



## STUDY BRIEF

# STRENGTHENING HEALTH SYSTEMS BY ADDRESSING COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS' MENTAL WELL-BEING AND AGENCY (NIHR-SHINE)

MAY 2024



### Our Team

Our interdisciplinary team comprises researchers, implementers, policymakers, CHWs, Government (National and County) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

### Setting

This project entails conducting studies within **urban slums** and **remote rural settings** in **Bangladesh** and **Kenya** to gain cross-contextual, cross-country comparisons and lessons for scale-up in other Low- & Middle-Income Country (LMIC) contexts.

### Duration

2022-2026

### Background

Strengthening health systems involves recognizing the importance of Community Health Workers (CHWs) and addressing their mental well-being and agency. CHWs are vital in delivering healthcare services and bridging the gap between formal healthcare systems and local communities. However, they often face numerous challenges, including heavy workloads, limited resources, insufficient training, and inadequate support, which can negatively impact their mental health and overall well-being.

### Research Aims and Objectives

SHINE aims to develop a comprehensive approach that promotes well-being and resilience among Community Health Workers (CHWs) while incorporating training, community cohesion, and support within the health system. SHINE objectives are geared;

- To identify strategies and programmes to enhance CHWs' well-being, with a specific focus on mental health that is equitable, sustainable and acceptable in LMIC settings.
- To co-design and test innovative health system interventions that are responsive to the diverse personal and job-related stressors (social, material and human) experienced by CHWs.
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- To contribute evidence and knowledge to inform and advocate for support for CHW's mental well-being and agency in future research and programme design in other health systems.



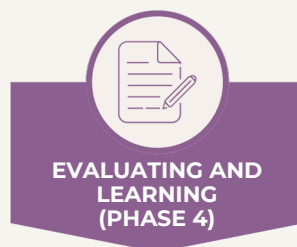
## Research Methodology

The project adopts a co-production approach characterized by inclusive and equitable partnerships to enhance stakeholder buy-in and sustainability. This approach entails sharing power, knowledge, and responsibility between Community Health Workers (CHWs) and various stakeholders within the health system.

By co-designing, implementing, and reflecting on solutions, we aim to develop strategies proven to strengthen health systems effectively.

The study is being conducted in urban informal, and rural settings to enable us to understand and compare the effects of the psychosocial well-being interventions focusing on diverse personal and job-related stressors experienced by CHWs to maximize support opportunities.

- The urban informal study sites are; **Viwandani** and **Korogochi**, both in **Nairobi City County**
- The rural setting study sites on the other hand are **Lari** and **Gatundu North** which are both in **Kiambu County**



- The objectives of this phase are to comprehensively analyze the stressors impacting Community Health Workers (CHWs) in rural and urban settings, assess their coping mechanisms, identify necessary support for their well-being and health system resilience, and document community beliefs, behaviors, and interactions with CHWs.
- We will create innovative health systems interventions, addressing both personal and job-related stressors Community Health Workers (CHWs) face.
- This involves hosting co-design intervention workshops, where CHWs collaborate with supervisors, managers, and policy actors using the 'Stepping Stones' method.
- We will use the evidence generated from phase 1 to co-develop and operationalize a holistic support package for the psychosocial well-being of CHWs.
- There will be simultaneous implementation of phases 3 and 4
- This will demonstrate the feasibility and measure outcomes of codeveloped interventions aimed at supporting Community Health Workers (CHWs) mental well-being
- Outputs will include innovative health systems interventions tailored to address personal and job-related stressors, as well as contextualized mental health interventions for CHWs, tested and evaluated for cost, equity, feasibility, acceptability, and potential scale-up
- The RE-AIM framework will be applied



...Community Health Workers (CHWs) bridge the gap between healthcare systems and local communities, playing a vital role in delivering services. Yet, they face challenges like heavy workloads, limited resources, and insufficient support, impacting their mental health...

## Acknowledgement



## Partners

