

CRVS Insight

February 2023



New Estimate: More Than 8 million Deaths Unregistered Yearly in Asia-Pacific

Death registration is key to measuring and implementing public health policies, responding to health emergencies and a key component of legal identity. Despite progress, many countries still do not have universal and inclusive death registration systems and measuring completeness is essential to understanding the extent to which these systems may be deficient. However, data on the level of completeness and the number of unregistered deaths is lacking and this paper represents the first attempt to estimate the level of death registration completeness at the regional level. Innovative methods are applied to estimate unregistered deaths in countries for which this data are not reported.

The study estimates that of the approximately 32.1 million deaths in the 58 countries in the region, 23.8 million were reported, resulting in a regional estimate of completeness of 74.3 per cent in 2018. More specifically, the study showed that completeness exceeded 99.9 per cent in 10 countries and was below 50 per cent in 7 countries.

This Brief is part of ESCAP's work on civil registration and vital statistics funded under the Bloomberg Philanthropies Data for Health Initiative (D4H) Project.

Download the full report [here](#).



First Meeting of South-East Asian Civil Registrars Held in Manila, Philippines

A [meeting of South East Asia \(SEA\) civil registrars](#) was organized from 7-9 February 2023 in Manila. The meeting provided a professional forum for civil registrars to discuss priority areas that are of common concern to the civil registrars in the region, as well as the terms of references and organizational setup of a South-East Asia civil registrars network. The priority areas discussed, included legislative frameworks, CRVS digitization in South-East Asia and inequalities in CRVS. Presentations from the meeting are available on www.getinpicture.org.

For each of the priority areas, a draft background paper was developed by ESCAP and UNICEF in preparation for the meeting. The papers will be published as a compendium later in 2023. Additionally, field trips were organized to the [Office of the National Statistician](#) and Civil Registrar General and registration offices in Muntinlupa.

The meeting allowed participants to share existing practices and common challenges from their daily work with civil registration in the region. The meeting was supported by the [Philippines Statistics Authority](#) as well as other partners including ESCAP, Vital Strategies, CDC Foundation, Global Health Advocacy Incubator, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNHCR and WHO.



Data Analysis and Report Writing Workshop in Nadi, Fiji

From 30 January to 3 February, 16 participants from Tonga, Fiji, Vanuatu, Samoa and Kiribati attended a 5-day regional [capacity building workshop](#) on data analysis and report writing for civil registration based vital statistics in Nadi, Fiji. Participants included representatives from Civil Registration Offices, Ministries of Health and National Statistical Offices. The workshop, which was co-facilitated by ESCAP, [Australian Bureau of Statistics](#) (ABS), the [Pacific Community](#) (SPC) and the [Data 4 Health Global Grants Program](#), focused on using the data generated from national civil registration systems to produce vital statistics on births and deaths. During the workshop, participants strengthened proficiency in key analytical, interpretation and presentation skills, with the main aim being the production of a vital statistics report. ESCAP and development partners will continue to provide remote support to these countries in the ongoing production of their vital statistics report.



Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) Closing Workshop for Assessing Inequalities in Registration in Fiji, Suva

As one of the final steps in the [project for assessing inequalities in civil registration](#) in Fiji, a [closing workshop](#) was convened from 6 to 7 February in Suva, Fiji. The closing workshop, which follows an inception workshop and two national capacity building workshops which were held in 2022, provided an opportunity to present and share findings in inequalities in birth and death registration. A variety of stakeholders attended the workshop, including representatives from [Fiji Bureau of Statistics](#) (FBoS), Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MoHMS), the Registrar General's Office (Ministry of Justice), Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts, Fiji Police Force, Ministry of Women, Ministry of iTaukei Affairs, Fiji National Provident Fund, as well as representatives from ESCAP, UNICEF, SPC and WHO. Stakeholders discussed the findings from the inequality assessment, the potential policy implications, and next steps to ensure disparities in registration are addressed.



Just Launched: The Health Sector in Civil Registration: Options and Methods to Increase of Live Births, Stillbirths and Deaths

Partner organizations recently released a [new publication](#) titled “The health sector in civil registration: options and methods to increase registration of live births, stillbirths, and deaths”. The report serves as an addendum to the [WHO/UNICEF guidance](#) Health sector contributions towards improving the civil registration of births and deaths in low-income countries, released in 2021. The publication’s objective is to help civil registration and vital statistics system stakeholders increase rates of vital event registration. Options and guidance are provided to improve the quality and timeliness of civil registration information by leveraging opportunities available in and with the health sector, including infrastructure and well-established data collection practices.

This document is an output of the Bloomberg Philanthropies Data for Health Initiative and can be accessed [here](#).



ID4D Global ID Coverage Update

Many people around the world do not have official identification to prove who they are. Since 2016, the World Bank’s [Identification for Development \(ID4D\)](#) initiative has produced global identity coverage estimates and data to help fill this gap. ID4D recently updated its [Global Dataset](#) and revised the estimate for the number of people worldwide without official proof of identity. ID4D estimates show that approximately 850 million people did not have official identification in 2021, down from 1 billion in 2018. The Global Dataset also provides further details on who is being most impacted and where these people are located.

The latest edition of the ID4D Global Dataset draws on new data sources, providing a picture of identity ownership on the global level. The new data sources include representative survey-based data on ID ownership from the [ID4D-Findex survey](#), an expanded set of administrative data provided by ID authorities, and associated improvements to the methodology for calculating the global ID coverage gap. The current dataset covers 194 countries.



SDG3 GAP and Health Data Collaborative Multi-Agency Support Mission to Nepal for CRVS and GIS

On 23-27 January 2023, the [Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Wellbeing for All](#) (SDG3 GAP) and the [Health Data Collaborative](#) (HDC) organized a multi-agency support mission to Nepal, supported by UNICEF, WHO and UNFPA. The mission aimed to discuss areas of possible collaboration with a focus on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) and Geographic Information Systems (GIS). The objectives of the joint mission were to:

- Explore how HDC partners can jointly accelerate support for the Nepal CRVS Strategy 2019.
- Convene a stakeholder meeting of national, bilateral and multinational partners, including but not limited to the health sector, to share ongoing activities in support of CRVS.
- Recommend key areas for improvement in partners' alignment (national and international) and improved integration of CRVS and GIS systems within the overall population and health data system.

The outcome of the mission was a short mission White Paper co-developed with the Government of Nepal, outlining recommendations for joint partner support for CRVS and GIS.



Collaborative on Administrative Data

The [United Nations Statistics Division](#) and the [Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data](#) are joint convenors of the Administrative Data Collaborative, a multi-stakeholder collaborative of countries and regional and international agencies, aiming to strengthen the capacity of countries to use administrative data sources for statistical purposes. The collaborative addresses both urgent and longer-term needs around the access and use of administrative data for statistical purposes. The collaborative serves as a platform to share resources, tools, best practices, and experiences. It includes technical experts across the globe and draws on the expertise of UN regional and specialized agencies and other organizations and initiatives. More information is available at the [inventory of resources](#).

In 2022, many activities and products have come out of the Collaborative work, including:

- Side-events at the UN Statistical Commission, African Statistical Commission as well as a presentation at ECA admin data event
 - 2 expert clinics/webinars on [maturity models](#) and harmonization of concepts and definitions
 - Joint set of workshops with Chile and ECLAC on IT infrastructure and admin data: [first session](#), [second session](#) and [third session](#)
 - Workshops on use of administrative data sources in Bhutan and Namibia
 - Legal framework self-assessment tool (scroll down on main page of the CAD)
 - Further development of MoU guidance (current version [here](#))
 - Materials for training on use of administrative data for NSOs and admin data holders
 - Development of an admin data quality assessment toolkit
 - Improvements to and addition of materials on [inventory of resources](#)
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MoU with the Maldives Paves the Way for Health Data Systems Strengthening

On 1 December 2022, a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) (MoU) was signed between the Global Health Advocacy Incubator (GHAI) and the Maldives' Department of National Registration. The MoU establishes a strategic partnership to mobilize domestic resources to create an integrated and sustainable civil registration and identity system that helps improve public health data in line with international best practices.

The MoU will support the [Maldives government's plans to prioritize CRVS programs](#). This collaboration, which is planned for 12 months, includes advocacy to secure an increased and maintained investment in CRVS functions by Maldivian budgetary authorities. This aims to strengthen the human resource capacity of the Department of National Registration and improve information technology systems for better integration and interoperability of the birth and death registration system. To help build the public demand for more efficient civil registration services, GHAI will also support an increase in the quality and quantity of media coverage for CRVS topics.



Open CRVS Version 1.2.0 Product Launch

OpenCRVS hosted a virtual release for v1.2.0 of the platform on 2 February 2023, showcasing the latest features and functionalities that have been developed in response to global demand. More specifically, the [online event](#) focused on providing:

- A recap of OpenCRVS achievements in 2022.
- An overview and demonstration of key features and functionalities included in v1.2.0.
- A briefing on upcoming activities for OpenCRVS in 2023 and plans to release v1.3.0, including MOSIP integration, marriage and divorce registration modules and putting civil registration at the heart of effective government service delivery through [G2P Connect](#) and the [Convergence initiative](#).

The updated documentation for v1.2.0 is available at this [link](#) and more information on OpenCRVS is available on the website [here](#). If you are considering CRVS digitisation and would like to speak to the team and/or arrange a private demonstration, get in touch by emailing team@opencrvs.org.

OpenCRVS is a not-for-profit organisation with a mission to make civil registration easy and valuable for everyone by making high-quality and cost-effective digital systems widely available and sustainable. Visit their [website](#), to learn more.

Side Event at the UN Statistical Commission

United Nations
Statistical Commission
54th Session

ECONOMY • ENVIRONMENT • POPULATION • SOCIETY • TRADE

Measuring coverage of death registration: innovative approaches with surveys and censuses

Wednesday, 01 March 2023
1:15 – 2:45 pm (Eastern) | UNHQ, CR-8

unstats.un.org | @UNStats | #UN54SC

United Nations
Department of Economic and Social Affairs

54th UNSC Side Event: Measuring Coverage of Death Registration: Innovative Approaches with Surveys and Censuses

The [side events of the 54th United Nations Statistical Commission](#) will be held during 28 February – 3 March 2023 in New York. In particular, a side event on "[Measuring coverage of death registration: innovative approaches with surveys and censuses](#)" will be organized by UNSD, NYU Abu Dhabi and UNESCAP on 1 March 2023. The side event is the first of a webinar series on innovative methods to measure adult mortality and will be led by [Technical Advisory Group on COVID-19 Mortality Assessment](#). The event will focus on the use of surveys and censuses to measure the completeness and gaps in death registration and health information systems. Discussion in the event will inform further work and guidance to countries on innovative and comprehensive measurement and collection of statistics on adult mortality.



CRVS Champion: Ponifasio Vasa

Each month, our community newsletter puts a spotlight on one person from Asia-Pacific who has gone above and beyond in their efforts to support CRVS programmes, raise awareness of CRVS issues or lead CRVS improvement efforts in their home country. This month we are happy to highlight Mr. Ponifasio Vasa from Samoa.

What is your current title and role?

I am the Assistant Chief Executive Office for Births, Deaths and Marriages Division and Registrar for Births, Deaths and Marriages.

The institutional arrangements in Samoa are quite unique, whereby the Office for Births, Deaths and Marriages is situated within Samoa Bureau of Statistics.

My main role is to ensure full compliance with BDM Legislation in registration of births, deaths, marriages and divorces, as well as verifications of vital statistics for overseas citizenships and registration of adoptions.

Can you please share with us a particular experience which highlighted the importance of CRVS to you?

The experience I treasure most in terms of highlighting the importance of CRVS in Samoa, is outreach programmes. Through outreach programmes, we have witnessed the vulnerabilities of some population groups (especially those residing in isolated areas or people living with disabilities), in terms of their accessibility to services and access to birth or death certification. Without access to a birth certificate, people may face challenges in accessing many government services such as education, health services and financial services.

There are tailored government services for people living with disabilities, but a birth certificate is a necessity to access these essential services.

How are you currently involved in CRVS improvements?

In Samoa, we try to ensure that every person is reached by civil registration services through outreach programmes and public awareness campaigns. I feel in my role as Assistant Chief Executive Office for Births, Deaths and Marriages Division and Registrar for Births, Deaths and Marriages, it is important for me to continue coordinating with our core group of CRVS stakeholders and to continue building this network, in order to advocate for the importance of CRVS. Collaboration with stakeholders is key to our work in improving access to civil registration.

Which advice would you give to others trying to improve CRVS systems?

Be patient and persistent, especially when it comes to advocacy among CRVS stakeholders for CRVS improvements. Collaboration with other civil registrars in the Pacific region such as through the Pacific Civil Registrars Network (PCRN) is also invaluable, for sharing experiences between countries and working together to strengthen our national civil registration systems.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **28 February-3 March 2023:** 54th session of the United Nations Statistical Commission. More details [here](#).
- **20-22 March 2023:** Pacific Civil Registrars meeting, find concept note [here](#).
- **23-24 March 2023:** A regional meeting on the Brisbane Accord Group members. Follow the [link](#) for more information.
- **27-30 March 2023:** Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development. Follow the [link](#) for more information.
- **3-4 April 2023:** Asia Pacific CRVS Research Forum. Follow the [link](#) for more detail.
- **10-12 May 2023:** Meeting of the Regional Steering Group for CRVS in Asia Pacific (members will be invited shortly).

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

- ESCAP, Programme Assistant, G6 - Statistics Division. Job opening based in Bangkok, Thailand. Find more details [here](#).
- ESCAP, Internship (Civil Registration and Vital Statistics) - Statistics Division. Job opening based in Bangkok, Thailand. Find more details [here](#).
- UNFPA, Programme Analyst: Population and Policy. Job opening based in Vientiane, Lao PDR. Find more details [here](#).



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If you have a new resource, upcoming event or article you would like highlighted, please send submissions along with an accompanying photo to escap-crvs@un.org.

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