

# DHIS 2 Functions and Data Use for Health Information System Strengthening

## Development and Application of a Practical Training Package

### Background

A national health information system (HIS) is the backbone of efforts to gather data to understand a country's health issues. MEASURE Evaluation–Tanzania (MEval-TZ) has worked with the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children (MOHCDGEC) since 2014 to strengthen the performance and management of the country's HIS.

MEval-TZ's overarching goal has been to improve the systems that monitor and evaluate health and social service programs while enhancing local capacity to sustain and use these systems. Since the beginning of the project, MEval-TZ has supported the health management information system (HMIS) unit of the MOHCDGEC to institutionalize the DHIS 2 software for HMIS through training and capacity building at the national, regional, and district levels and by developing and implementing tools and resources to enhance system use. This document is a snapshot of the project's work to help the ministry develop a training package for DHIS 2 functions and data use for HIS strengthening. The package is a standard, practical training resource for building the skills and competence of health system staff to employ DHIS 2 to analyze and use system data to improve evidence-informed decision making at local and national levels. It

consists of a facilitators' guide (available here: <https://www.measureevaluation.org/resources/publications/ms-17-123a/>) and a participants' guide (available here: <https://www.measureevaluation.org/resources/publications/ms-17-123b/>).

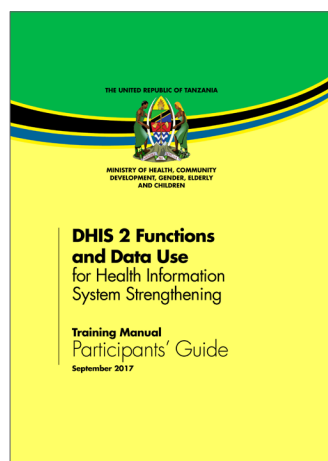
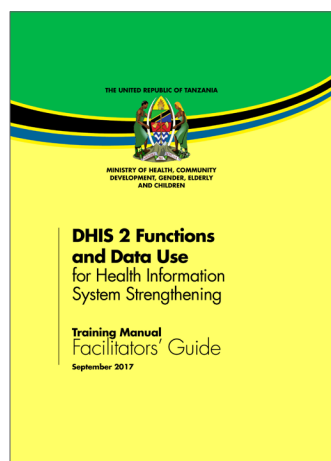
### Introduction

The MOHCDGEC made a strategic decision to invest in DHIS 2 and completed the national rollout of the system in 2013. Thereafter, the priorities for the ministry and for MEval-TZ were to ensure the sustainable functioning of the system, adapt the system to evolving needs, and establish a culture of information use in which staff have the capacity and skills needed to take full advantage of system data for evidence-informed decision making.

During an early phase of the project, MEval-TZ determined the need for a standard, comprehensive training resource to build capacity and skills in the use of the chief HIS systems and tools implemented by the government of Tanzania, including DHIS 2. The DHIS 2 training package was developed to augment the capacity and skills of council health management teams (CHMTs) and regional health management teams (RHMTs). Training helped these groups to use the advanced functions and features of DHIS 2, linking competent system use with improved data quality, analysis, and use of routinely collected data, and, ultimately, a stronger HIS.

### Development Process

A core team from MEval-TZ and the University of Dar es Salaam, under the guidance of the MOHCDGEC, drafted the training package. MEval-TZ managed the writing, which involved multiple HIS and HMIS stakeholders and was carried out in several stages: defining the overall scope for the package; content design and drafting; draft review and field pretest; and revision and finalization based on the pretest. RTI International and Jhpiego contributed technical content during draft review and pretesting. RHMT members from Dodoma, Iringa, Njombe,



Morogoro, and Singida regions and CHMT members from Dodoma Municipal Council, Mufindi District Council, Njombe Town Council, Singida Municipal Council, and Ulanga District Council participated in the field pretest. A final review was done by the MOHCDGEC as well as the Monitoring and Evaluation Strengthening Initiative (MESI) technical working group. The final version of the package represents the effort and commitment of many people, organizations, and partners.

## Results and Achievements

The comprehensive DHIS 2 training package consists of a facilitators' guide, participant's guide and PowerPoint slides organized into five modules:

- Module 1: Overview of health sector data sources
- Module 2: Overview of Tanzania's HMIS
- Module 3: HIS data management systems
- Module 4: Managing health data quality
- Module 5: Analysis and use of health data

The facilitators' guide includes training objectives, training methods, a schedule, and slide presentation notes to assist trainers to organize and facilitate training workshops. The participants' guide includes detailed session materials and participatory learning exercises (e.g., group discussions, case studies, scenarios) to help participants solidify and apply technical content.

MEval-TZ rolled out the DHIS 2 training package in all project-supported regions and districts in 2016 and 2017. Various modules were integrated and used in several MOHCDGEC training events.

## Going Forward

The DHIS 2 training was endorsed in 2018 by the MOHCDGEC's M&E and information and communication technology technical working group as a national resource material. Feedback from users should be channeled to the MOHCDGEC to improve it over time.



© 2016 Riccardo Gangale/VectorWorks, courtesy of Photoshare.