Get every one in the picture

2026 CRVS Research Forum

2026 CRVS Research Forum: Registration is open

In partnership with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and Vital Strategies, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) will host the 2026 Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) Research Forum from 30 March to 1 April 2026.

Building on the success of the 2023 CRVS Research Forum, which was attended by 390 virtual participants from 62 countries and territories, the 2026 CRVS Research Forum will be held as a hybrid event with both online and in-person attendance at ESCAP headquarters in Bangkok, Thailand.

The Forum will showcase current CRVS research from academics and practitioners from the region, with papers covering a wide range of topics. It will also provide opportunities for

professional networking, information exchange, and capacity building for participants and presenters. The final programme is under development.

Supported by the Bloomberg Philanthropies Data for Health Initiative, the **deadline to register is 6 March 2026**.

Please find the registration form and event details on the [CRVS Research Forum webpage](#)

Asia-Pacific Stats Café Series: Researching CRVS for Better Policy

ESCAP is hosting a new session of its Asia-Pacific Stats Café Series on 9 February 2026, focusing on the central role of evidence in strengthening civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) systems. The session will highlight how a solid evidence base enables countries to diagnose bottlenecks, design targeted interventions, and monitor the performance of their systems. The discussion will feature practical approaches for generating and applying evidence to inform CRVS reforms, drawing on insights from development partners and practitioners who have undertaken evidence-driven improvements in their national contexts. The upcoming CRVS Research Forum will also be presented.

Date: Monday, 9 February 2026

Time: [11.00 - 12:00 a.m](#)., Bangkok time (UTC+7)

Venue: [MS Teams](#)

Event page: [Asia-Pacific Stats Café Series](#)

Asia-Pacific Stats Café Series: Death Registration: Updated Estimates, Gender Dynamics, and Country Perspectives

ESCAP will convene another session of the Asia-Pacific Stats Café Series on 23 February 2026, featuring discussions on Death Registration: Updated Estimates, Gender Dynamics, and Country Perspectives, on 23 February 2026The event will unpack why death registration remains among the least complete components of civil registration and vital statistics systems worldwide, despite progress in birth registration. This session will bring together regional experts on death registration and showcase the latest estimates of death registration completeness in Asia and the Pacific, and country case studies from Bangladesh and India.

Date: Monday, 23 February 2026

Time: [11.00 - 12:00 a.m](#)., Bangkok time (UTC+7)

Venue: [MS Teams](#)

Event page: [Asia-Pacific Stats Café Series](#)

**The CART Is Expanding: Launch of the Third CART Cohort**

On 20 January 2026, the third cohort of the CRVS Applied Research Training (CART) Initiative was launched! The CART initiative is a joint program between ESCAP and the Economic Commission of Africa (ECA), which supports CRVS practitioners from registration authorities, statistical agencies, civil society and other related organizations to develop research skills and conduct and implement a independent research project with the aim of producing a publishable research paper.

The third cohort welcomes 40 new participants from over 28 different countries. Proposed projects cover a variety of topics, including implementing verbal autopsies, assessing disaster readiness of CRVS systems, measuring birth and death registration gaps and strengthening accurate cause-of-death reporting.

The virtual launch session introduced the programme's training modalities, curriculum, and learning platform. It also featured participants from previous cohorts, who shared their own research, reflected on their experience, and offered insights and advice for the new cohort.

To learn more about the CART, click here.
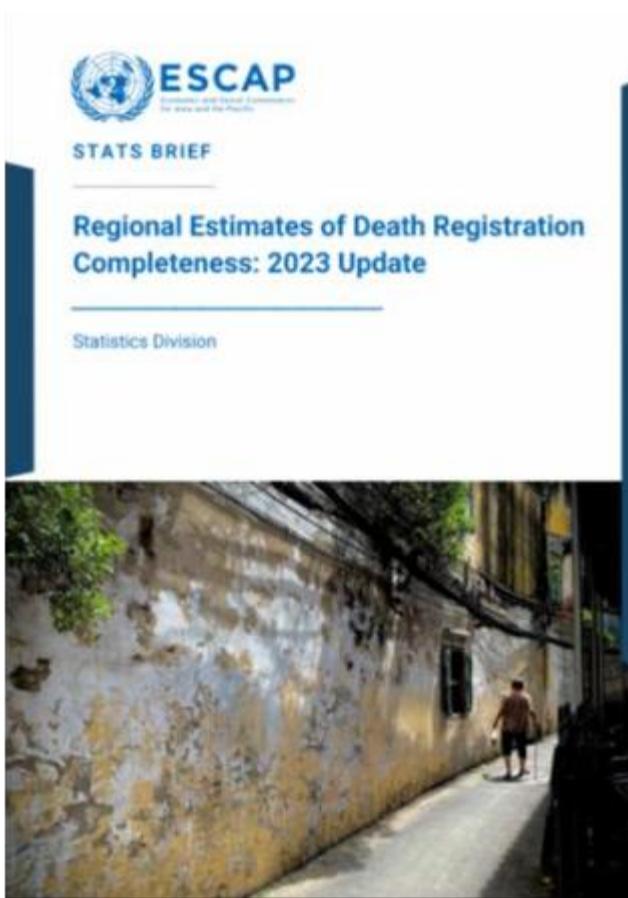
New estimates:

**Every year 3.7 million deaths in Asia and the Pacific are not registered**

ESCAP has released a new Stats Brief on Regional estimates of death registration completeness: 2023 Update. This Stats Brief presents updated regional and subregional estimates of death registration completeness in Asia and the Pacific for 2023, drawing on official country submissions and standardized estimation methods. Overall, death registration has improved substantially over the past five years, reflecting sustained efforts under the CRVS Decade. In 2023, an estimated 88.8 per cent of deaths in the region were registered, up from 74.3 per cent in 2018. This corresponds to approximately 29.7 million registered deaths out of an estimated 33.4 million total deaths, leaving around 3.7 million deaths unregistered.

Progress, however, has been uneven across subregions. While some have achieved near-universal completeness, others continue to account for a large share of unregistered deaths, despite notable improvements over the period. The analysis also highlights persistent data gaps. Although the availability of death data has improved, many countries still lack national estimates

of total deaths required to calculate completeness, underscoring ongoing challenges in producing reliable and comprehensive mortality statistics.

As the region enters the next phase of its CRVS commitment (2025–2030), achieving the global target of at least 80 per cent death registration completeness by 2030 will require stronger collaboration, renewed political commitment, and sustained investments in data, systems, and human capacity.

The full Stats Brief is available [here](#).

Updated free CRVS e-learning Course from the World Bank

The World Bank has released an updated version of its free Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) e-learning course, revised to offer a more flexible, self-paced learning experience. Hosted on the [Open Learning Campus](#), the refreshed 13-module program delivers essential training for

professionals seeking to modernize the recording of life events. Developed in collaboration with international partners and academic experts, the updated content reflects the latest global standards and best practices for strengthening civil registration systems.

The course is structured into two levels: a **Basic Course** (Modules 1–3), which introduces core CRVS concepts, and an **Intermediate Course** (Modules 4–13), which explores more advanced technical and policy topics. Open enrollment is available now.

Access the Basic Course (Module 1 - 3) here.
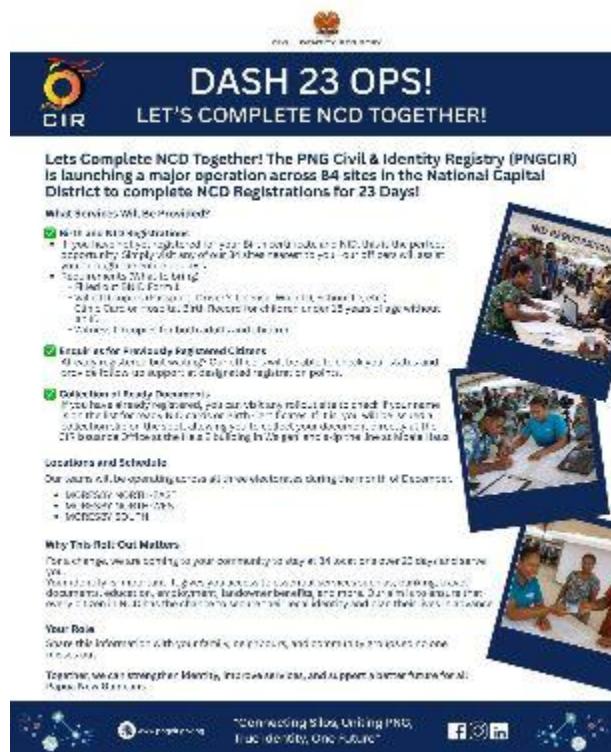
Photo credit: The PNG Civil and Identity Registry

DASH23: PNG's Largest Identity Drive to Accelerate Birth and NID Registrations

The Papua New Guinea Civil and Identity Registry (PNGCIR) has initiated DASH 23 OPS, an intensive 23-day operation aimed at completing Birth and National Identification (NID) registrations across the National Capital. Running from 1 to 23 December 2025, the campaign deployed teams to 84 mobile service points in Moresby North-East, North-West, and South, ensuring that essential identity services reach communities directly and reduce reliance on traditional office queues.

Throughout this period, residents could register for new documents, check the status of pending applications, and confirm whether their names appear on the collection lists. This large-scale initiative underscores the government's commitment to empowering citizens with legal identity, a prerequisite for accessing banking, travel, and employment opportunities. Residents were strongly encouraged to visit their nearest community site to secure their legal identity.

The project substantially reduced average registration times while revealing operational challenges specific to urban environments. These insights enabled PNGCIR to identify and prioritize targeted improvements necessary for successful project completion.

Vietnam Approves National Action Program on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics for 2026–2030

Vietnam has approved a new National Action Program on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) for 2026–2030, marking a major step toward modernizing the country's administrative data systems. The program aims to ensure that all vital events, births, deaths, marriages, and other civil status changes, are recorded accurately, promptly, and in digital formats.

A core priority is expanding and digitalizing birth registration. The government targets a timely birth registration rate of 95% by 2028 and 98.5% by 2030, with all children born in medical facilities receiving birth certificates, including electronic versions. The plan also introduces a

two-phase "retroactive digitization" process to ensure that every living Vietnamese citizen holds a valid legal birth certificate by 2030.

The program further strengthens management of marital status records. By 2028, all divorce data from court judgments will be synchronized directly from the Supreme People's Court to the Electronic Civil Status Database, with real-time synchronization expected by 2030 to streamline procedures and improve data quality.

Implementation will be overseen by a National Steering Committee led by the Minister of Justice and including representatives from key ministries. By accelerating digital transformation and enhancing local-level authority, the government aims to build a transparent, citizen-centered civil registration system that supports human rights and inclusive socio-economic development.

The National Action Program was developed with support from UNFPA and Vital Strategies.

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

Solomon Islands Improves Cause-of-Death Reporting to Protect Lives in Remote Communities

In the Solomon Islands, where nearly 80% of deaths occur outside formal health facilities, the absence of reliable mortality data has long impeded effective health planning. A new collaboration between the Ministry of Health, the CDC Foundation, and Bloomberg Philanthropies' Data for Health Initiative is aiming to close this gap by introducing innovative community-based reporting systems across the nation's 900 islands.

To capture deaths that previously went unrecorded, pastors, who are often first informed of a passing, are now trained to complete standardized death notification forms during burial rites. This approach is complemented by verbal autopsies, in which nurses visit remote villages to interview families and determine probable causes of death. Data collected on-site is digitized and uploaded to central servers, enabling health authorities to identify trends and allocate resources more strategically.

The impact is already evident: reporting of deaths from chronic conditions such as diabetes and hypertension has increased, providing a clearer picture of national health challenges. For health officials, these efforts go beyond record-keeping, they inform prevention. By turning community-driven data into actionable insights, the Solomon Islands is building a more resilient health system that reaches even its most remote citizens.

Watch the full story on YouTube [here](#).

Read more [here](#).
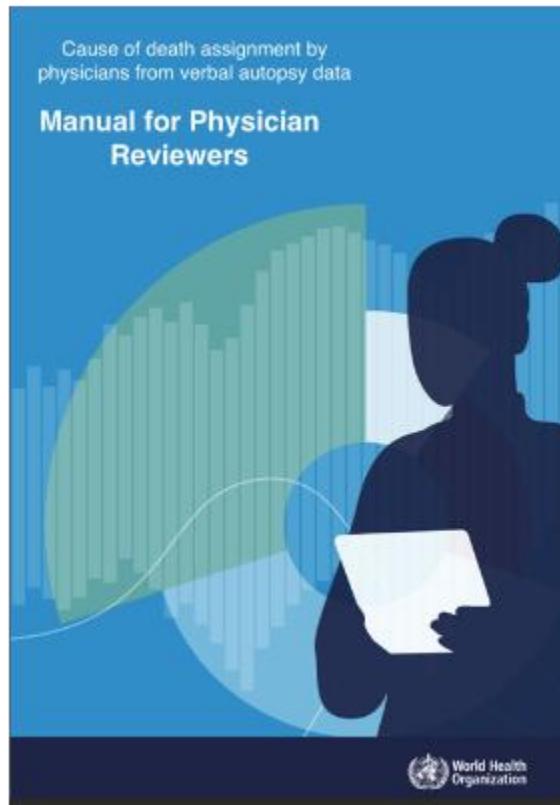
New global manual to standardize cause-of-death reporting via verbal autopsy

The World Health Organization (WHO) has released a technical manual for the assignment of causes of death via verbal autopsy (VA). The publication, Cause of Death Assignment by

Physicians from Verbal Autopsy Data, establishes a standardized methodological framework for extracting clinical insights from interviews with caregivers in regions where formal medical certification is frequently unavailable. By reconstructing the symptoms and circumstances preceding a death through structured inquiry, verbal autopsy serves as the primary evidence base for public health planning in resource-constrained settings.

While the global health landscape has seen a rapid expansion of automated, computer-coded systems (CCVA) to support civil registration and vital statistics, the manual reaffirms the continued importance and use of Physician-Certified Verbal Autopsy (PCVA). This expert-led approach ensures that mortality data retains a high degree of clinical accuracy and remains strictly aligned with international practice. The manual offers exhaustive definitions and instructions for certifying and coding causes of death using the International Classification of Diseases (ICD), providing physicians with a sophisticated toolkit to identify the underlying, immediate, and antecedent causes of death, as well as contributory factors.

Specialized guidance is included for a broad spectrum of conditions on the WHO's target list, including stillbirths, perinatal causes, infectious diseases, COVID-19, non-communicable diseases, and neoplasms. By standardizing the interpretation of these complex cases and providing clear diagnostic guidance, the framework supports the improved comparability and quality of mortality statistics and standards for statistical tabulation. Furthermore, the manual outlines the structural characteristics of the WHO verbal autopsy instrument and introduces a broad training curriculum. Consequently, it will equip medical practitioners with the specialized skills required to accurately review data, effectively reinforcing verbal autopsy as a vital, professionalized component of national mortality surveillance systems.

Download the manual here.
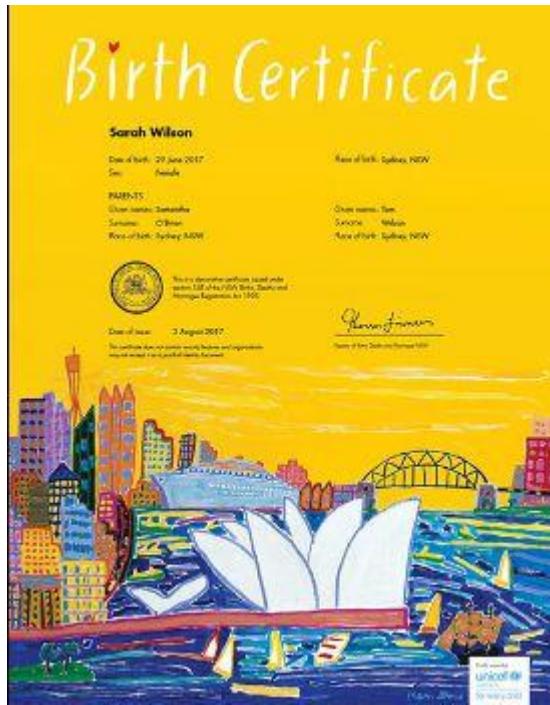
Photo credit: NSW Registry of Births, Deaths & Marriages

NSW Begins Digital Birth Certificate Rollout for 16–21-Year-Olds

After the pilot digital birth certificate programme in 2024 for people born in New South Wales, Australia, which enabled more than 1,400 participants to trial a standalone app offering secure access to digital birth records, the New South Wales (NSW) government is now advancing its digital identity agenda with the introduction of digital birth certificates (DBC) for residents aged 16 to 21, beginning in March 2026. The project is led by the NSW Registry of Births, Deaths & Marriages.

Users can choose how they prove their identity, opting for either a paper birth certificate or a digital version. The digital credential is designed to help users verify their identity more easily while safeguarding personal data through enhanced consent and privacy protections. Initially, the DBC will be accepted only for selected government transactions, and its adoption is expected to broaden over time, as policymakers work with businesses, schools, clubs and other organisations to expand acceptance of the digital document.

Click here to watch the [news](#) on YouTube.

Japan's My Number Card Adoption Tops 100 Million

Japan's digital identity system reached a pivotal milestone as Matsumoto Hisashi, Minister for Digital Transformation, confirmed that more than 100 million My Number Cards have been issued, a figure reported in his official New Year's Reflection and reaffirmed by independent coverage. This widespread adoption, now encompassing roughly 80 percent of the population, has positioned the card as Japan's central digital identity credential, supporting a broad shift toward integrated public and private services.

Since its launch in 2016, the My Number Card has expanded beyond basic identification to underpin Japan's administrative modernization. It functions as a legal Health Insurance Certificate and enables emergency responders to access patient information through the My Number Emergency Service. The card also supports bank account onboarding and cashless payments. At the end of November 2025, approximately 63 million public money receiving accounts have been registered to streamline benefit delivery. This consolidation of services has reduced bureaucratic burdens, particularly in procedures such as relocation and residency updates.

Looking ahead to 2026, the government plans further expansion of the card's capabilities, including nationwide deployment of electronic medical records, greater secondary use of medical data, and digitalization of maternal and child health services. Minister Matsumoto emphasized a "human-friendly" approach to digitalization "where no one is left behind", underscoring cybersecurity awareness and digital literacy as essential foundations for an inclusive transition.

Read New Year's Reflection by MATSUMOTO Hisashi, Minister for Digital Transformation here.

Click here for our previous edition on "Online birth registration is now available in Japan"

Brunei Rolls Out Nationwide Digital ID System with New BruneiID App

Following the success of its soft launch for BruneiID App in November 2025, Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) and the Ministry of Transport and Infocommunications (MTIC) of Brunei Darussalam have officially rolled out the national digital identity system that functions as an electronic form of personal identification for individuals.

BruneiID facilitates citizens and residents to verify their digital identities for access to government online services through a unified, biometrically authenticated login system. During the initial stage, the App supports identity verification based on identity card (IC) information for access to selected government digital platforms, then additional government digital services will be integrated in phases to ensure an orderly implementation consistent with governmental, security, and data-protection requirements, and aligned with national public service digital transformation and digital economy objectives.

Click here for the news article.

Click here for our previous edition on "Brunei Advances Digital Identity with BruneiID Soft Launch"

CRVS Champion

Jin Shan - China

*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 **Jin Shan**.*

What is your current title and role?

I currently serve as a Statistician at the Shanghai Municipal Center for Disease Control and Prevention. My primary responsibilities include the statistics, management, and analysis of vital registration data, ensuring the accuracy, timeliness, and completeness of birth registration data. Additionally, I am committed to promoting the integration of registration data with public health practices, providing evidence-based support for regional population health management and decision-making.

How did I get involved in CRVS-related research?

I have long conducted research centered on CRVS data, with a focus on the impact of climate change on urban population health. Relevant research findings have been published in academic journals such as [Urban Climate](#) and [Ecological Indicator](#). As a member of the **2024-2025 CART programme**, I developed the research framework for "Global Warming and Health: The Impact of Heat Waves on Years of Life Lost in Shanghai", which was subsequently published in Environmental Research. Currently, I continue to deepen the application of CRVS data, conducting public health research on the effects of environmental factors such as extreme temperatures and air pollution on neonatal health.

Recent CRVS-Related Research Project and Findings

My recent core CRVS-related research is a neighborhood-scale study on the health impacts of heatwaves in Shanghai, published in [Environmental Research (October 2025)](#) and serving as a key outcome of my participation in the 2024-2025 CART programme. This study fills the gap in understanding the dynamic changes of heatwave-related health burdens at a fine spatial scale. Methodologically, it integrates CRVS death registration data, meteorological data, and remote sensing data from two time periods (spanning a decade) across 211 neighborhoods in Shanghai. Using distributed lag nonlinear models (DLNM) and multivariate meta-analysis, we accurately quantified the association between heatwaves and Years of Life Lost (YLL) rates.

Key findings include:

- A significant reduction in heatwave-related health burdens over the decade: YLL per death decreased from 1.00 years (95% CI: 0.85-1.15) to 0.19 years (95% CI: 0.06-0.32), and annual excess deaths (ED) dropped from 327 cases (95% CI: 277-380) to 62 cases (95% CI: 58-66), with a noticeable shortening of heatwave lag effects.

- Persistent high-risk groups: Adults aged 65 and above and populations with low educational attainment remained highly vulnerable to excess mortality. Notably, the YLL burden shifted from males to females.

- Higher vulnerability among cardiovascular disease (CVD) patients: CVD-related YLL remained consistently higher than that of total non-accidental deaths (TND) across both periods.

For Shanghai, this study provides data-driven support for differentiated heatwave protection strategies. It also offers a replicable framework for applying CRVS data in other Chinese cities and serves as robust empirical evidence for similar aging cities worldwide addressing climate-related public health challenges.

Which advice would you give to others wanting to do similar research?

For those interested in CRVS-related research, I have three suggestions:

- Prioritize data quality: The reliability of CRVS research depends on the completeness and accuracy of the data. It is essential to establish a robust system for data standardization and quality verification early in the research process.

- Align with practical needs: Define research directions based on real-world scenarios such as public health practice and population management decision-making to facilitate the translation of data into policies.

- Embrace interdisciplinary integration: CRVS research requires integrating knowledge from multiple fields, including registration management, statistical analysis, environmental science, and public health. Proactively adopt interdisciplinary research methods and technical tools to enhance the depth and breadth of your work.

Events

- [UNSD: Global calendar of statistical events](#)

- [Pacific Community - Statistics for Development Division: Events](#)

- [4 February 2026: UN57SC Webinar: A System Approach for Population and Social Statistics](#)

- [9 February 2026: Stats Café session on Researching CRVS for Better Policy](#)

- [9 February 2026: 2025 Q4 Meeting of the Civil Registration Professionals of South Asia (CR8)](#)

- [10 - 11 February 2026: National Symposium & Stakeholder Consultation to Strengthen Mortality Data System in India](#)

- [12 February 2026: National Inception Workshop Production of High-quality Vital Statistics Report for Thailand](#)

- [23 February 2026: Stats Café session on "Death Registration: Updated Estimates, Gender Dynamics, and Country Perspectives"](#)

- [30 March - 1 April 2026: 2026 CRVS Research Forum](#)

Resources

- [Asia-Pacific Stats Café Series](#)

- [LinkedIn: Asia and Pacific Collaborative - Global Network](#)

- [CRVS eLearning courses](#)

- [CRVS e-learning Course from the World Bank](#)

- (English) [Report: Inaugural Workshop Eurasian Civil Registrars Network, Ankara, Turkiye, 15-17 April 2025](#)

- (Русский) [Report: Inaugural Workshop Eurasian Civil Registrars Network, Ankara, Turkiye, 15-17 April 2025](#)

Professional Opportunities

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

As we are always looking to improve content, we'd love to hear your feedback and input for articles. CRVS Insight is written for you and your feedback matters to us! 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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