The Community Health Systems Catalog Dataset

User Guide

Since 2012, the Advancing Partners & Communities (APC) project has supported community health programs, with a focus on family planning. APC develops practical tools and approaches to help global and national stakeholders identify knowledge and programming gaps to harmonize and scale up community health programs.

What is the Community Health Systems Catalog?

In March 2014, In support of global efforts to strengthen, scale up, and harmonize community health programs, APC launched the Community Health Systems (CHS) Catalog, a one-stop shop for information on community health and family planning policies and programs in 25 countries. In 2017, APC updated the CHS Catalog, which features:

- 25 country profiles.
- A list of country policies and strategies.
- A set of infographics.
- A synthesis of cross-country trends.
- A complete dataset.

The CHS Catalog content is organized by the WHO’s Health System Building Blocks framework and comprises information based on individual country policies and strategies. The catalog focuses on national public-sector programs, and when possible, captures community-based private sector health programs operating at scale.
How were the data collected?

APC developed the CHS Catalog using a 121-question survey in collaboration with the Strengthening Partnerships, Results, and Innovations in Nutrition Globally project and the Maternal and Child Survival Program (MCSP), each funded by USAID. APC recommends referring to the survey tool when exploring the dataset. The project collected data between January 2016 and June 2017 through country consultants, who gathered community health policies, strategies, curricula, and other national documents vetted by country authorities, and used them to complete the survey. APC staff verified the data and input final responses in an electronic survey using a combined Enketo/SurveyCTO platform. The project then transferred and formatted this information in Microsoft Excel to enhance usability.

How is the dataset organized?

The CHS Catalog survey dataset is organized across five Excel spreadsheets to facilitate comparisons across countries, programs, and community health providers.

1. MAIN SHEET
   - Includes the main survey responses related to community health systems, organized by country.
   - Contains responses for survey questions #1–25, 46–56, 76–102, 109, 111, 113, and 119–120.
2. PROGRAMS SHEET

- Includes survey responses about community health programs, organized by **country** and specific **program**.
- Contains responses for survey questions #25–44.

3. PROVIDERS SHEET

- Includes survey responses about community health providers, organized by **country** and **cadre**.
- Contains responses for survey questions #56b–75.
4. INTERVENTIONS SHEET

- Includes survey responses about which interventions community health providers are allowed to provide, according to policy, organized by country and cadre.
- Contains responses for survey questions #103–118 (see the tables at the end of the survey tool).

5. MEDICINES SHEET

- Indicates which selected medicines, supplies, and commodities are included in each country’s Essential Medicines List.
How can the dataset be used?

While the CHS Catalog country profiles and cross-country synthesis provide a sizeable overview of community health in 25 countries, the complete dataset contains even more detail. The Excel format enables users to perform simple tabulations and secondary data analyses to meet their specific information needs.

The dataset:

- Collates information on a range of national community health models to inform country-level policy and program planning and design. This allows countries seeking to create or update community health policies and programs learn from their neighbors’ experience.
- Provides detailed information to serve as a foundation for policy analyses and research. The dataset distills information from extracted from more than 100 countries’ policies on community health, health systems strengthening, family planning, and other health topics.
- Advances dialogue on the role and definition of a CHW. With data on more than 130 health interventions, the dataset is a key resource for information on the services that countries permit CHWs to provide. This information is particularly useful in the context of task-sharing, a practice that many countries are undertaking to better distribute the burden of health service delivery across the workforce and improve access for communities that are underserved.

When using the CHS Catalog dataset, consider the following:

1. **Catalog data was collected from written policy guidance.** The purpose of the CHS Catalog is to provide a policy-level perspective on community health systems. APC applied a broad definition of ‘policy’ that included national and subnational policies, strategic plans, training curricula, and other documents that guide community health systems. Hence, it does not necessarily capture the realities of policy implementation or service delivery on the ground.

2. **The catalog captures a snapshot in time.** The data comes from policy guidance developed before 2017, thus policies developed after the dates on the individual CHS Catalog country profiles may not be captured.

3. **Policies are often vague, incomplete, and/or contradictory,** which presents challenges in distilling and interpreting written guidance. When possible, APC conducted interviews with local experts to validate the information. APC recommends using the CHS Catalog country profiles, the original policies and strategies (listed on the CHS Catalog website), and/or other resources as companions to this dataset.
Citing the CHS Catalog dataset

If you use the CHS Catalog data in your work, please use the following citation:


Photo: Kate Holt, MCSP