

HEALTHY FAMILIES, COMMUNITIES, AND MUNICIPALITIES METHODOLOGY (HCM)

CONTEXT

The health of a family is determined by numerous internal and external factors, which range from a mother's decision to boil contaminated water to a national policy promoting maternal health. Likewise, the health of a community is determined by the behaviors and practices adopted by the families who inhabit it. In turn, municipal or district governments can play an influential role in contributing to better health by choosing to invest in the health of their communities. Within this complex system, single-pronged efforts to create lasting health impact often fall short.



APPROACH

The Healthy Families, Communities, and Municipalities Methodology (HCM) works at all three levels to improve maternal and child health by strengthening communities, empowering families, and refocusing municipal governments to take ownership of their health. Through health promotion and education, the HCM methodology builds leadership and management capacities at all levels to support the adoption of healthy practices and change thinking about health.

The HCM methodology can be applied by nongovernmental organizations, local governments, and private companies, which learn the methodology through a comprehensive guide that provides training modules for prospective program managers. The HCM guide teaches program managers the values of health promotion to development and provides them with the knowledge and skills required to coach families, communities and municipalities to adopt health-centered practices and invest in health. The guide provides instructions for use of the HCM Toolkit, a user-friendly set of resources which is presented to each municipality to enable them to equip their communities with health monitoring tools, public investment projects, and leadership development programs, among others.

The HCM methodology is designed to be implemented as part of a longer-term, technical assistance program requiring several years of monitoring and follow-up to support changes in behaviors. While it is possible to utilize individual strategies, e.g. Healthy Families, Healthy Communities, or Health Municipalities, evidence has shown that an integrated approach yields the best results, as activities draw upon information collected at all three levels.

The HCM methodology helps managers of NGOs, private sector organizations or public institutions to:

- design and implement a multi-tier health promotion project;
- provide leadership training programs for community and government leaders;
- equip community and government leaders with planning and monitoring tools;
- communicate easy-to-understand health messages to families; and,
- monitor resulting improvements.

For More Information

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