Better Data, Stronger Health Workforce:
The Open Source iHRIS Approach

Capacity*Plus* leads the development of the free open source **iHRIS platform** of health workforce information tools and software. Currently supporting **more than a million** health worker records in **19** countries, all iHRIS software products are open source—free to download, adapt, and implement by interested users, including governments, nonprofits, and private health providers. **IntraHealth International**, through the USAID-funded Capacity Project, launched the first version of iHRIS in 2007. Capacity*Plus* continues to develop the core iHRIS software, release updates, and partner with countries to roll out the software and train people to use and maintain it.

Cost Savings of Open Source

It would cost more than **$177 million** in licensing fees alone for the 19 countries currently using iHRIS to support a similar number of health worker records with a proprietary system purchased from for-profit companies. In addition, iHRIS is enabling organizations to accomplish in a few minutes tasks that previously took days with a paper system.
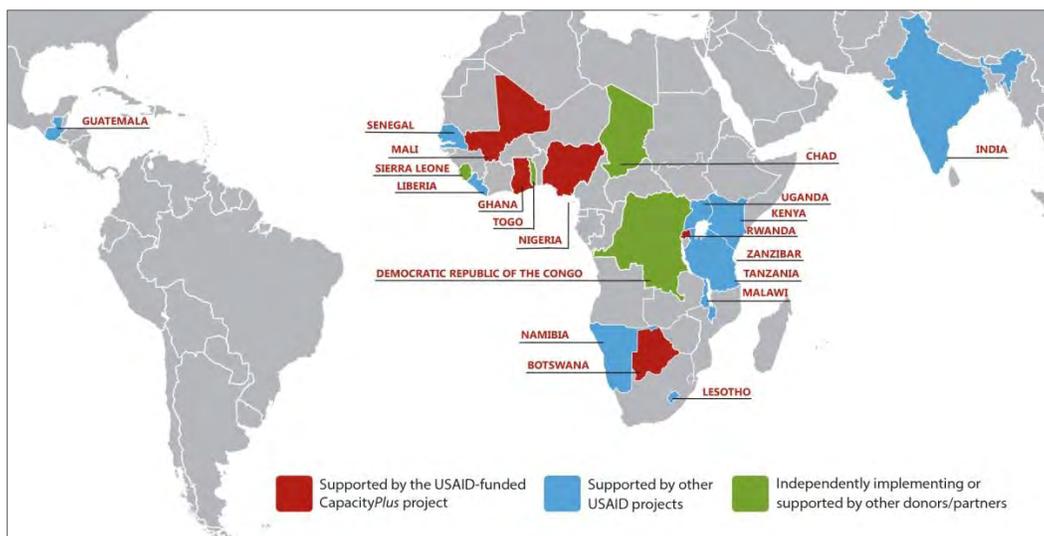
iHRIS Applications

The iHRIS software suite consists of five interoperable applications that allow health workforce leaders and managers to plan, develop, and manage a health workforce efficiently and effectively to meet national or institutional health objectives. iHRIS conforms to a variety of international standards for data exchange to ensure that data that would otherwise be siloed is accessible to all parts of the health system.

- **iHRIS Manage** supports ministries of health and other service delivery organizations to track, manage, deploy, and map their health workforces

- **iHRIS Qualify** enables professional councils and organizations to maintain a database of registered and licensed health professionals to support increased quality of care

- **iHRIS Plan** projects the likely changes in the health workforce under different scenarios and compares them with projected needs

- **iHRIS Retain**, developed in collaboration with the World Health Organization, helps countries plan and cost retention interventions

- **iHRIS Train** assists organizations to track and manage health worker training activities at the national level.

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Data for Decision-Making: Country Successes

With support in data management and analysis from Capacity*Plus* and other USAID-funded projects—as well as regional leadership in iHRIS from the West African Health Organization and the East, Central, and Southern Africa Health Community—countries are increasingly using iHRIS data to influence health workforce policy and planning. Highlights include:

- The Uganda Ministry of Health used data from its customized iHRIS in **104** of 112 districts to identify vacancies and needed health workers, gained further information from a retention and costing study conducted by Capacity*Plus*, and successfully advocated to Parliament for a **$20 million** recruitment fund, filling over **7,200** health worker vacancies and doubling doctors' salaries.

- The state of Jharkhand in India used iHRIS to identify and address gaps in OB/GYN services in **60%** of their facilities, and to add **450** new clinical officers, making services available to **900,000** additional people.

Global iHRIS Support Community

To foster sustainability, Capacity*Plus* created a global iHRIS community intended to become self-sufficient in supporting iHRIS users. The iHRIS community is effectively growing on its own, reaching **200** members who work across time zones to resolve issues raised on the community e-mail list. Because this open source community provides ongoing updates and support, countries that use iHRIS are collectively saving an additional **$51 million** every year—that's how much it would cost them to purchase the same type of updates and support from a for-profit source.

For more information, contact the Global iHRIS Secretariat: **ihris@intrahealth.org**

The Capacity*Plus* Partnership   www.capacityplus.org

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