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CRVS Insight Newsletter

December 2025



The year 2025 marked significant progress in civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) across the Asia and the Pacific region. Countries continued to strengthen legal frameworks, streamline registration processes, and harness digital technologies to close gaps in coverage. These efforts reinforce the region's commitment to ensuring that every individual is counted and that vital statistics are produced in a timely and reliable manner.

A major highlight was the [Third Ministerial Conference on CRVS in Asia and the Pacific](#), held in June 2025. The conference brought together ministers and senior officials from across the region to renew commitments, share innovative solutions, and adopt strategies for accelerating progress. While these achievements are commendable, the work is far from complete. We must remain dedicated to closing remaining gaps and ensuring that strong and effective CRVS systems benefit everyone in the region. Together, we will carry these achievements forward into 2026, working hand in hand to achieve universal registration and timely vital statistics



Strengthening Civil Registration in Viet Nam: Evidence and Future Focus

A new discussion paper by ESCAP, in collaboration with UNFPA and Vital Strategies, reviews the latest available evidence on Viet Nam's civil registration system, highlighting

where progress has been made and where gaps remain, particularly in the completeness and timeliness of birth and death registration.

Drawing on recent national reports, including the first [Vital Statistics Report 2021–2024](#), the paper brings together key findings and recommendations to inform the development of the 2026–2030 National Programme of Action on CRVS. It also identifies priority areas for further analysis, offering a practical evidence base to support dialogue, policy planning, and more targeted action to reduce CRVS disparities across the country.

The full Discussion Paper is available [here](#).



Kazakhstan Nears 100% Birth Registration

Kazakhstan has reached a significant milestone in child rights protection, achieving an almost universal birth registration rate. Recent findings from UNICEF and the Ministry of Education highlight this accomplishment as a critical step toward ensuring that every

child in the country is legally recognized from birth. Experts emphasize that this achievement reflects Kazakhstan's sustained commitment to international standards on child welfare and identity rights.

The [2024 Situation Analysis of Children and Adolescents in Kazakhstan](#) identifies birth registration as a foundational element of the nation's broader child protection strategy. With children and adolescents comprising 34% of the population, the government has prioritized legal identity as a gateway to essential services. Analysts attribute the near 100% registration rate to long-standing family support policies and the integration of digital governance systems, which have streamlined registration processes nationwide.

Beyond legal recognition, birth registration enables access to social and economic benefits, including participation in the "National Fund for Children" program. This progress coincides with improvements in the Child Well-Being Index, which rose to 58.6 points in 2024. Looking ahead, Kazakhstan plans to consolidate child-focused measures under the forthcoming "Children of Kazakhstan" programme, reinforcing its position as a leader in child rights protection.

Read full news article [here](#).



Photo credit: UNFPA / Asad Zaidi

Blog: Strengthening death registration to end gender-based violence

As the annual 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) conclude, experts are highlighting a critical but often overlooked tool in combating violence: universal and robust death registration. Countless women and girls across Asia and the Pacific lack formal recognition, extending even to the documentation of their deaths. This undermines efforts to design effective policies and interventions. Without accurate mortality data, gender-related killings and harmful practices remain hidden from view, perpetuating cycles of violence.

Current estimates suggest that 6.9 million deaths go unregistered annually in the region, with women disproportionately represented among the uncounted. This gap stems from systemic and social factors, including limited incentives for families to register female deaths, particularly where women lack property rights. Location also plays an important role. Women are more likely to die at home or outside health facilities, especially in rural areas where registration systems are weakest. Even when deaths are recorded, misclassification is common. Cases labeled as “natural” or “accidental” or “unknown”

often mask gender-based violence. Studies reveal that many deaths initially classified as suicides or accidents were, in fact, linked to GBV.

The consequences are critical. In 2024 alone, an estimated 17,700 women in Asia and the Pacific were killed by intimate partners or family members, yet many of these deaths were not officially counted as femicide due to inadequate data standards. This failure to capture female mortality accurately not only obscures the scale of violence but also hinders accountability and prevention efforts.

International experts, including ESCAP and UNFPA, are calling for urgent action to close this gap. Priorities include ensuring complete and timely death registration, adopting the Statistical Framework for Measuring the Gender-Related Killing of Women and Girls, and strengthening medico-legal capacity to accurately determine cause and manner of death. Countries such as Fiji and Mongolia have already piloted these frameworks, signaling progress toward global standards. Experts stress that improving female death registration is not merely a technical exercise, it is a human rights imperative and a prerequisite for achieving Sustainable Development Goal Target 5.2 on eliminating violence against women and girls.

Read the full blog [here](#).



Blog: Filling in the blanks: Identity and inclusion in a digital world

In an increasingly digital world, incomplete birth records are emerging as a major barrier to identity verification and service access. Missing days or months on birth certificates, once a minor bureaucratic issue, now trigger system rejections that block individuals from healthcare, banking, education, and international travel. Millions across Asia-Pacific face this challenge due to legacy paper-based registration practices that failed to capture full birth dates.

Historically, placeholders such as “--/--/YY” in Thailand or default dates like 1 January in rural Bangladesh were considered acceptable. Today, however, modern databases require standardized day-month-year formats, and incomplete records result in what experts call “digital exclusion.” The consequences extend beyond personal inconvenience: inaccurate data weakens Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) systems, hampers policy planning, and delays legal processes such as marriage and migration.

To address these gaps, countries are adopting corrective measures. Thailand now authorizes registrars to assign assumed dates, while Switzerland and Australia have introduced fictitious date policies to enable identity verification. Experts recommend a dual approach: retrospective rectification of old records and forward-looking reforms to ensure accurate birth registration from the outset. Regional momentum, highlighted in recent [ESCAP report](#), reflects a shared goal: preventing historical oversights from becoming permanent barriers in an increasingly automated future.

Click [here](#) for the full blog.



Photo credit: UNHCR

New framework aims to increase Cause-of-Death data accuracy

Bangladesh is taking steps toward strengthening its civil registration system as experts highlight opportunities for reform to achieve universal coverage. While current birth and

death registration rates: 50% and 47% respectively, remain below global averages, momentum is building to close these gaps and ensure every citizen has a legal identity.

Improving registration coverage is critical for expanding access to education, healthcare, and social protection. Legal identity also plays a key role in preventing child marriage, child labor, and trafficking by providing official proof of age. Recent surveys reveal progress but also persistent challenges among marginalized groups, with street children and urban slum families most affected. Addressing these disparities will help advance Bangladesh's commitments to equity and inclusion.

Experts recommend practical reforms to accelerate progress, including mandatory registration at health facilities, fee waivers for early corrections, and enhanced digital integration to streamline processes. These measures align with the United Nations' goal of 100% registration by 2030 and support broader Sustainable Development Goals on health, equality, and poverty reduction. Strengthening civil registration is not only an administrative priority—it is a foundation for inclusive development and social justice.

Read full news article [here](#).



Photo credit: General Department of Identification, Ministry of Interior, Cambodia

Cambodia advances toward “One Person, One Identity”

Cambodia is advancing a major initiative to strengthen its civil registration and digital identity systems, aiming to achieve the principle of “One Person, One Identity.” This effort seeks to ensure that every citizen is recognized and empowered through a secure and interoperable digital framework, laying the foundation for inclusive access to essential services.

The initiative is being developed through a partnership between the General Department of Identification, UNDP Cambodia, and Vital Strategies. A significant milestone was reached in November with the National Consultation Workshop, co-organized by the partners and attended by H.E. Abhisantibindit Sar Sokha, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior. The workshop focused on shaping the National Strategic Plan of Identification Phase 2 (2026–2035), a ten-year roadmap to modernize identity management.

UNDP Cambodia is supporting this transition through enhancing digital ID infrastructure, strengthening local administrative capacity, and fostering cross-ministerial coordination.

The collaboration reflects a shared commitment to building an inclusive and resilient digital identity ecosystem.



National Symposium & Stakeholder Consultation to Strengthen Mortality Information System in India

India is hosting a National Symposium and Stakeholder Consultation titled “Building a Mortality System for Viksit Bharat” in February 2026, marking a major step toward strengthening health data systems. The event aims to ensure that every death is registered, and its cause accurately determined to inform evidence-based health policies and improve governance.

Scheduled for 9 - 11 February at the India International Centre in New Delhi, the program includes technical workshops, stakeholder consultations, and poster presentations. Organized by leading public health experts, the symposium will focus on establishing a National Consortium for Strengthening Mortality Data Systems. Key themes include improving mortality data for policy development, enhancing civil registration and medical certification of deaths, expanding verbal autopsies for non-institutional deaths, and exploring artificial intelligence for cause-of-death ascertainment.

The event invites participation from epidemiologists, demographers, medical professionals, and public health specialists, with opportunities for paper submissions and oral presentations. Registration is now open, and selected authors may receive

travel grants subject to funding. Organizers emphasize that strengthening mortality data systems is essential for achieving national health goals and advancing India's vision for Viksit Bharat.

Visit the event page [here](#) for more details and registration.



Fiji Strengthens Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems

Fiji is undertaking its first comprehensive review of civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) laws in five decades, aiming to modernize outdated frameworks and transition “from typewriters to tablets.” Led by the Ministry of Justice and supported by the Pacific Community (SPC) and Bloomberg Philanthropies’ Data for Health Initiative, the reform seeks to improve governance, strengthen legal identity, and ensure accurate recording of life events.

In Fiji, a major milestone was the launch of on-site birth registration services at Suva's Colonial War Memorial Hospital. This innovation allows families to register births before discharge, reducing delays and costs while improving data accuracy. Early uptake demonstrates strong demand, with multiple late registrations completed within days of implementation.

Fiji's outreach to outer islands, including Waya and Koro, brought marriage licensing and mobile registration services directly to communities. These initiatives reduce financial and logistical barriers, enabling families in remote areas to formalize unions and register vital events without costly travel.

The nationwide CRVS Awareness Project, which concluded in November, focused on addressing gender inequities in on-time birth registration. Through mobile campaigns and community engagement, the project tackled persistent challenges such as late notifications, connectivity gaps, and cultural barriers, reinforcing the principle that every birth matters.

Finally, regional support for cause-of-death reporting expanded with the Pacific Regional Coding Service, now available to all Pacific countries. Operated by SPC and supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies, the service applies WHO ICD-10 standards to mortality data, helping governments strengthen health policy and improve evidence-based decision-making.

Further details on these initiatives are available in the full [December 2025 PCRN Newsletter](#).



Brunei Advances Digital Identity with BruneiID Soft Launch

Brunei has taken a major step in its digital transformation agenda with the soft launch of BruneiID, a national digital identity platform designed to streamline access to public and private services. Available on major app stores, BruneiID offers secure, verifiable, and user-controlled identity management for citizens, permanent residents, and expatriates, marking a significant milestone in the country's efforts to modernize governance and service delivery.

The platform introduces several key features, including a digital version of the national identity card, password-less login through QR code scanning, and universal eligibility for all holders of Brunei-issued identity cards aged 12 and above. While the physical card remains necessary for certain legal transactions, BruneiID is expected to simplify authentication processes and enhance security. The Immigration and National Registration Department (INRD) is overseeing the rollout, which will eventually replace the existing e-Darussalam platform.

This initiative forms part of Brunei's National Digital Economy Blueprint and Digital Economy Masterplan 2025, which allocates BND146.5 million (approximately USD108 million) for digitization projects. The soft launch begins a six-month trial phase during which the system will be refined ahead of full national deployment, signaling Brunei's commitment to building a robust digital ecosystem that supports inclusive and efficient service delivery.

Click [here](#) for the news article.

CRVS Champion



Azizbek Ashurov - Kyrgyzstan

*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 **Azizbek Ashurov**.*

What is your current title and role?

I am a lawyer and human rights advocate working on statelessness, nationality, and legal identity in Central Asia. I currently serve as the Coordinator of the Central Asian Network on Statelessness (CANS), a regional platform that brings together civil society organizations, academics, and legal experts working to prevent and reduce statelessness.

My work focuses on strengthening legal frameworks, improving access to civil registration, and ensuring that nationality systems are inclusive. I work closely with governments, UNHCR, UN agencies, and civil society partners to promote CRVS as a foundation for legal identity, protection, and sustainable development.

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

The importance of CRVS is deeply personal to me. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, my family and I lived for several years without nationality. During that time, I had no passport, no legal identity, and no access to many basic rights. I was part of society, but legally I did not exist.

Later, as a civil activist and lawyer, I encountered many similar cases across Central Asia. I met people who were never registered at birth, individuals holding unrecognized Soviet-era documents, and parents who could not register the births of their children because they lacked valid documents themselves. This created a cycle where the lack of civil registration was passed from one generation to the next, putting children at risk of statelessness from birth.

These experiences clearly showed me that without inclusive CRVS systems, people remain invisible and excluded, and statelessness becomes very difficult to prevent.

How are you currently involved in CRVS improvements?

I am involved in CRVS improvements at both national and regional levels. In the Kyrgyz Republic, I worked with civil society, government institutions, and UNHCR to support a national campaign to end statelessness. Mobile legal teams travelled to villages, remote settlements, and prisons to help people obtain birth certificates, restore missing civil records, and access nationality procedures.

Over four years, more than 13,000 people acquired Kyrgyz nationality, and in 2019 Kyrgyzstan became the first country in the world to resolve all known cases of statelessness on its territory.

At the regional level, through CANS, we support cooperation and knowledge-sharing among organizations across Central Asia to strengthen inclusive CRVS systems, improve late birth registration procedures, and prevent new cases of statelessness. We also contribute to regional policy dialogue linked to the Ashgabat Declaration on Ending Statelessness in Central Asia (2024) and UNHCR's Global Alliance to End Statelessness.

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

First, make CRVS inclusive. Every child must be registered at birth, regardless of their parents' legal status or documentation.

Second, remove legal and practical barriers. Allow late registration and flexible procedures so that people affected by migration, historical documentation gaps, or poverty are not excluded.

Third, actively reach those left behind. Mobile registration units and strong partnerships with civil society are essential.

Finally, see CRVS as more than a technical system. Inclusive CRVS supports human rights, reduces inequality, and strengthens trust between people and the State. Progress takes time, cooperation, and persistence—but the impact is transformational.

Events

- [UNSD: Global calendar of statistical events](#)
 - [13 January 2026: Inequalities in CRVS](#)
 - [10 - 11 February 2026: National Symposium & Stakeholder Consultation to Strengthen Mortality Data System in India](#)
 - [30 March - 1 April 2026: 2026 CRVS Research Forum](#)
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Resources

- [Asia-Pacific Stats Café Series](#)
 - [LinkedIn: Asia and Pacific Collaborative - Global Network](#)
 - [CRVS eLearning courses](#)
 - [WHO: Preventing suicide: a resource for strengthening suicide case registration](#)
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Professional Opportunities

- [2026 IAOS Prize for Young Statisticians](#)
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