

Rural Health Worker Retention Tools

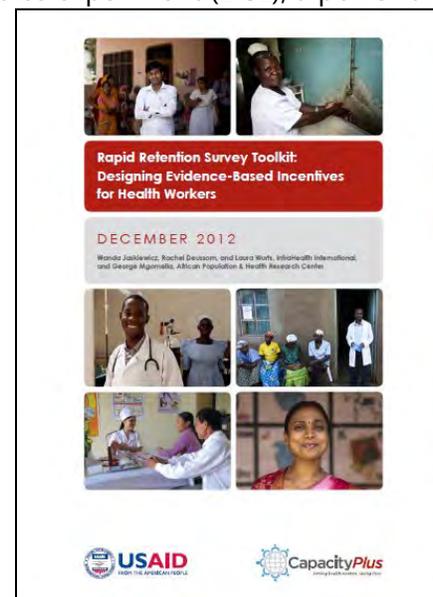
Many countries struggle to attract and retain sufficient numbers and types of health workers to provide quality services in rural and remote areas. To encourage country ownership and advocate for use of data for policy-making, the USAID-funded CapacityPlus project developed several tools, including the [Rapid Retention Survey Toolkit](#); a companion software product, [iHRIS Retain](#), developed in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO); and a [discrete choice experiment user guide](#), developed in collaboration with the World Bank and the WHO.

The tools build on the WHO's global policy recommendations, which describe ways to retain more health workers in rural and remote areas by combining strategies related to education, financial incentives, regulation, and professional development. Together, the tools provide human resources managers with step-by-step guidance, formats, and software to select the most cost-effective incentive strategies and packages to increase the attraction and retention of health workers.

RAPID RETENTION SURVEY TOOLKIT AND ELEARNING COURSE

The Rapid Retention Survey Toolkit is based on the discrete choice experiment (DCE), a powerful research method that identifies the trade-offs health professionals (or other types of workers) are willing to make between specific job characteristics and determines their preferences for various incentive packages, including the probability of accepting a post in a rural health facility.

The Rapid Retention Survey Toolkit employs a simplified but reliable version of the DCE methodology to guide human resources managers through the survey process to rapidly assess health workers' motivational preferences to take up posts and remain in underserved facilities. The toolkit allows for rapid data gathering and analysis—thereby decreasing human, financial, and time resource requirements. The results of the survey are then used to create evidence-based incentive packages.



To use the toolkit, go to <http://www.capacityplus.org/rapid-retention-survey-toolkit>.

To follow a free online eLearning course that provides an overview of how to use the toolkit, go to <http://www.hrresourcecenter.org/elearning/course/view.php?id=14>.

iHRIS RETAIN

As part of the decision-making process for selecting the most appropriate retention packages to pursue and advocating for funding support, human resources managers also need to know how much the incentive packages will cost.

iHRIS Retain, developed in collaboration with WHO, is an open source tool that estimates the costs of retention strategies at the district, regional, or national level. The software guides users through the costing process step by step to capture relevant financial and health

workforce data. iHRIS Retain then calculates the total costs—generating reports for each retention strategy and type of health worker, as well as for different packages of strategies—and compares the costs to available funding. Human resources managers and other health sector stakeholders can use the information to determine which retention strategies would be the most feasible and then calculate their budgets for implementing them.

To try iHRIS Retain, part of the iHRIS platform of health workforce tools, go to <http://retain.ihris.org/retain>.



DISCRETE CHOICE EXPERIMENT USER GUIDE

CapacityPlus collaborated with the World Bank and the WHO to create a guide to support researchers and technical experts to conduct a DCE. The User Guide with Case Studies: How to Conduct a Discrete Choice Experiment for Health Workforce Recruitment and Retention in Remote and Rural Areas offers step-by-step advice on the application of DCE to identify health workforce policy interventions appropriate to a particular country context.

To access the technical DCE user guide, go to <http://www.capacityplus.org/files/resources/discrete-choice-experiment-user-guide.pdf>.

