

CRVS Insight

September 2023

04 October 2023
13:00-14:15h (UTC+7)

Asia-Pacific Stats Café Series

**Vital Statistics Business Process Model:
a new, process-centric approach to
improving CRVS systems**



REGISTRATION

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Teams meeting

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Good coffee makes your day
but good data helps you decide.

Speakers:



Romain Santon

Regional Deputy Director
Asia-Pacific,
Vital Strategies



Raj Gautam Mitra

International Consultant,
Vital Strategies



**Country
Experience
Sharing**

Opening remarks:



Petra Nahmias

Chief of the Population
and Social Statistics
Section,
Statistics Division,
ESCAP



Nidhi Chaudhary

Principal Technical Advisor,
Data Impact Program,
Vital Strategies



Chloe Harvey

Associate Population
Affairs Officer,
Statistics Division,
ESCAP

Moderated by:



Countries meet in Bangkok for Inequality Assessment training

ESCAP organized a Regional Training on Assessing Inequalities in Civil Registration Completeness. The training took place in Bangkok from 11 to 15 September and involved participants from 12 countries as well as UNICEF and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). It provided practical knowledge to assess the completeness of birth and death registration records using secondary sources of data as well as training them to compute completeness rates of birth and death registration. This provided participants with the demographics skills necessary to initiate inequality assessments, and the opportunity to discuss on how these assessments can lead to policy outcomes.

This workshop participants gained practical knowledge to assess the completeness of birth and death registration records using secondary sources of data. In total, 40 participants representing National Statistics Offices, Civil Registries and Ministries of Health attended the training.

ESCAP is following up with participating countries to provide further support for inequality assessment analysis.

More information about the event available [here](#).



Launch of World Bank's Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems Advanced Level Course

The [World Bank](#) recently released an advanced level self paced course on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics systems. This course covers 13 modules and is virtually guided by international experts who facilitate online discussions and assignments.

More information about the course on this [link](#).



Workshop on Data Analysis and Report Writing for Civil Registration Based Vital Statistics in Maldives: Deaths and Causes of Death

ESCAP, in close partnership with the [Maldives Bureau of Statistics](#) (MBS) and the [World Health Organization](#) (WHO), organized the second workshop on data analysis and report writing for civil registration-based vital statistics. The event took place in Male, Maldives, from the 3rd to the 7th of September 2023.

The primary objective of this workshop was to enhance the capabilities of government officials to conduct comprehensive and systematic analyses of mortality data drawn from the national civil registration data system. The workshop covered a range of topics, including the assessment of data quality and the completeness of death registration, the calculation and presentation of key mortality indicators, such as life expectancy at birth, and providing hands-on training in the utilization of the WHO's [ANACoD3 tool](#).

The workshop engaged a total of 24 national stakeholders from the Ministry of Health, Department of National Registration, Maldives Bureau of Statistics, Indira Gandhi Memorial Hospital (IGMH), Health Protection Agency, Hulhumale Hospital and Treetop Hospital.

The workshop was concluded with multiple mutually agreed timelines for data sharing, data analysis and the release of the vital statistics report, set for February 2024.

More information on the event available [here](#).



National Capacity Building Workshop on Using CRVS-Related Evidence to Inform Gender-Sensitive Policies in Fiji

The National Capacity Building Workshop on Using CRVS-Related Evidence to Inform Gender-Sensitive Policies in Fiji was held in Suva on 21-22 September involving a core group of CRVS data producers, users and decision-makers. The workshop identified gender-focused priority policy areas based on available data. It enhanced participants' capacity for data synthesis and of crafting data-driven messages towards policy recommendations. This was part of support to countries on [evidence to action](#) and first in a series of national workshops focusing on the topic.

More information on the event available [here](#).



Samoa Commits to Modernize Birth Registration

The Registrar General of Samoa participated at the launch of the report: *Strengthening birth registration in Samoa - Intelligence Report*. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between the Registrar General and the [United Nations Development Programme](#) (UNDP), to transform civil registration and vital statistics in Samoa. This reinforced the commitment towards universal birth registration and marks a significant milestone in the effort to modernize civil registration and vital statistics in Samoa.

Video of the launch can be found [here](#) and the full report is available via this [link](#).



Second Capacity-Building Workshop on Inequality Assessments and Strengthening Demographic Analysis Capacity on CRVS in Bangladesh

In partnership with the [Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics](#), ESCAP organized a capacity-building workshop in preparation for the publication of Bangladesh's first inequality assessment. This workshop brought together experts from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics and its national and international partners, to strengthen ties, deepen understanding of the demographic data ecosystem in Bangladesh, and improve capacity for estimating vital statistics and demographic indicators using advanced methods, such as small area estimation, and spatial modelling. The sessions combined presentations as well as practical exercise on spatial analysis and demographic methods for CRVS.

The workshop represented another step in Bangladesh's journey toward strengthening the stakeholders' capacity to generate vital statistics and demographic indicators using civil registration and sample vital registration system data. It developed stakeholder's abilities to measure completeness of birth and death registration, assessing inequalities, as well as examining how the results can inform policy at the national level.

More information on the event can be found [here](#).



Congratulations to Fiji on launching the Fiji Vital Statistics Report 2016-2021 and the Report on Assessing Inequalities in Birth and Death Registration in Fiji

On the 26th of September 2023, [Fiji Bureau of Statistics](#) launched two landmark CRVS Reports: The [Fiji Vital Statistics Report 2016-2021](#) and the [Report on Assessing Inequalities in Birth and Death Registration in Fiji](#).

The Fiji Vital Statistics Report 2016-2021 is the culmination of five years of meticulous data collection, analysis and collaboration which captures the vital events that have shaped Fiji's society during this period. The development of the vital statistics report was supported by Vital Strategies, University of New South Wales and partners of the Brisbane Accord Group. For a snapshot of the main findings, you may find the highlights [here](#).

Fiji is also one of the first countries to have embarked on an in-depth quantitative civil registration inequality assessment report, as part of [ESCAP's regional support for implementing CRVS inequality assessments and strengthening demographic capacity](#). The report examines differentials in birth and death registration by sex, age, ethnicity and mother's marital status. Information obtained from this assessment will be used to inform future research and policy interventions to bridge gaps in registration between different population groups in the country. One of the key policy findings from the inequality assessment is the significant and positive impact that financial incentives had on birth registration in Fiji, which are reported in an associated [policy brief](#).

Congratulations to the Fiji Bureau of Statistics (FBoS), Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Health and Medical Services and all of the national CRVS stakeholders in Fiji who led and contributed to these two reports.



CRVS Champion: Tom Moultrie

Our community newsletter puts a spotlight on people who have gone above and beyond in their efforts to support CRVS programmes in Asia and the Pacific, raise awareness of CRVS issues or lead CRVS improvement efforts in their home country or in the region. This month, we would like to dedicate this issue of Insight to Tom Moultrie.

What is your current title and role?

I am the professor of demography at the University of Cape Town, South Africa. My areas of research fall into several major themes, two of which are relevant to CRVS systems: demographic estimation from limited and defective data; and the political economy of official statistics.

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

The moral case for enhancing and improving CRVS systems has long been apparent, Targets 16.9 and 17.19 of the SDGs set a goal of 100% completeness of birth registration and 80% completeness of death registration by 2030. However, for me, it was the COVID-19 pandemic that crystallised in the starkest manner possible the centrality of CRVS in assisting with understanding, and responding to, the pandemic.

In South Africa, while our civil registration is substantially complete, data are often not available for several years after collection: [CRVS data on births are currently available only to 2020; and deaths \(with cause of death\) only to 2018](#). With such lags, South Africa – like the vast majority of developing countries - would have been flying blind throughout the pandemic.

However, we are fortunate to have a National Population Register NPR for South African citizens that gets updated in real-time with registration of births and deaths. Colleagues had used monthly data from the NPR to track the evolution of HIV/AIDS mortality in the country in the early 2000s. As we watched the pandemic unfurl, first in China, then Italy, [we set about repurposing the system to track mortality on a weekly basis](#), adjusting the NPR data for deaths of non-citizens, as well as the completeness of death registration in the country.

While the NPR allowed us to bypass some of the deficiencies and inefficiencies in our CRVS, the pandemic brought home the importance of being able to track birth and death registration in near-real time using CRVS data.

How are you currently involved in CRVS improvements?

I have been extremely fortunate to have worked closely with ESCAP's Statistics Division for nearly three years now, assisting them – and countries in the ESCAP region – to evaluate the completeness of their CRVS data, and to begin the crucially important process of conducting inequality assessments on those data. Inequality assessments seek to identify those groups who are more likely to not be included in CRVS systems, providing the crucial data against which interventions can be planned.

Vital statistics in most of sub-Saharan Africa remains something of a black hole. This has to be a major source of effort in the remaining years of the SDG period.

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

First, the challenge of improving CRVS is so complex – requiring political negotiation to secure buy-in and data sharing from so many stakeholders who are often used to working in their own silos – and the road is extremely long and hard, but the rewards of seeing improvements in completeness of CRVS data, and emerging collaborations between those stakeholders make it all worthwhile!

Second, never forget the moral case for universal civil registration and vital statistics systems, and the value that the data in those systems can add to achieving the global development agenda!

And, finally, while it is truly exciting to see countries moving to new forms of data collection and dissemination, if these changes are made incrementally (e.g. a gradual roll-out), every effort must still be made to keep the old system going in parallel with the new until it is fully replaced.

NEW RESOURCES

- 6th Regional Head of Planning and Statistics (HOPS6) Working Paper 4 – Action Plan for Pacific CRVS: [English](#) and [French](#)
- 6th Regional Head of Planning and Statistics (HOPS6) Working Paper 5 – Regional Cause of Death Support Approach: [English](#) and [French](#)
- [Statelessness Encyclopedia Asia Pacific \(SEAP\)](#)
- [Fiji National Vital Statistics Report 2016-2021](#)
- [Assessing Inequalities in Registration of Births and Deaths in Fiji](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **3 – 5 October 2023:** [6th Regional conference of heads of planning and statistics \(HOPS 6\)](#)
- **4 October 2023:** [Asia-Pacific Stats Café: Vital Statistics Business Process Model: a new, process-centric approach to improving CRVS systems](#)
- **10 October 2023:** [Population Registers, Ethics and Human Rights](#)
- **18 – 20 October 2023:** [Technical Workshop on CRVS System Interoperability and Data Sharing](#)



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