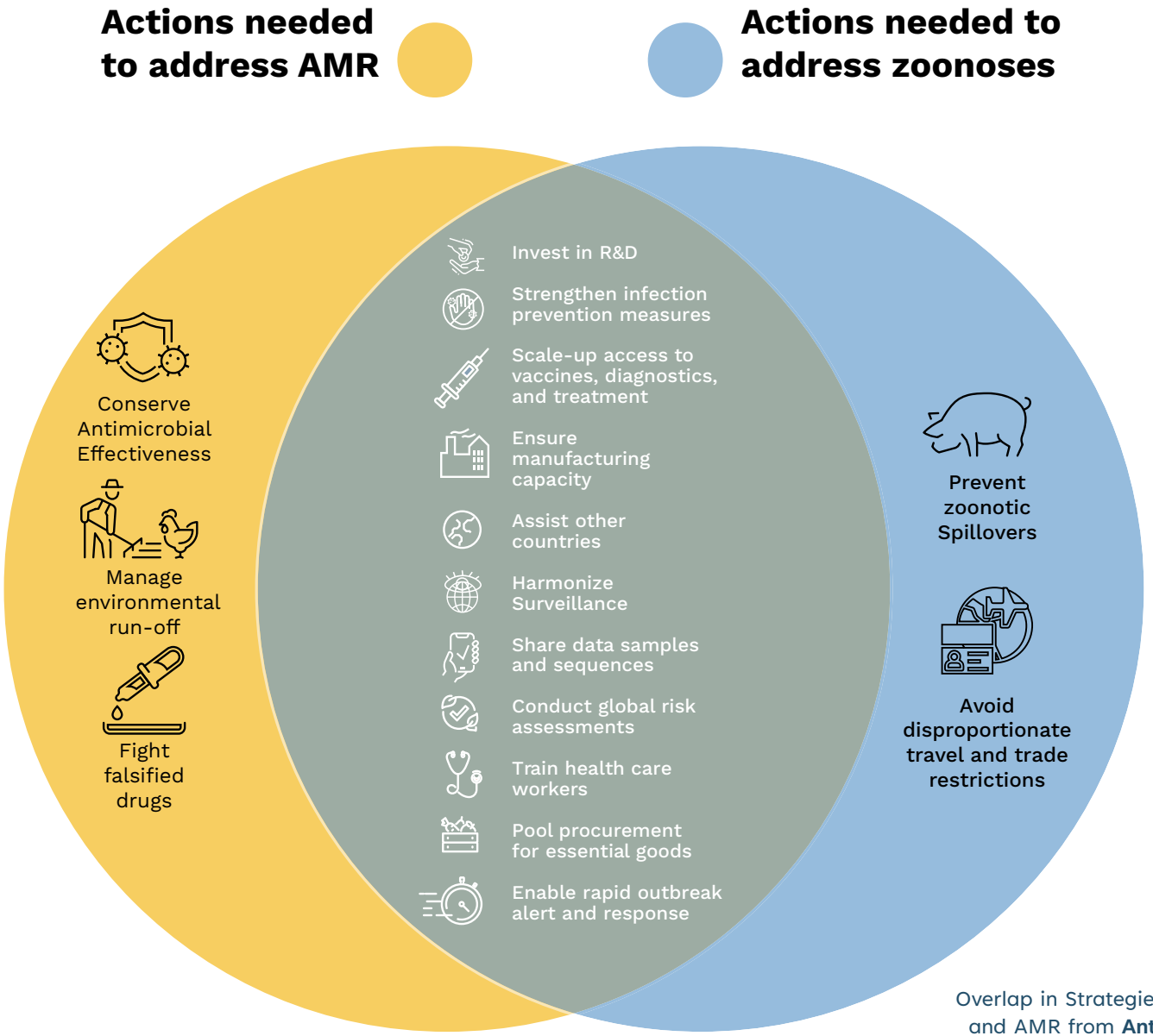
The Accelerator Model in Action

A More Comprehensive Pandemic Instrument is Needed

In the wake of COVID-19, the World Health Organization (WHO) established an Intergovernmental Negotiating Body (INB) to negotiate a new instrument for pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response. Despite initial calls from researchers and civil society for a broad scope — recognizing that pandemics and other major health emergencies require One Health international cooperation — early drafts of the text focused on viral and zoonotic threats with little mention of AMR and bacterial threats.

The AMR Policy Accelerator responded by bringing together a constellation of research and policy partners to collectively call for a comprehensive pandemic instrument that addresses AMR, alongside other pandemic threats.



Overlap in Strategies Needed to Address Zoonoses and AMR from **Antimicrobial Resistance Must Be Included in the Pandemic Instrument to Ensure Future Global Pandemic Readiness**

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Interventions for a More Comprehensive Pandemic Instrument

June

2022

Recognizing the many overlaps between pandemic preparedness and an effective AMR response, the AMR Policy Accelerator led an analysis, showcasing how – with a few small tweaks – the pandemic instrument could be designed to address both zoonotic and AMR pandemic threats. This analysis was shared as a **policy brief** with the Ministerial Alliance of Champions against AMR and online and through a **webinar**.

September

2022

Leveraging an opportunity to **submit feedback** on the then-current Working Draft of the pandemic instrument, the Accelerator and partners outlined how AMR could be addressed in the agreement, including specifically expanding the definition of pandemics to include bacterial pathogens of concern.

October

2022

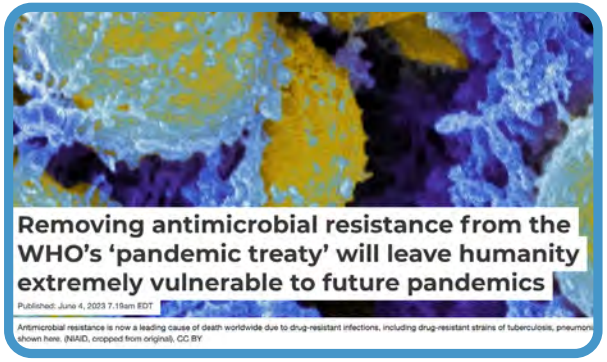
Convening researchers from 26 countries, including 15 LMICs, the International Network for Antimicrobial Resistance Social Science (INAMRSS) workshop reviewed and debated the latest AMR policy research and released a workshop statement calling for the inclusion of AMR in the pandemic instrument. This event was hosted by the Centre for Advanced Studies in Biomedical Innovation Law in partnership with the AMR Policy Accelerator.

March

2023

Showcasing the depth of our policy research expertise on AMR, the Accelerator team contributed to seven open-source research articles in the Symposium Issue of the Journal of Law, Medicine and Ethics (JLME). Titled **"Addressing Antimicrobial Resistance through the Proposed Pandemic Instrument"**, this issue was guest edited by the AMR Policy Accelerator's Dr. Susan Rogers Van Katwyk and Dr. Steven J. Hoffman along with Boston University's Dr. Kevin Outterson.

Watch a 2-minute video on the **special issue of the Journal of Law, Medicine and Ethics (JLME)**



June

2023

Ahead of the fifth meeting of the INB, Dr. Susan Rogers Van Katwyk penned an article for *The Conversation*, explaining the importance of addressing AMR in the pandemic instrument for the general public. Her piece, ***Removing antimicrobial resistance from the WHO's 'pandemic treaty' will leave humanity extremely vulnerable to future pandemic*** garnered over 9000 views and was carried by news outlets globally, including *Yahoo! News Canada, The Hindu, AllAfrica and MSN News*.

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Spearheading Research to Tackle Complex AMR Challenges

The AMR Policy Accelerator brings together experts from the social sciences and natural sciences, offering interdisciplinary One Health perspectives on AMR policy issues. Beyond a dedicated team of researchers and analysts, the Accelerator taps into an expansive AMR expert network, producing actionable insights on complex AMR challenges. Central to the Accelerator's approach is its dedication to equity-driven research. From its onset, the Accelerator has undertaken research on access to antibiotics for displaced communities, the gendered aspects of AMR policy and aligning action on AMR and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Thanks to the Global Strategy Lab and the AMR Policy Accelerator for your excellent work. We, as WHO, really benefit from your collaborations.

Anand Balachandran,

Unit Head, National Action Plans & Monitoring Unit, AMR Division, World Health Organization.

Spotlight: Access to essential antibiotics in migrant and refugee populations

Many people around the world still lack access to vital lifesaving antibiotics. Migrant and refugee communities often are at heightened risk of infection given the conditions they face, such as overcrowded housing.

To better understand antibiotic access for migrants and refugees, the WHO's Health and Migration Program Team approached the AMR Policy Accelerator to identify, analyze, and synthesize evidence on antibiotic access and use by migrant and refugee populations worldwide. The resulting study, **Capturing the evidence on access to essential antibiotics in refugee and migrant populations**, painted a compelling picture: these communities often encounter significant obstacles in accessing antibiotics. Corroborating previous research, it underscored that refugee and migrant populations typically have more limited access to healthcare than host populations. Critically, this study identified barriers along the continuum of care that result in members of refugee and migrant populations opting out of formal health care systems and seeking antibiotics through informal networks. The study identified vital research gaps, including a scarcity of research and data on antibiotic access for migrants and reguees residing in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).

At the official WHO launch event, the AMR Policy Accelerator's Managing Director, Dr. Susan Rogers Van Katwyk emphasized the need for global and national action. She encouraged national governments to tackle the barriers that redirect migrant and refugee communities towards informal access. For instance, through multilingual community-based initiatives to increase awareness on appropriate antibiotic access and use. Moreover, Dr. Rogers Van Katwyk recommended the removal of status-based barriers to care and stressed the importance of affordable antibiotics and healthcare access to ensure that refugees and migrant communities can appropriately access antibiotics.

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Effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on AMR

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, there was growing concern among global and public health experts about its potential impact on already critical levels of antimicrobial resistance. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of COVID-19 on antimicrobial use and AMR, an analysis of the available evidence and data was needed. To this end, the Public Health Agency of Canada and COVID-END contracted the AMR Policy Accelerator and the Knowledge Synthesis and Application Unit at the University of Ottawa to undertake a living evidence review of AMR and AMU national trends through the pandemic. This ambitious project aimed to identify linkages and evidence gaps to determine how three drivers —antimicrobial use, infection prevention and control, and use of healthcare and related systems— impacted AMR emergence, transmission, and burden. Editions of the living evidence review were published in **November 2022, May 2023** and **November 2023**. Early findings indicated that antimicrobial use decreased overall in 2020 while AMR trends across countries differed, perhaps due to the various approaches used by countries to slow the spread of COVID-19. An important gap identified during this research was the lack of data on how the pandemic and AMR has impacted equity-seeking populations.

Research in Progress

Gender and antimicrobial resistance: A conceptual framework for researchers working in livestock systems

Gender shapes men's and women's roles and opportunities across livestock systems, and influences how they use and access antimicrobials, the extent to which they are exposed to resistant pathogens, and the impact of resistant infections on their lives. To better understand these interactions, the AMR Policy Accelerator, partnered with gender and AMR livestock experts at the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) in Nairobi, Kenya to develop a framework which identifies gender dimension questions related to AMR research being conducted in livestock systems. The framework incorporates three entry points for gender: antimicrobial use, AMR exposure and AMR outcomes. Gender-analysis in livestock research is becoming increasingly mainstream and the introduction of this framework will provide a starting point to improve gender-inclusion, specifically in AMR research being conducted in livestock systems.

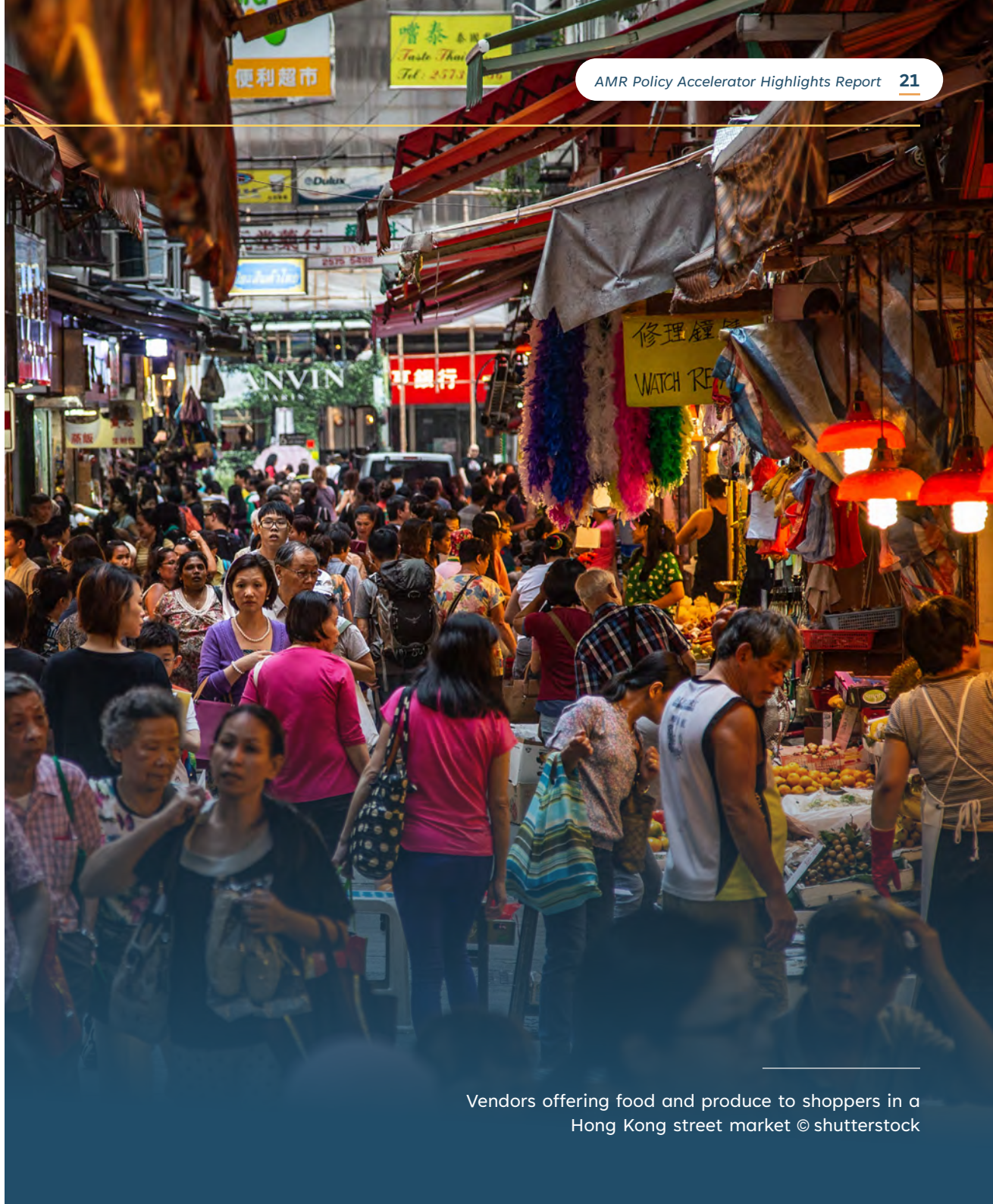
Aligning action on AMR and the SDGs

AMR poses a significant threat to global development, as evidenced by its adverse impact on 12 of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Recognizing this

interplay, the AMR Policy Accelerator has spearheaded research aimed at identifying opportunities for aligning policy actions in National Action Plans on AMR with broader global development priorities stipulated by the SDGs. The primary objective of this research is to provide guidance to national governments and international agencies on addressing the challenges posed by AMR while also accelerating meaningful progress on various SDGs, including SDG 2-Zero Hunger, SDG 6-Clean Water and Sanitation and SDG 13– Climate Action.

Filling the knowledge gaps on AMR policy & gender

The detrimental impacts of AMR are not evenly distributed across populations, and disparities, including those based on gender, are evident. Despite the profound implications of this gendered impact, there exists little research on the intersection of gender and AMR. Perhaps as a result, few National Action Plans on AMR include gender considerations in their policies or activities. To remedy this gap in research and policy, the AMR Policy Accelerator has partnered with the World Health Organization to undertake research and develop a policy brief with practical country guidance for inclusion of gender in human health policies, interventions, and monitoring.



Vendors offering food and produce to shoppers in a Hong Kong street market © shutterstock

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Developing Context-specific Solutions to Support National AMR Policymaking

Policymakers need access to relevant, high-quality research to develop actionable, evidence-informed AMR policy. When this research is available in formats that resonate with policymakers and includes considerations for local contexts, its impact is magnified. Understanding these requirements for effective AMR policymaking, the Accelerator provides the support needed to accelerate the development of evidence-informed AMR National Action Plans and One Health policies. The Accelerator works closely with policy makers to understand their specific issues, undertakes the necessary research to provide evidence-informed policy options and creates practical tools and guidance to facilitate knowledge mobilization.

Custom research for better survey design

When the government of Bangladesh needed support with the design of an AMR knowledge, attitudes, and practice (KAP) survey for the country's pharmacists and drug sellers, it approached the AMR Policy Accelerator. In Bangladesh, an estimated 86% of antimicrobial use is non-prescription and antibiotics are often dispensed by drug sellers with limited training. To support the client in better understanding knowledge gaps among these drug sellers, our Advisory Services team reviewed KAP survey tools for use in similar settings and recommended principles and best practices for designing and adapting KAP surveys to the Bangladeshi context.

Spotlight: Smart Choice Process for NAP activity prioritization

Developing and updating a National Action Plan (NAP) on AMR is vital in establishing priorities across One Health sectors –human and animal health, food and agriculture systems, and the environment. However, successfully implementing identified priorities can be challenging, as they all require staff time, attention, and financing. Without a prioritization strategy across sectors, identifying which activities need to be addressed immediately and which can wait, sustainable implementation can be challenging.

The AMR Policy Accelerator recognized the need for a facilitated process by which government NAP planning teams can work together with national experts to prioritize NAP activities in an evidence-informed and context-specific manner. As a result, the Smart Choice process was developed based on previous prioritization framework experience with the Public Health Agency of Canada.

Working with NAP planning teams, national experts and a list of prioritized activities provided by NAP planning teams, the Accelerator facilitates a transparent ranking (based on the individual country's social, political, and financial goals) exercise with all relevant stakeholders to develop a prioritized list for AMR action.

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Work in Progress

Guidance on One Health national governance structure frameworks

When the World Health Assembly endorsed the Global Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance, it urged countries worldwide to create and execute National Action Plans on AMR utilizing a One Health approach coordinating across human health, animal health, environment, and agricultural sectors. While numerous countries have developed their NAPs, it has become evident that practical guidance is necessary on the institutional structure of multisectoral coordination committees. In our role as the WHO Collaborating Centre on Global Governance of Antimicrobial Resistance, our team is working to provide the World Health Organization with research and national-level guidance for establishing effective multisectoral coordination committees. This guidance will be critical for countries looking to develop and update their National Action Plans on AMR to be more effective.

Policy pathways to reduce antimicrobial use in production animals

Globally, two thirds of all antimicrobials used are consumed by livestock production systems and this is expected to grow as LMICs increase domestic meat production. Policies that promote prudent use of antimicrobials in livestock are essential not only to maintain the effectiveness of antimicrobials but also to preserve the security of food systems. To support policymakers in LMICs concerned with reducing antimicrobial use in production animals, the AMR Policy Accelerator is identifying and mapping policy initiatives in pathways which improve the prudent use of antimicrobials in meat production. The resulting guidance will present strategies to reduce the use of antimicrobials, especially those that are medically important for human use.

Updating the knowledge base on AMR government policy interventions

In 2019, a first-of-its-kind systematic evidence map was developed to support governments in making evidence-informed decisions when implementing programs to address AMR, by identifying, describing, and assessing the full range of evaluated government policy options to reduce antimicrobial use in humans. As part of a process to create a living systematic review of AMR government policy interventions, the Accelerator team and partners at the Ottawa Hospital Research Institute will regularly update this knowledge base as a living systematic review, for the next six years, providing national governments with the latest evidence on a variety of policy options and their effectiveness.

Convening to Accelerate Action on AMR Policy

Addressing AMR requires collective, global, and multisectoral action informed by effective, evidence-based research and policy advice at a national and global level. By convening researchers, policy makers and other One Health experts, the AMR Policy Accelerator is playing a vital role in advancing the latest research, disseminating evidence-informed policy recommendations, and identifying opportunities for multi-sector, coordinated action.

The Accelerator's webinars, workshops, and other events are proactively planned to ensure representation from LMIC stakeholders, as well as women and early career researchers. Through co-hosting events, the Accelerator aims to contribute to and reinforce the constellation of AMR policy organizations.

Pharmacist filling prescriptions in a pharmacy drugstore

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Convening for Action on AMR

November 2022

AMR Policy Accelerator webinar series: A future with sustainable antimicrobial use for all

Marking its official launch, the AMR Policy Accelerator held a webinar series highlighting **AMR policy** leadership (with guest panelists from Wellcome, ILRI and SEDRIC) and **equity in AMR policymaking**. This webinar series showcased the Accelerator's comprehensive approach to supporting evidence-informed policymaking.

April 2023

Expert workshop on the future of AMR policy

Experts in One Health and AMR policy from 13 countries, including 6 LMICs, met at the Global Strategy Lab and Accelerator offices at York University in Toronto to discuss the future of AMR policy. Three of the Accelerator's policy research projects, presented by early career researchers were discussed and will form the basis of upcoming policy guidance.

June

2023

Forced migration and antimicrobial resistance: Research and policy

On World Refugee Day, the AMR Policy Accelerator and the Center for Forced Displacement **partnered on a webinar** to spotlight the AMR challenges facing migrant and refugee communities. Panelists highlighted that displaced communities are at higher risk of contracting infections and less likely to have access to safe, effective antimicrobials.

August

2023

Leave no one behind: Advancing One Health AMR national action plan implementation in Africa

The 2023 Antimicrobial Resistance Conference in Lusaka, Zambia was co-hosted by ReAct Africa & South Centre with support from the AMR Policy Accelerator. Julia Bishop, Director of Strategy and Partnerships and Dr. Samuel Orubu, Policy Research Lead featured the work of the Accelerator and met with policymakers, civil society partners and students working on AMR.

September

2023

Antimicrobial resistance and the UN Sustainable Development Goals: Pitfalls and prospects

The AMR Policy Accelerator convened an expert panel to examine the **wide-spread and negative impact of AMR** on the attainment of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Panelist from the South Centre, ICARS and World Health Organization reinforced that aligning action on AMR and the SDG goals is critical if meaningful progress is to be made on the SDGs.

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Looking Ahead: Embracing 2024's Transformative Possibilities

As the spotlight moves towards the 2024 UNGA High-Level Meeting—a landmark event poised to shape the AMR agenda for the coming decade—the AMR Policy Accelerator will continue to play a critical role providing specialized policy and collaborating national governments to develop effective, evidence-informed policies that contribute to global action against AMR.

We will expand our capacity building offering by holding the inaugural session of our AMR Policymaking micro-credit course with International Training Centre for Authorities and Leaders (CIFAL) and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). This executive-level training will provide technical professionals with the knowledge and tools to quickly ramp up their understanding of the AMR policymaking context to support their success in AMR policymaking leadership roles.

Beginning in February we will launch a suite of new policy research that will provide guidance on reducing antimicrobial use in agriculture, aligning policy action on AMR and global development priorities, and developing effective One Health multistakeholder coordination committees.

We will also kick-off new research to tackle AMR policy challenges, including a partnership with SEDRIC to identify opportunities for strengthening surveillance for resistant pathogens.

Perhaps our most ambitious priority for 2024 will be to convene and work with partners in the AMR policy ecosystem to develop a set of unifying global targets on AMR — defined goals that will unite all countries and sectors in their efforts to address AMR.

In closing, I would like to thank our team, advisors, and partners for their dedication to realizing our shared vision. Sustainable antimicrobial use for all is possible, and in 2024 we will make significant strides to transforming that vision into reality.

Susan Rogers Van Katwyk PhD

Managing Director, AMR Policy Accelerator and Research Director Global Antimicrobial Resistance, Global Strategy Lab
Adjunct Professor, York University

Thank You

Advisory Board & Deputies

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Villagers with their livestock in western Anatolian region, Turkey. © shutterstock

Global Strategy Lab

The AMR Policy Accelerator is supported by the Wellcome Trust [222422/Z/21/Z].