Open Source Software

CommCare is an open source software. This page provides some detail on what that means.

Software is open source if the original source code is made freely available and can be redistributed and modified. Dimagi releases its software under the most permissive of Open Source Initiative software licenses (BSD and Apache v 2.0). These licenses grant organizations complete freedom to re-use, redistribute, and reproduce Dimagi's software without consulting Dimagi.

Using open source code is especially beneficial if a project is going to scale or if there is a need to transfer the mHealth technology to a government. With open source code, governments can directly copy and customize pre-existing code and set-up their own servers without having to pay for licensing fees, use, or distribution of the software. This ensures that local software developers in a country can take ownership of a code base, and can be important for the long-term sustainability of a large-scale mHealth project.

It is important to note that utilizing open source code may require substantial resources. For example, an organization that obtains open source software for free may have to hire software developers to modify and install the open source code. In some cases, there exists a community of software developers who contribute to a code base. In this case, there is more support for new software developers to begin using the code. In other cases (including with Dimagi’s open source products), a single company produces almost all the software, but the code is available for others to use.

You can find more detail about the CommCare code base in the Advanced section of the CommCare help site and find the code on github.