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## CRVS Insight Newsletter

September 2025



### CART Cohort 3 Applications now open

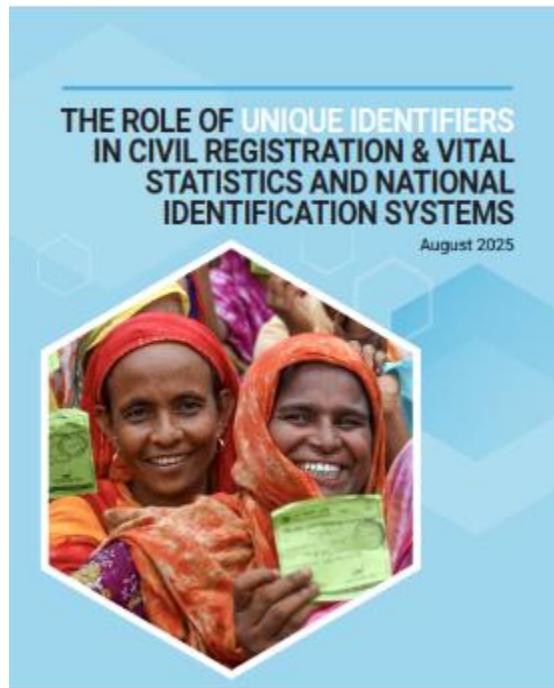
The CRVS Applied Research Training (CART) initiative is a one-year capacity-building programme designed to strengthen research and analytical skills for professionals working on CRVS. It supports participants in conducting their own applied research projects that aim to improve the completeness, quality, and use of CRVS data. The programme combines e-learning resources, mentorship, and collaborative opportunities such as in-person workshops to enhance quality and impact of research projects.

You can join the upcoming Stats Café on **9 October** to learn how the CRVS Applied Research Training (CART) is equipping practitioners to design and conduct applied research that strengthens civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) systems across the region. This Stats Café session will provide an overview of this training opportunity, and feature insights from past participants. More information [here](#)

Applications are now open for the third CART cohort (activities to begin in January 2026). Learn more and apply [here](#). The deadline for application is **9 November 2025**

Please share this opportunity with your colleagues and networks who may be interested!

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## **Unique Identifiers in Civil Registration: Strengthening Governance and Statistics through Inclusive Identity Systems**

Unique identifiers are a key tool for countries aiming to build more resilient and inclusive digital public infrastructure. A recent report developed by United Nations Child's Fund (UNICEF) and Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) together with the UN Legal Identity Agenda Task Force highlights their critical role in linking civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) systems with national identification frameworks, a move that is central to improving governance and service delivery.

By enabling seamless data exchange, unique identifiers, such as a national ID number, help reduce duplication and ensure timely access to essential services like healthcare, education, and social protection. The integration of CRVS and national ID systems enhances legal identity coverage from birth, providing a stronger foundation for managing population data.

The report emphasizes that successful implementation of this strategy hinges on robust legal frameworks, strong data protection measures, and effective institutional coordination.

The report can be accessed [here](#).

ESCAP, UNICEF and the UN Legal Identity Agenda (UNLIA) Task Force recently organised a Stats Cafe session exploring the role of UINs in civil registration systems, their applications in governance and statistics, and the principles for designing inclusive and secure identifier systems. The Stats Café featured discussion based on the UNICEF/ESCAP report.

You can see the recording of and presentations from the Stats Cafe session [here](#).



### **New members of the Regional Steering Group for CRVS in Asia and the Pacific**

At the [Third Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics \(CRVS\) in Asia and the Pacific](#), governments across the region officially extended the [Asia and Pacific CRVS Decade](#) to 2030, reinforcing their dedication to building comprehensive and robust CRVS systems. This decision was formalized with the adoption of the Ministerial Declaration on a Decade of Action for Inclusive and Resilient CRVS and the renewal of support for the [Regional Action Framework \(RAF\)](#).

To oversee this next phase, the Conference reaffirmed the critical role of the [Regional Steering Group \(RSG\) for CRVS in Asia and the Pacific](#). Established in 2013 and supported by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the RSG will continue to guide the CRVS Decade and provide strategic oversight for the RAF's implementation.

The RSG, which is composed of members from various members and associate members of ESCAP and development partners, includes experts from civil registration,

statistics, justice, health, and planning sectors. The group performs three key functions: Provide regional oversight and strategic guidance for the implementation of the Regional Action Framework, advice governments on the implementation of the RAF and foster coordination and alignments to the principles of the RAF. The extension of the CRVS Decade underscores a renewed regional commitment to ensuring that all vital life events are registered, thereby establishing a foundation for inclusive development, public health, and human rights.

Governments across the region have been invited to nominate **one senior official** to serve on the Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) for the 2026–2030 term. **Nominations are open until 1 December 2025.** Additional details about the Regional Steering Group (RSG) can be found [here](#).

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

**Community engagement doubles birth registration completeness in Cambodia**

A pilot initiative by Cambodia's General Department for Identification, Vital Strategies, Plan International and Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) with support from Rain Barrel Labs, is demonstrating the power of community engagement in strengthening civil registration systems. The project targeted 14 underserved communes, aiming to improve birth registration through locally driven strategies.

By empowering community leaders and co-developing outreach materials with registrars and civil society organizations, the initiative made registration services more accessible and culturally relevant. As a result, communes with full birth registration coverage nearly doubled, from seven to thirteen, and average registration rates rose.

The findings highlight that community involvement is a critical lever for improving public service delivery, particularly in marginalized areas.



**Philippines President champions Digital ID  
for inclusive public services**

At the Manila Tech Summit in August 2025, Philippine President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. highlighted the tangible benefits of digital transformation for the nation's citizens, with a strong focus on the Philippine Identification System (PhilSys) and the Digital National ID. Marcos emphasized that these digital advancements would translate to more efficient and accessible public services.

This vision was further championed at the 4th National Convention on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (NCCRVS). The convention, which gathered nearly 1,000 local civil registrars and representatives from local government units, served as a platform to brief attendees on the functionalities and advantages of the Digital National ID.

The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) used the event to encourage local governments to integrate the Digital National ID into their CRVS processes, highlighting its use for civil registry applications such as birth, death, and marriage certificates. The move is part of a broader push to modernize the CRVS system and ensure that a trusted digital identity is at the core of streamlined government services for all Filipinos.

For more information, please visit the 4th National Convention on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (NCCRVS) page [here](#) and the Manila Tech Summit [here](#).

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*Photo credit: UNICEF/Arimacs Wilander*

### **Strengthening CRVS Systems: Safeguarding Lives and Identity in Times of Crisis**

Amid the rising frequency and intensity of climate-related disasters, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) is emphasizing the crucial function of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) systems in both disaster preparedness and recovery. These systems help identify vulnerable populations, track mortality, and ensure access to aid, aligning with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In recent blog posts, ESCAP argues that CRVS systems, which document births, deaths, and other vital events, are indispensable for locating displaced people, coordinating humanitarian aid, and providing legal identity during crises. When CRVS infrastructure is not strong and falters during crisis, it reveals gaps in the ability to handle large-scale disruptions, leaving many disaster victims left out of official records, which complicates relief efforts and long-term recovery. While countries have made strides in strengthening CRVS systems under the Asia-Pacific CRVS Decade initiative, questions remain about their resilience to future shocks.

The posts also highlights the systems' own fragility, noting that damaged infrastructure and mass displacement can disrupt them. To address this, ESCAP advocates for crisis-ready CRVS systems that can operate during emergencies through digital tools, continuity plans, and robust infrastructure. Accurate birth and death data are vital for disaster risk reduction, health planning, and post-crisis recovery. This strategy would not only strengthen immediate response but also support long-term, inclusive resilience.

This appeal follows the Third Ministerial Conference on CRVS in Asia and the Pacific, where governments recommitted to building resilient systems that protect identity and dignity, even in the midst of a disaster. With climate change, conflict, and pandemics posing ongoing risks, sustained investment and political will are needed to safeguard progress, and ensure these systems continue to protect lives and inform policy during crises

Read the latest blogs from ESCAP here:

- [Defending lives and data amid crises and disasters](#)
- [The role of civil registration and vital statistics systems when disasters strike](#)

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*Photo credit: Fiji Bureau of Statistics*

### **Fiji's CRVS Awareness Campaign connects communities and provides legal identity**

Fiji has launched a nationwide campaign to improve birth registration and legal identity, focusing on underserved rural and maritime communities. Running from June to September 2025, the initiative is a joint effort by government ministries and international partners. It targets ten regions with the longest delays in registration, deploying mobile teams equipped with off-grid technology to deliver on-the-spot services.

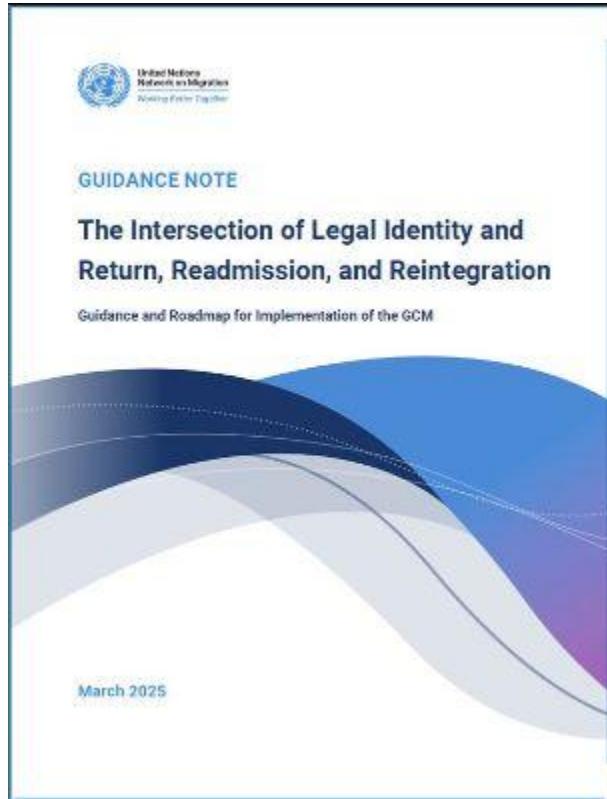
In July, the Ministry of Justice received a CRVS Awareness Kit from Canada, funded by Vital Strategies, containing tools like a laptop, printer, scanner, and power pack to support remote operations. The campaign uses a three-pronged approach: collaborating with healthcare workers, offering mobile registration for births, deaths, and marriages,

and educating students about the importance of civil registration. In August, Northern Division outreach activities in Nabouwalu, Savusavu, and Taveuni emphasized the role of registration in daily life. The campaign also reached Dravo District School, extending services to the wider community.

This effort supports Sustainable Development Goal 16.9, which promotes legal identity for all. By expanding coverage and improving data quality, Fiji is working to ensure inclusive access to essential services and reliable statistics for national planning.

Additional activities and updates from the Fiji Bureau of Statistics are available on the [website](#) and social media channels.

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## **Guidance Note: The Intersection of Legal Identity and Return, Readmission, and Reintegration**

The United Nations Network on Migration has issued a new Guidance Note emphasizing the pivotal role of legal identity in facilitating the return, readmission, and reintegration (RRR) of migrants. Titled 'Legal Identity: A Cornerstone for Dignified Return, Readmission, and Reintegration', the document frames legal identity as a foundational human right, essential for ensuring safe and dignified migration processes.

The report warns that the absence of legal documentation impedes every phase of RRR—from verifying nationality in host countries to accessing services upon return. It identifies key barriers including lack of birth registration, limited access to registry offices, language obstacles, and fear of authorities. Particular attention is given to vulnerable groups, such as children born to migrant parents, who face heightened risks of statelessness; and women, who often encounter systemic hurdles in securing identity documents.

To address these challenges, the guidance calls for enhanced international collaboration to strengthen civil registration systems, advance digital identity solutions, and promote cross-border recognition of legal documents. The guidance outlines actionable recommendations for both host and origin countries to build inclusive, rights-based frameworks that uphold the dignity and legal recognition of all migrants.

The Guidance Note can be accessed [here](#).

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*Photo credit: UNHCR*

### **Bangladesh: Experts call for legal amendments to streamline Birth, Death Records**

At a recent workshop hosted by PROGGA (Knowledge for Progress) and the Global Health Advocacy Incubator (GHAI), public health experts in Bangladesh advocated for legislative amendments to ensure 100% birth and death registration. A key recommendation was to legally assign registration responsibilities to hospital authorities.

Experts argue that shifting the burden from families to healthcare institutions, where 67% of births occur, would streamline the process and support the government's goal of universal registration by 2030.

The workshop identified major barriers including low public awareness, limited human resources, and procedural complexity. Speakers emphasized the urgency of legal reform and effective enforcement to improve vital statistics systems and public health planning.

Read full news article [here](#).

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### Advancing Secure and Interoperable Breeder Documents

The European Committee for Standardisation (CEN) Working Group 19 (CEN/TC 224/WG 19) is working on the development of the CEN Technical Specification (TS) series 17489, titled '**Secure and Interoperable European Breeder Documents**'. CEN is recognised by the European Union as the official body for developing voluntary European standards.

The CEN/TS 17489 series is being developed through a rigorous, consensus-driven process. Rather than prescribing a specific format for breeder documents (including birth certificates), the focus is on strengthening the processes for issuing and reviewing these foundational identity documents. This approach aims to enhance trust and interoperability without restricting innovation or national practices.

In the absence of an International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) standard for breeder documents, the working group is aiming to fill this gap. The standard directly supports the objectives of the ICAO TRIP Guide on Evidence of Identity (EOI). To ensure alignment and maximize impact, the working group is liaising with a subgroup of the ICAO Implementation and Capacity Building Working Group (ICBWG) to review and potentially endorse the outcomes of CEN/TS 17489.

CEN/TC 224/WG 19 welcomes both formal and informal input from stakeholders worldwide. Your expertise and feedback are invaluable to shaping a robust and widely accepted standard.

For more information or to contribute, please contact Stephan Hofstetter (Editor of CEN/TS 17489-5) at [stephan.hofstetter@secoia-excon.com](mailto:stephan.hofstetter@secoia-excon.com).

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*Photo credit: UN Sri Lanka*

## **Sri Lanka advances toward a Digital Civil Registration System**

Sri Lanka is undertaking a major transition from its longstanding paper-based Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) system to a comprehensive digital platform under the “OneRegistry” initiative. Building on a legacy of administrative discipline, the shift aims to address inefficiencies inherent in manual recordkeeping while enhancing accessibility and data integrity.

Implemented in partnership with the United Nations, the initiative seeks to establish an inclusive and reliable digital infrastructure. Well-maintained paper archives, such as those in Jaffna, underscore both the strengths of the current system and the complexities of digitization. The new platform is designed to preserve the foundational principles of CRVS—continuity, permanence, compulsion, and universality—while introducing improvements in speed, accuracy, and service delivery.

Through this modernization, Sri Lanka aspires to strengthen legal identity for all citizens, reduce barriers to essential services for underserved populations, and support the development of a more responsive and trusted governance framework.

Click [here](#) to read the full blog.

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**CRVS Champion**



### **Sovannaroth Tey - Associate Statistician, ESCAP**

*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 **Sovannaroth Tey**, who, as an Associate Statistician at ESCAP, has been an instrumental member of the ESCAP's CRVS team. As he transitions to a new role, we want to recognize his significant contributions to strengthening CRVS systems and his dedication to our shared mission.*

#### **What is your current title and role?**

I am an Associate Statistician in the Population and Social Statistics Section, Statistics Division of ESCAP. I have a few responsibilities but one that I hold dear is my role in the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) team. I think of the role as helping governments to register everyone, (re)issue civil status documents, and produce quality and timely vital statistics to ensure every individual gets access to services and can exercise their rights. Essentially, I help get everyone in the picture!

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

An experience that struck a chord with me was a story that I heard at a workshop I attended. A researcher presented findings from his interviews with some floating villagers who had no permanent settlement, no identity documents, and no means of enjoying their rights and freedom like others. After listening to a story about a girl from the floating village who dreamt of working a proper job to support her family but couldn't because she had no civil status document, I immediately realized the significance of civil registration as a gateway to a better life for many.

**How are you currently involved in CRVS improvements?**

I can proudly say I was part of a passionate and professional team at the Population and Social Statistics Section, Statistics Division, ESCAP that organized the biggest CRVS event in recent years, the Third Ministerial Conference on CRVS in Asia and the Pacific. Over 500 participants attended with over 400 delegates including Ministers and Deputy Ministers from more than 20 members and associate members of ESCAP. A key outcome from the Ministerial Conference is the Ministerial Declaration on a Decade of Action for Inclusive and Resilient Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific which formally extends the Asia-Pacific CRVS Decade to 2030, providing additional time and mandates to accelerate CRVS improvement progress.

I also led the 2025 review of progress in implementing the Regional Action Framework on CRVS in Asia and the Pacific and published a flagship report in the lead up to the Ministerial Conference. The report assessed CRVS achievements for 50 members and associate members of ESCAP since the start of the Decade in 2015 against their national targets. Of course, many colleagues both at ESCAP and our wonderful CRVS partners provided much-needed support to ensure the successful completion of this process.

I am now handing over my remaining responsibilities to my successor whom I'm sure will perform the role just as well, if not better, than I did.

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

As I transition to my new role, I look back and cherish my time working on CRVS. If I were to give one advice to others working to improve CRVS systems, I would say never ever take CRVS for granted. For people in a position of privilege, civil registration may feel like an administrative process that you need to complete to access some services. For those in vulnerable and underprivileged communities, it could be the key to change their lives (and their families') forever.

*We would like to extend our best wishes to Sovannaroth Tey for continued success in his new role and thank him for his great contributions to get every one in the picture.*

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### **Events**

- [UNSD: Global calendar of statistical events](#)
- [23 September - 2 October 2025: Technical Support for CRVS System Strengthening in Kiribati](#)
- [25 September 2025: Q3 Meeting of the Civil Registration Professionals of South Asia \(CR8\)](#)
- [1 - 3 October 2025: The 10th UNSD Global Forum on Gender Statistics](#)
- [9 October 2025: Asia-Pacific Stats Café: What is the CRVS Applied Research Training?](#)
- [14 October 2025: Asia-Pacific Stats Café: Building Resilient CRVS Systems](#)

- [14 October 2025: World Health Summit - The Lifesaving Potential of Death Data: Shaping Health Policies that Save Lives](#)
- [15 - 17 October 2025: 4th Global CRVS and Gender Symposium](#)
- [20 October 2025: World Statistics Day](#)
- [30 March - 1 April 2026: 2026 CRVS Research Forum](#)

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## Resources

- [Asia-Pacific Stats Café Series](#)
- [Report: Assessing Inequalities in Registration of Births and Deaths in Bhutan](#)
- [The Revised UN Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration and Temporary Mobility \(2025\)](#)
- [LinkedIn: Asia and Pacific Collaborative - Global Network](#)
- [CRVS eLearning courses](#)

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## Professional Opportunities

- [ESCAP: Intern-Statistics Division](#)
- [CART Cohort 3: Call for applications](#)

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*Please note by submitting photos you are granting ESCAP Statistics Division permission to publish the photo in the current article and any future articles it deems appropriate.*

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