



CRVS Insight

September (2) 2022



Implementing Digital Identity Systems without Leaving Anyone Behind

This [side event](#) will be held on **30 September** (10:00-11:00, UTC+7) during [the third Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific](#), Bangkok and Online.

Digital identity is a set of electronically captured and stored attributes and credentials that can uniquely identify a person when interacting with government and private services and the digital economy. Digital identity systems are underpinned by mechanisms which verify and authenticate an individual's personal data and require strong legal frameworks to uphold data protection, security, privacy and consent. Historically, governments have operated primarily foundational ID systems which are created to provide identification to the general population for a wide variety of transactions and which can be digitized or paper-based.

Providing documents and records for individuals to establish their legal identity is an important element of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, explicitly so in target 16.9. Governments in Asia and the Pacific are implementing civil registration and vital statistics

systems underpinning identity management systems to issue national identity cards and numbers as well as digital credentials for establishing uniqueness and enabling secure identity verification.

Full inclusion in digital identity systems is essential to facilitate access to the benefits and protections of the State. As services increasingly transition to digital, disparities in coverage of hard to reach and marginalized populations can further compound disadvantages and exclusion and deepen the digital divide.

During this side event, experts from Singapore, Australia, Armenia and Microsoft will share their experiences with digital ID.

Registration link is [here](#).



The importance of CRVS highlighted at expert forum on disaster-related statistics

[The second expert forum on disaster-related statistics](#) was held on **6-8 September 2022**, organised by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and several partners.

This forum's key objective was to emphasize the significance of establishing mechanisms to enable national and international collaboration and coordination of disaster-related statistics work across disciplines and organizations. It also aimed to advance a common framework for disaster-related statistics by forming a network of experts to maintain collaboration, coordination and fundraising for improving statistics on hazardous events and disasters.

During session 2: [Lessons learned on using data to save lives during pandemics: Global lessons learned and related WHO work on improving data](#), Steve MacFeely, Director, Data and Analytics, WHO presented on the key role for CRVS and mortality surveillance in disaster risk reduction.

WHO has estimated global excess deaths associated with COVID-19 from Jan 2020 to Dec 2021, to more than 14.91 million deaths while only 5.42 million were reported. The importance of CRVS (and mortality surveillance), and general investment in data infrastructure are needed for all countries to build up essential analytical capacity in preparation for future crises.



Side event on UN Legal Identity Agenda held at the UN General Assembly

U.N. General Assembly side event at UNICEF's headquarters in New York, organized by UNICEF and the UN Legal Identity Agenda (UNLIA) taskforce in partnership with the Bloomberg Philanthropies Data for Health Initiative, including Vital Strategies. The event focused on demonstrating the successful implementation of the UNLIA recommended approach to CRVS and Identity management, following a lifecycle approach starting with birth registration and exiting with death registration through country examples of Cameroon and Cambodia and provided an opportunity for knowledge sharing and learning through a panel discussion.



Birth and Death Notifications for Improving Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Bangladesh: Pilot Exploratory Study

[This paper](#) was published in JMIR Public Health and Surveillance Vol 8, No 8 (2022): August

A pilot study was conducted in Bangladesh in 2016 in 2 sub-districts to understand whether accurate, timely, and complete information on births and deaths can be collected and notified by facility-based service providers; community health workers, including those who routinely visit households; local government authorities; and key informants from the community.

The innovative system gathered 13,377 notifications for births and deaths from all channels, including duplicate reports from multiple sources. Project workers were able to verify 92% of the births and 93% of the deaths through household visits. The household survey conducted among a subsample of the project population identified 1204 births and 341 deaths. After matching the notifications with the household survey, we found that the system was able to

capture over 87% of the births in the survey areas. Health assistants and family welfare assistants were the primary sources of information. Notifications from facilities were very low for both events.

Conclusion: The pilot innovation reiterated the importance of building an evidence base for improving civil registration and vital statistics and also revealed that it is possible to coordinate with the routine health information system to note births and deaths as the first step to ensure registration. Health assistants could capture more than half of the notifications as a stand-alone source.



E-learning course: Using CRVS Data in Public Health Journalism

[Vital Strategies](#) has created an e-learning course for journalists who want to improve their ability to source, understand, and translate population and demographic data into compelling stories.

As data become more prevalent and accessible, good reporting on CRVS at the community, national, and global levels—requires journalists who can understand and use data. The e-learning course builds the data use skills of journalists to develop stories related to CRVS. The course will provide a detailed overview of CRVS—what it is and why it is important, including for human rights and equity—and build skills related to data use in reporting. Topics covered include: common data-related terms and concepts; primary sources of CRVS data; basic methods for analyzing, interpreting, and visualizing CRVS data; and effective tactics for interviewing public health experts and leaders about data-rich topics. This course is designed for journalists who write about public health topics, and participants will be guided in developing a CRVS-related data story for publication.

Learn more and enroll [here](#).



CRVS Champion: Mr. Kap Andy Calo

We are pleased to present our CRVS Champion for October's Insight newsletter: **Mr. Kap Andy Calo, Director of Vanuatu National Statistics Office (VNSO)**. We hope our subscribers enjoy reading his valuable experiences and insights.

1. What is your current title and role?

I am the Director and the Registrar General of Vanuatu's Civil Registration and Identity Management (CRIM) Department at the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Prior to this, I worked for 14 years at the Vanuatu National Statistical Office as a Population Statistician. I was appointed Government Statistician (Director) of VNSO in 2019 and served till 2021. You can say I am passionate about complete, accurate, and up-to-date population data. I am happy that in Vanuatu civil registration is now considered to be the fundamental source of information for legal identities. Establishing vital statistics based on civil registration data will provide insight into population demographics that the Government needs to make timely decisions that will improve the quality of life of citizens in Vanuatu.

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

One of the biggest challenges in Vanuatu as we have matured into a nation with more formalized institutions is to ensure that we maintain our heritage and cultural knowledge while adapting to the future. For the first time since independence, we have an official National Identity Card that has helped people maintain their cultural identity while also gaining access to institutions. The National Identity Card streamlines the public administration process for getting access to education and health care, as well as voting. The National Identity Card is accessible to everyone and is something that is held with pride. We have seen a rapid uptake in people applying for ID cards. Currently, more than 77 percent of the population has a National Identity Card. Why? Because it's efficacious in every way!

3. How are you currently involved in CRVS improvements?

The Government of Vanuatu realized that to create reliable population data, provide trustworthy legal identities, and establish quality vital statistics, it would require legal, technical, and organizational changes to manage civil registration and legal identities properly.

Regarding the legal changes, in 2022 two bills have been passed with support from UNDP/Vanuatu Electoral Environment Project (VEEP): the Civil Registration and Identity Management Act and the Vanuatu National Identity Card Act. In addition, regulations on civil registration and national identity card have been developed. A regulation on vital statistics will be developed in 2022. Also, specifically important to civil registration is the development of a Data Protection Bill that will hopefully be approved in 2022 by the Vanuatu Parliament.

On the technical front, we are currently in the final phase of testing our newly developed software for a Central Civil Register System and the Vanuatu Population Register. The system is developed in-house and will improve the standard for data quality. Establishing data quality is the most crucial element in civil registration. Therefore, a data cleaning exercise is ongoing to enable the launching of the new system with the most accurate data. However, data quality control is a continuous process and will become a structural part of the management of the new system. The Central Civil Register and Population Register will allow for interoperability of data sharing such as ID verification between its data and public institutions (as well as some private institutions such as banks). This will contribute to improving the service provided to citizens using the principle of collecting data once with multiple institutions benefiting from it. Obviously, data sharing will take place respecting the rules on data protection.

CRIM is also currently going through an organizational restructure to support and meet the needs of our new legislation, regulation and growing population. We started by addressing our Central Civil Register system (now RV5). In collaboration with international experts at UNESCAP, we went through the Business Process Improving project which included mapping all current registration processes of birth and deaths. As Vanuatu is an archipelago with over 83 islands, the mapping of the 'as-is' process was critical to understand the variety of ways that people are currently getting registered and to identify process bottlenecks. Be it a lack of knowledge of where to register, not having an internet connection for the register to regularly update the data or having a missing link between different ministries that play a role in the notification of vital events. Based on a multi-stakeholder effort we then successfully finalized the re-design of the business processes. This will lead to standard operating procedures as well as developing training materials for the new system and training for the staff. In addition, we have expanded our staff to support the needs of the citizens and are in the process of getting registers posted at every major hospital.

4. How would you like to see CRVS in Vanuatu develop by the end of the CRVS Decade?

We are aiming for a fully digitized civil registration process with citizens having control of their data and having the ability to update and provide correct information. This digitized process will ensure that all islands, no matter how remote, can update and have access to their personal data. This will support the idea of bringing the government and its resources to the door-step of the people as well as supporting the decentralization process in Vanuatu. We would also like to address the data gap that exists in death registration and have that improved or strengthened.

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

An absolute necessity for any improvement of the CRVS is ensuring the commitment of the Government and relevant stakeholders, without that support it will be difficult to make changes. Furthermore, I think it is important to fully formulate the 'as is' situation and determine the 'should be' situation. This knowledge provides the required insight in challenges, risks and leads to realistic result formulation, describing of activities, planning, and budgeting. Equally important is to communicate with citizens, timely and frequently on the implementation. Their trust and cooperation in the changes to be made is essential.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- 17-18 October 2022: *Third Global CRVS and Gender Conference*, New York (Hybrid). Event details are [here](#).
 - 24-28 October 2022: *Sixth Conference of Africa Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration*, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Find more details [here](#).
 - 25-28 October 2022: *Second National Workshop on demographic and statistical capacity building* (ESCAP Inequality Assessments project), [Lao PDR](#).
 - 28 September 2022: *Inception workshop* (ESCAP Inequality Assessments project), [Bangladesh](#).
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RESOURCES

- Research article on *Working together to 'Get Every One in the Picture' in Asia and the Pacific*. Published in *Statistical Journal of the IAOS*, vol. 38, no. 3, pp. 769-782, 2022. See full [paper](#).
 - The Lancet Global Health: *Divergent age patterns of under-5 mortality in south Asia and sub-Saharan Africa: a modelling study*. Full text is [here](#).
 - [Podcast](#): Discussing the OpenCRVS open-source civil registration system
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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.

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This e-mail has been sent to rattanakittiaporn@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](#).