

HEP+ Guatemala: Data to Strengthen Governance

About HEP+ Guatemala

Under the global Health Policy Plus (HP+) project, the Health and Education Policy Plus (HEP+) program in Guatemala aims to strengthen in-country partners' capacity to navigate complex environments for effective policy design, implementation, and financing aligned to their priorities. Grounded in its mandate to strengthen and advance health policy priorities in family planning, reproductive health, and maternal health, HEP+ is also providing technical assistance to the Guatemalan Ministry of Health (MSPAS) to better respond to the COVID-19 pandemic through the strategic use of data.

Why Data?

The last two decades have brought demands of increasing complexity to health systems. HEP+'s work in strategic information systems fosters greater use of data for evidence-based policy development and decision making, management, and monitoring and accountability. Visual analytics and digital platforms can help decisionmakers identify and understand gaps and priority areas for policy development or reform; data also helps multisectoral groups and civil society access data and information for public health program interventions and advocacy, whenever needed.

Our Work

Establishing information systems. The first step in using data to strengthen governance is collecting and storing data. HEP+ has supported the government and civil society organizations to establish strategic information systems, such as electronic medical records and monitoring systems to track health indicators. These

types of information systems can help stakeholders collect or integrate data from different sources—such as public budgets showing expenditure of allocated funds—to monitor public health programs.

Increasing data use. HEP+ empowers civil society partners and governmental organizations to use data by providing trainings on how to identify data needs, define content for data systems, and manage those systems. In addition to providing on-the-job technical support, HEP+ works with partners to provide tools and put processes in place to strengthen and maintain data capabilities, even after the project's formal engagement has ended.

Using data for public health monitoring and advocacy. With the ability to collect and analyze public health data, HEP+ civil society partners are better equipped to conduct policy and program monitoring. Data insights into indicators, such as COVID-19 vaccination rates, contraception prevalence rate, or maternal mortality rate allow civil society organizations to inform citizens and decisionmakers from public and private sectors about public health issues—transparent communication that fosters advocacy and holds the government accountable for follow-through on policy issues.

Using data for public policy decision making. Through HEP+ support to develop and strengthen the MSPAS Health Management Information System (SIGSA), the ministry monitors health indicators over time by geography or relevant demographic groups and uses this data to inform health public policy or program design.

Our Accomplishments

A mobile application for OSAR, the Sexual and Reproductive Health Watchdog, aggregates that aggregates publicly available data from multiple sources regarding indicators on local contraception, maternal and infant mortality, and adolescent pregnancy. OSAR analyzes the data as a part of their monitoring and advocacy exercises. For example, OSAR Youth used the app and found that demand for and use of family planning and reproductive health services had *declined* in 2020, and that indicators on maternal deaths, unplanned pregnancies, and infant deaths had *increased* due to pandemic shutdown measures. Based on these findings, OSAR Youth initiated a social media campaign advocating for the continued offering and use of family planning and reproductive health services during the pandemic. OSAR Youth continues to analyze data on pregnancies and sexual violence through this tool and will use the results to keep the Congressional Youth Commission accountable to its promises.

Baseline data collection for the Great National Crusade for Nutrition (GNCC) will help define a strategy to improve nutrition with an emphasis on Guatemala's poorest and most marginalized areas. The baseline data will provide precise, timely, reliable, and representative data for decisionmakers to estimate the national nutrition status and lay the foundation for the GNCC monitoring and evaluation system design and operation. In collaboration with MSPAS, HEP+ has identified government interventions to improve child nutrition. In the future, the baseline data will be used to measure the impact of those interventions.

The Decentralization Process System (SIPRODES) is a strategic information system that assesses the readiness of municipalities to be entrusted with delegated functions from central government agencies. The system is used by the Decentralization Process Bureau, which is a technical, coordinating, and governing body tasked with overseeing the implementation of the National Decentralization Plan.

The COVID-19 vaccination dashboard provides MSPAS with biweekly vaccination rates per department,

municipality, or vaccination center and allows MSPAS to monitor the implementation of the National Vaccination Plan. Decisionmakers also use the tool to determine vaccine allocation and delivery and identify any need to implement specific vaccination strategies for certain populations.

The 1,000-Day Window information tool is a virtual platform through which civil society networks and the Human Rights Ombudsman monitor 1,000-Day Window of Opportunity interventions to improve healthy infant development and growth. This tool houses data on indicators related to infant and child health, including the level and quality of reproductive health services across the nation. Civil society uses this data in its social audit to demand accountability from government institutions to improve the quality of health services. The information is also useful for the government in programmatic and investment decision making.

The Integral Healthcare Directorate (SIAS) Territoriality Prioritization Tool was developed in partnership with MSPAS to capture data from health centers at multiple levels to identify their geographic locations, operating conditions, and health services gaps. It equips MSPAS with the information necessary to determine health centers' needs and estimate the financial resources required to further expand healthcare services.

The National Contraceptive Security Commission (CNAA) Indicator Monitoring System compiles data from partner institutions working in contraception distribution, creating several visualization dashboards, including on: the 15 percent tax on alcoholic beverages, which earmarks funding for contraceptive procurement; the purchase of various contraception types; the financial contribution of each CNAA institution to those purchases; fertility rates; unmet family planning need rates; and family planning prevalence per department. It also shows the impact of these efforts as measured by the amount of money saved year-over-year through CNAA efforts and the prevention of maternal deaths, unplanned pregnancies, and infant deaths.

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