

# DATA BRIEF



## REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF CHRISTIAN HEALTH WORKER TRAINING INSTITUTIONS

MARCH 2025

# Summary

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In a first-ever attempt to gather global insight into Christian Health Worker Training Institutions (HWTIs), this brief presents a data snapshot of 1,365 Christian health worker training institutions in the world, offering 3,810 degree programs. Focusing on Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs), there are 634 institutions and 1,579 programs.

In LMICs, medical programs account for 12 percent of the total, while nursing programs account for 39 percent. Other professions represented in training institutes include oral health, pharmacy, and behavioral health. This data is based on the first global census of Christian HWTIs, carried out in 2024 by volunteers working with the Christian Health Asset Mapping Consortium. Results from this data can inform and help plan future efforts to improve the formation of Christian health workers. This will be a living database, with additional professions and data about the institutions added over time.

# Introduction

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Faith-based health worker training institutions are a key part of the health service landscape in many Low- and Middle-Income Countries, providing general training and specific equipping for those destined to work in Christian and other faith-based health services.

There is a lack of reliable data on the number, location, and type of programs, especially for faith-based HWTIs. This data gap hampers the inclusion of this critical sector in healthcare planning, resource allocation, specialized programs, and progress toward universal healthcare. A couple of large databases generally catalog information on all HWTIs.

The [World Directory of Medical Schools](#) is run by the World Federation for Medical Education and FAIMER, a division of Intealth. It includes an up-to-date list of over 4,000 medical schools globally. Outside of this resource for physician programs, there isn't much information available on other health degree programs such as nursing, pharmacy, or behavioral health. Some nursing accreditation agencies have lists of qualified institutions. Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing has a Center for Global Initiatives, which also has limited information. Otherwise, the only global list of nursing programs was a [1965 list from the World Health Organization](#).

To address this issue, the [Christian Health Asset Mapping Consortium \(CHAMC\)](#) conducted a brief study to identify global Christian HWTIs. The aim was to add knowledge about their scope and location and create a foundation for better global partnerships and research, especially in LMICs. Two volunteers led this effort, and CHAMC is grateful for their work.

The result of this is a unique list of 1,365 Christian HWTIs working in 111 countries. This data brief highlights information about these Christian HWTIs.

# Methods

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The development of this database was completed in five phases:

1. **Planning and Designing:** This included answering questions defining the elements of the database, such as "What is a Christian organization? What is a country? Whose description of a 'health professional' should we use? Which health professions should we include?" etc. The resulting model was then beta-tested.
2. **AI Search:** For each country in the world, AI searches helped to identify health professions education organizations (typically colleges, universities, and hospitals) and Christian health professions education organizations.
3. **Association and Accreditation Search:** Involved querying Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant health professions education associations and accrediting bodies and utilizing their member, licensing, and participant lists to update the worldwide database.
4. **Validation:** This phase is ongoing and involves correcting, updating, and supplementing the database through 'friend-sourcing.' In this phase, we ask individuals with local knowledge to review the results thus far and suggest corrections, updates, additions, and additional leads to be followed.
5. **Maintenance:** This phase is ongoing and involves database cleaning, management, and maintenance.

# Results

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There are 1,365 Christian health worker training institutions identified in more than 100 countries. These Christian HWTIs offer 3,810 degree health-related programs categorized in 18 different fields. The United States has 36 percent of all Christian HWTIs, with 496. **Appendix 1** shows the distribution of degree programs and the location of all 3,810 degree programs.

About 46 percent of the Christian HWTIs are located in LMICs. Among LMICs, India had the highest number of Christian HWTIs at 102, followed by the Philippines (48) and Mexico (41).

The Christian HWTIs represent a range of denominations and church connections. These were sorted into four groups: 49% are Catholic institutions, 43% are Protestant, 1% are Orthodox, and 6% are Other (e.g., Quaker, Africa Inland Church, nondenominational, interdenominational, and unspecified).

On the next page, **Table 1** shows the number and type of degree programs offered at Christian HWTIs in LMICs, distributed by region.

**Table 1**

Christian Health Worker Training Programs in LMICs by Type of Program and WHO Region

| Area              | Program                                | Number of Programs per Region |                |                             |                |                        |                       | Total       |
|-------------------|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|----------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
|                   |                                        | Africa (AFR)                  | Americas (AMR) | Eastern Mediterranean (EMR) | European (EUR) | South-East Asia (SEAR) | Western Pacific (WPR) |             |
| Medicine          | Physician                              | 68                            | 70             | 4                           | 2              | 29                     | 15                    | <b>188</b>  |
|                   | Physician Assistant                    | 4                             |                | 1                           |                | 1                      | 1                     | <b>7</b>    |
| Oral Health       | Dentist                                | 7                             | 54             | 2                           | 2              | 2                      | 3                     | <b>70</b>   |
|                   | Hygienist                              | 3                             | 2              |                             |                |                        |                       | <b>5</b>    |
| Nursing           | Advanced Practice/Nursing Practitioner | 8                             | 12             | 1                           |                | 20                     | 12                    | <b>53</b>   |
|                   | BSN                                    | 145                           | 92             | 9                           | 2              | 63                     | 47                    | <b>358</b>  |
|                   | Certificate                            | 55                            | 5              |                             |                | 9                      | 2                     | <b>71</b>   |
|                   | Midwife                                | 95                            | 10             | 4                           |                | 15                     | 6                     | <b>130</b>  |
| Pharmacy          | Pharm                                  | 32                            | 23             | 7                           | 1              | 11                     | 16                    | <b>90</b>   |
|                   | Pharm Asst                             | 17                            | 3              | 1                           |                | 1                      | 1                     | <b>23</b>   |
| Behavioral Health | Psychologist                           | 31                            | 130            | 4                           |                | 45                     | 11                    | <b>221</b>  |
|                   | Social Worker                          | 31                            | 37             | 2                           | 1              | 34                     | 8                     | <b>113</b>  |
|                   | Counselor                              | 41                            | 23             | 1                           | 1              | 11                     | 11                    | <b>88</b>   |
| Other             | Physical Therapy                       | 14                            | 49             | 5                           | 1              | 10                     | 9                     | <b>88</b>   |
|                   | Occupational Therapy                   | 5                             | 14             | 3                           |                |                        | 3                     | <b>25</b>   |
|                   | Speech/ Language                       |                               | 13             | 1                           |                | 4                      | 2                     | <b>20</b>   |
|                   | Vision/Eye Care                        | 7                             | 7              | 2                           |                | 8                      | 1                     | <b>25</b>   |
|                   | Audiology                              | 1                             |                |                             |                | 2                      | 1                     | <b>4</b>    |
| <b>Total</b>      |                                        | <b>564</b>                    | <b>544</b>     | <b>47</b>                   | <b>10</b>      | <b>265</b>             | <b>149</b>            | <b>1579</b> |

**Table 2**

Definitions of Each Program

|                          |                      |                                                                                                                |
|--------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Medicine</b>          | Physician            | Offering top degrees, according to country or regional standards, in medicine                                  |
|                          | Physician Assistant  | Offering lesser degrees (than medicine—see above), according to country or regional standards, in medicine     |
| <b>Oral Health</b>       | Dentist              | Offering top degrees, according to country or regional standards, in oral health                               |
|                          | Hygienist            | Offering lesser degrees (than dentistry—see above), according to country or regional standards, in oral health |
| <b>Nursing</b>           | Advanced Practice/NP | Offering master's or doctoral-level degrees in nursing (nurse practitioner)                                    |
|                          | BSN                  | Offering bachelor's level degrees in nursing                                                                   |
|                          | Certificate          | Offering certificates in nursing                                                                               |
|                          | Midwife              | Offering bachelor's level (or higher) degrees in perinatal care                                                |
| <b>Pharmacy</b>          | Pharm                | Offering top degrees, according to country or regional standards, in pharmacy                                  |
|                          | Pharm Asst           | Offering lesser degrees (than pharmacist—see above), according to country or regional standards, in pharmacy   |
| <b>Behavioral Health</b> | Psychologist         | Offering top degrees, according to country or regional standards, in psychology                                |
|                          | Social Worker        | Offering degrees in social work                                                                                |
|                          | Counselor            | Offering degrees in counseling                                                                                 |
| <b>Other</b>             | Physical Therapy     | Offering degrees in physical therapy                                                                           |
|                          | Occupational Therapy | Offering degrees in occupational therapy                                                                       |
|                          | Speech/Language      | Offering degrees in speech/language                                                                            |
|                          | Vision/Eye Care      | Offering degrees in vision and/or eye care                                                                     |
|                          | Audiology            | Offering degrees in audiology (hearing and balance)                                                            |

The Christian HWTIs in LMICs offer over 1,579 degree programs. The most popular is nursing (BSN), which has 358 programs, followed by psychology (221) and physician (188). The African Region has the highest number of degree programs at 240. Figure 1 below shows the distribution of Christian medical programs in LMICs, and Figure 2 shows the distribution of Christian nursing degree programs. Tanzania has the highest number of medical programs (20) and the second highest number of nursing programs (65). India has the highest number of nursing programs (85).

**Figure 1**

Christian Medical Programs in LMICs, by Country

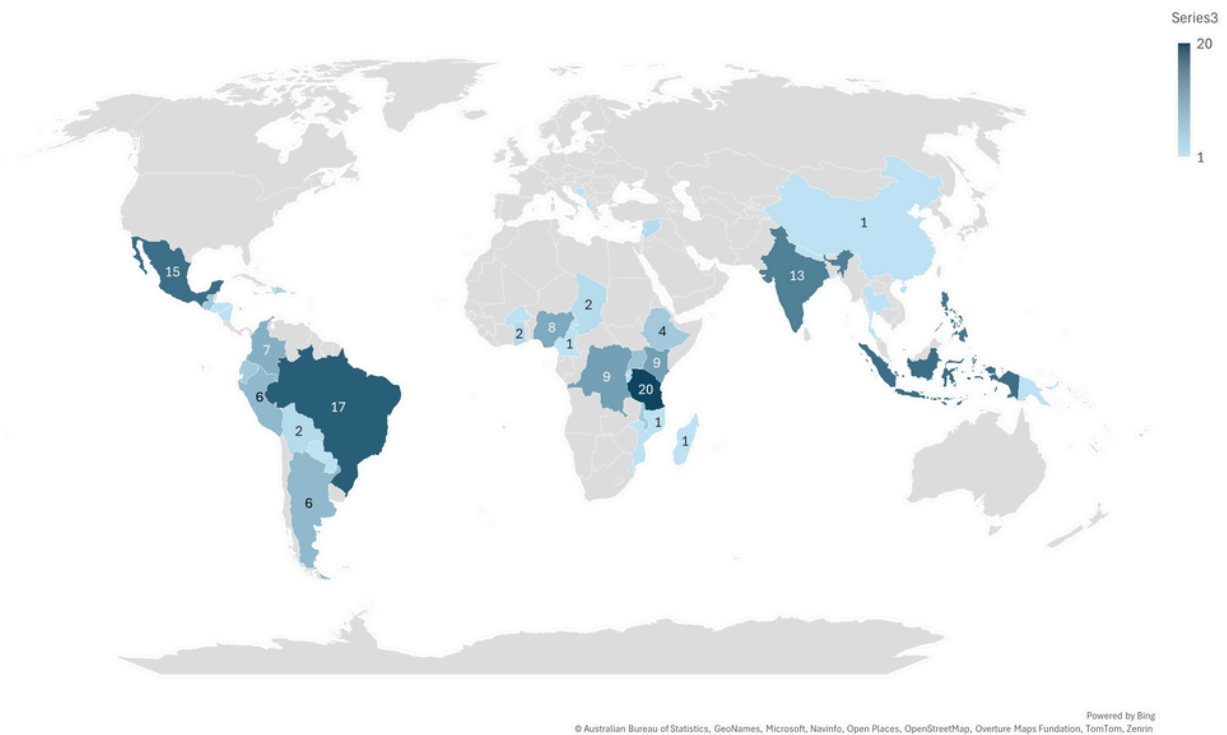
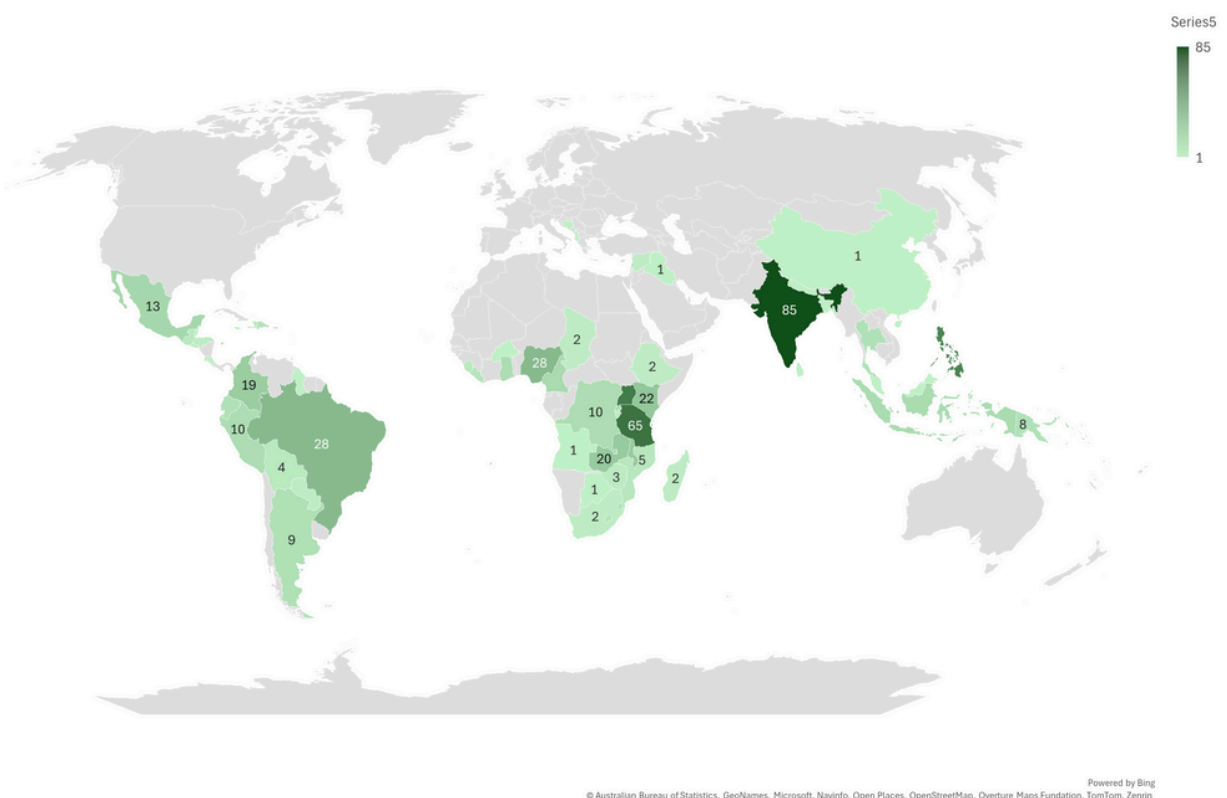


**Figure 2**

Christian Nursing Programs in LMICs, by Country



# Discussion

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This Christian HWTI database is the first of its kind, and the information in this brief is a snapshot of the available data. The full database can be shared upon request. Now that this database exists, it is time to envision the possibilities of how to put it to best use. How can these institutions contribute to improving and strengthening the future of a country's workforce? For example, this data can be used to:

- Guide research and development partnerships that need local academic partners
- Support curriculum review and development
- Create cohorts of training institutions committed to strengthening their work
- Trace pre-service and post-service professional development
- Explore how formation influences professional compassion, capabilities, and quality

There are many ways that CHAMC could build on this initiative. Future phases could include the addition of residency programs, public health degree programs, and community health worker training programs. CHAMC is particularly interested in how we can assess and strengthen the quality of these programs. A social networking analysis might also be relevant to understand how these institutions are already connected and leverage those connections. Lastly, the relationship between the number of Christian HWTI and the Christian population size in each country could be explored.

This initiative can be a catalyst for strengthening the Christian roots and quality of Christian health worker training institutions around the globe.

# Acknowledgements

Special thanks to Ron Yee, MD, MBA, and Gary Cloud, PhD, MBA, for collecting this data.

This brief was developed by the [Christian Health Asset Mapping Consortium \(CHAMC\)](#). CHAMC is an association of organizations addressing the urgent need for quality data and information on the Christian health asset landscape across the globe.

The mission of the CHAMC is to increase resources, learning, and partnerships in faith-based health services by improving understanding of the nature, scope, and location of those services.

Founding members of CHAMC include the [Africa Christian Health Associations Platform](#) (ACHAP), the [Catholic Health Association](#) (CHA USA), [Christian Connections for International Health](#) (CCIH), the [International Christian Medical and Dental Association](#) (ICMDA), [The Dalton Foundation](#), and the [World Council of Churches](#) (WCC).

CCIH serves as the Consortium's secretariat.

Cover photo from the Uganda Protestant Medical Bureau: A laboratory technician operates a hematology analyzer.

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## Appendix 1

### All Christian HWTI Degree Programs

| Area              | Degree               | Number of Programs per WHO Region |                |                             |                |                        |                       |             |
|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|----------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
|                   |                      | Africa (AFR)                      | Americas (AMR) | Eastern Mediterranean (EMR) | European (EUR) | South-East Asia (SEAR) | Western Pacific (WPR) | Total       |
| Medicine          | Physician            | 68                                | 111            | 4                           | 29             | 29                     | 32                    | <b>273</b>  |
|                   | Physician Assistant  | 4                                 | 91             | 1                           | 0              | 1                      | 2                     | <b>99</b>   |
| Oral Health       | Dentist              | 7                                 | 66             | 2                           | 16             | 2                      | 9                     | <b>102</b>  |
|                   | Hygienist            | 3                                 | 5              |                             | 1              |                        | 3                     | <b>12</b>   |
| Nursing           | Advanced Practice/NP | 8                                 | 207            | 1                           | 16             | 20                     | 23                    | <b>275</b>  |
|                   | BSN                  | 145                               | 512            | 9                           | 50             | 63                     | 90                    | <b>869</b>  |
|                   | Certificate          | 55                                | 49             |                             | 2              | 9                      | 7                     | <b>122</b>  |
|                   | Midwife              | 95                                | 19             | 4                           | 9              | 15                     | 13                    | <b>155</b>  |
| Pharmacy          | Pharm                | 32                                | 64             | 7                           | 18             | 11                     | 28                    | <b>160</b>  |
|                   | Pharm Asst           | 17                                | 8              | 1                           |                | 1                      | 2                     | <b>29</b>   |
| Behavioral Health | Psychologist         | 31                                | 231            | 4                           | 50             | 45                     | 47                    | <b>408</b>  |
|                   | Social Worker        | 31                                | 258            | 2                           | 42             | 34                     | 54                    | <b>421</b>  |
|                   | Counselor            | 41                                | 292            | 1                           | 20             | 11                     | 33                    | <b>398</b>  |
| Other             | Physical Therapy     | 14                                | 144            | 5                           | 29             | 10                     | 17                    | <b>219</b>  |
|                   | Occupational Therapy | 5                                 | 107            | 3                           | 11             |                        | 8                     | <b>134</b>  |
|                   | Speech/ Language     |                                   | 67             | 1                           | 8              | 4                      | 7                     | <b>87</b>   |
|                   | Vision/Eye Care      | 7                                 | 14             | 2                           | 4              | 8                      | 3                     | <b>38</b>   |
|                   | Audiology            | 1                                 | 4              |                             | 1              | 2                      | 1                     | <b>9</b>    |
| <b>Total</b>      |                      | <b>564</b>                        | <b>2249</b>    | <b>47</b>                   | <b>306</b>     | <b>265</b>             | <b>379</b>            | <b>3810</b> |