



## CRVS Insight

November 2022

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**CALL FOR ABSTRACTS**

**2023 ASIA-PACIFIC CIVIL REGISTRATION AND VITAL STATISTICS RESEARCH FORUM (ONLINE)**

**3-4 APRIL 2023**

**Deadline for submission: Monday, 5 December 2022**

**LINK FOR SUBMISSION**  
The online form for abstract submission is available [here](#).

**PUBLICATION OF PAPERS**  
Authors will be informed about accepted abstracts and selected authors will be offered assistance for journal submission.

**FORUM ORGANISER**  
Any queries or questions, please contact [csu@csu.org](mailto:csu@csu.org) with copy to [manu.uroki@un.org](mailto:manu.uroki@un.org)

**FORUM WEBPAGE**  
For more information, please visit [www.pssciv.org/asia-pacific-crvs-researchforum](http://www.pssciv.org/asia-pacific-crvs-researchforum)

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### Asia Pacific CRVS Research Forum to be held in 2023

The first Asia-Pacific [Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Research Forum](#) will be held next year. ESCAP, welcomes the submission of abstracts for the first Asia-Pacific CRVS Research Forum to be held online and in Bangkok, Thailand, from **3-4 April 2023**. The Forum offers a major research, information sharing, and capacity-building opportunity for participants, who will be able to present at and attend paper presentations and interactive sessions, including networking opportunities. Funding for the Research Forum is provided by [the Bloomberg Philanthropies Data for Health Initiative](#).

Please share the call for abstracts widely, as the aim is to make this an inter-disciplinary event for all of Asia and the Pacific. Abstract submission date is **5 December 2022**.

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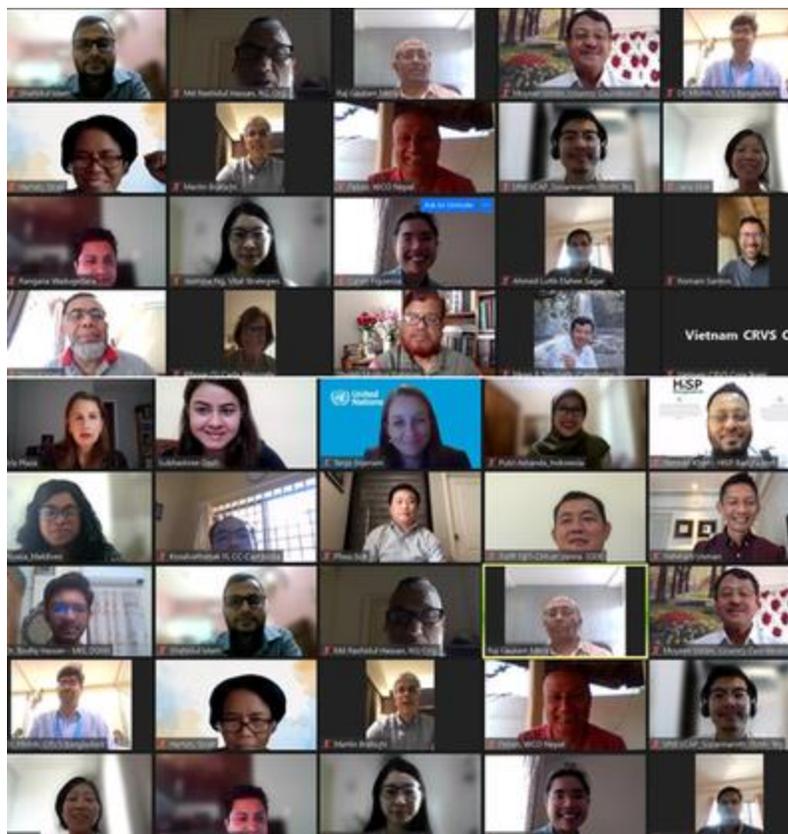


### **The second capacity building workshop for assessing inequalities in CRVS, Lao PDR**

A multi-stakeholder group of 20 participants from Lao Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education etc., convened for the second capacity building workshop for the project on assessing inequalities in civil registration in Vang Vieng, Lao PDR between **25-29 October 2022**. The workshop, which was organized in collaboration between UNESCAP, Lao Bureau of Statistics and the UNFPA country office, provided training on demographic indicators for participants involved in using and producing vital statistics. The main aim was to support stakeholders in being able to estimate fertility and mortality but also covered wider demographic concepts to support broader understanding.

To find out more, click [here](#).

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## Regional Workshop on experiences using the CRVS Systems Improvement Framework

The [CRVS Systems Improvement Framework](#) was developed by Vital Strategies, with the support of the Bloomberg Philanthropies Data for Health Initiative, in collaboration with ESCAP, ECA, WHO and other partners. As many as 13 countries in Asia-Pacific and Africa are at various stages of framework implementation.

Vital Strategies in collaboration with ESCAP and ECA, are in the process of taking stock of the lessons learned from the country implementation of the Framework and its applicability in the political, administrative, and legal context of these countries. As part of this exercise, a workshop for countries in Asia and the Pacific was held online on **28 October 2022**. The workshop focused on the lessons learned from the country-level implementation and the experiences gained by the country teams and national/international consultants who provided technical assistance in implementing the Framework. Further information and country presentations are available [here](#).

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### **Workshop on Probabilistic Population Projections, Pattaya, Thailand**

The workshop on **7-11 November 2022**, was jointly organized by NESDC Thailand, the United Nations DESA, and UNFPA Thailand.

The objective of the workshop was to provide an introduction to stochastic methods of demographic projections, to present the Bayesian probabilistic approach, and in particular the models being used for the development of national population projections of the United Nations Population Division. Through a series of lectures and practical exercises, participants learnt how to calculate population projections in R. Discussions focused on the use of stochastic projections as a complement to scenario-based forecasts.

Participants from NESDC, the Thai NSO, FPO, academia, UN agencies in Thailand, Lao Statistics Bureau, ESCAP, United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs, and UNFPA Thailand joined the workshop.

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### **CRVS Champion - Ms. Olga Joos**

This month, our community newsletter would like to highlight Ms. Olga Joos, a CRVS Champion who has contributed significantly to support CRVS programmes in Asia-Pacific. We asked Olga about her experiences and aspirations for Asia and the Pacific.

*What is your current title and role?*

I am currently an independent consultant engaged in the development of CRVS technical resources for the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and the World Health Organization Regional Office for the Americas (PAHO). I am also fortunate to provide technical assistance to in-country counterparts engaged in CRVS system strengthening activities through the Data for Health initiative Global Grants Program. Until recently, I served as a Senior Technical Advisor with the CDC Foundation based in the Division of Vital Statistics at the National Center for Health Statistics, which is part of the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention. I provided technical assistance on the Bloomberg Philanthropies funded Data for Health initiative.

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

There are just so many experiences I could possibly share, but I'll share two. In my work supporting efforts to improve the quality of cause of death data in India, I assisted a local government in establishing a centralized mortality coding team which we trained in manual ICD-10 coding and supported with regular supervision. I recall coders mentioning challenges in coding medical certificate of cause of death forms submitted by doctors in the medicolegal death investigation system. These included deaths that are usually unnatural, suspicious, or violent and require additional examination by a doctor, usually a forensic pathologist, with additional training in forensic examinations. By listening to the coders and looking into a sample of forms, we identified the need to examine the collaboration, communication, and data flow processes between various stakeholders in the medicolegal death investigation and CRVS systems to improve the quality of cause of death. This work grew beyond India, and we were able to establish the [Medicolegal Death Investigation International Community of Practice](#) which serves as a forum to improve the quality of medicolegal death investigations from which an important public health output is cause of death data. Many deaths that are referred for medicolegal death investigation are preventable, but that is only the case if policy makers know who is dying and why. This experience highlighted the importance of CRVS as a critical source of data for action and the synergistic value of taking a holistic approach to system strengthening.

My second example comes from my time working as a pediatric critical care nurse before I embarked on my career in public health. A mother whose baby had died was crying in the hallway

and told her family, 'I don't know what tomorrow will be like.' In a mortality register, one would see, '1 neonatal death'. To this mother, the loss of her baby was, and most likely still is, profound. As a public health expert, I look at issues from a population perspective, but also keep that mother's painful comment very close to see the people and families behind each statistic. I truly believe that everyone counts and civil registration serves as the essential starting point for realizing that.

*How would you like to see CRVS in Asia and the Pacific develop by the end of the CRVS Decade (2024)?*

My short answer is to see the complete registration of live births, stillbirths, deaths, marriages, and divorces, and the complete and high-quality reporting of cause of death data. In other words, all countries in Asia and the Pacific getting everyone in the picture with a more holistic or life-course approach to CRVS.

My longer answer goes a bit deeper and touches upon strategy and implementation. The establishment of the CRVS Decade has been catalytic for countries in Asia and the Pacific in supporting critical improvements to their CRVS systems with the guidance of the Regional Action Framework. To complement the broad guidance set out in the framework, countries should consider developing a CRVS National Strategy, if they don't already have one in place. A CRVS National Strategy can align the many government stakeholders and development partners engaged in CRVS system strengthening in improving resource allocation and supporting a stepwise approach to achieving progress. Additionally, to ensure no one is left behind, countries should consider conducting an inequality assessment that can inform the CRVS strategy. These two tools are very beneficial in establishing a clear and inclusive vision to guide countries in their efforts to strengthening CRVS systems.

These activities cannot just be tick boxes that are checked off once completed. Once the CRVS National Strategy is developed, it is important to translate it into action for implementation. Are roles defined by terms of reference? Do standard operating procedures clarify the processes for consistent practice and quality outputs? Are feedback mechanisms in place to refine processes and improve quality? Do stakeholders connect regularly to discuss system processes, outputs, solutions for further improvements? System maintenance is an active, not passive, process so any improvement efforts require an additional level of engagement. A mark of strong progress in getting everyone in the picture by the end of the CRVS decade would be for all countries in the region to establish active mechanisms for CRVS system strengthening guided by a CRVS National Strategy.

I realize that my short and long answers are ambitious but believe that it is important to aim high (very high!) when setting goals. I commend countries in the region for the progress they have achieved thus far and am eager to see how progress continues, particularly on stillbirth, marriage, and divorce registration efforts. I also commend UNESCAP for supporting the Regional Steering Group on CRVS and its efforts in guiding countries. Stay committed and focused on getting everyone in the picture. Aim high!

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

Share your lessons learned and listen to those from other country stakeholders and development partners. The Regional Steering Group on CRVS, Pacific Civil Registrars Network, and South Asia Civil Registration Network are a few examples of excellent forums for lesson sharing. Also, keep copies of UN Statistics Division and World Health Organization CRVS best practice guidance documents easily accessible. Some core documents include the [Principles and Recommendations for Vital Statistics Systems](#); [Handbook on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems: Management, Operation and Maintenance](#); and [Guidelines on the Legislative Framework for Civil Registration, Vital Statistics and Identity Management](#). Even with my many years of supporting CRVS system improvements, I regularly review these technical documents to refresh my memory on best practices. With that, my last piece of advice is to always be open to learning. There is always so much to learn, regardless of one's experience or familiarity with global best practices.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

- 28 Nov - 2 Dec 2022: Workshop on Modelled Population Estimates to support census processes in Thailand, Participants: TNSO, UNFPA, and WorldPop.
  - 29 Nov-1 Dec 2022: 2nd National Capacity-Building Workshop on Demographic and statistical capacity building in Fiji.
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## RESOURCES

- ESCAP blog: "*Today is the day when we are official 8 billion people living on earth* (15 November 2022)". Read at <https://www.unescap.org/blog/today-day-when-we-are-officially-8-billion-people-living-earth>
  - World Bank Group: Open Learning Campus, Self-Paced eLearning - *Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems* (Basic Level of the Self-Paced format). Find [more detail](#).
  - UNICEF: Protect the progress - 2022 Progress Report on the "[Every Woman Every Child Global Strategy](#)", released in October 2022.
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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](mailto:escap-crvs@un.org).

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This e-mail has been sent to [chatchai.intachai@un.org](mailto:chatchai.intachai@un.org) because you have expressed interest in CRVS activities in Asia and the Pacific. If you would like to stop receiving future communications, please [click here to unsubscribe](#).