



Asia-Pacific CRVS Research Forum

3–4 April 2023 | Bangkok, Thailand

The significance of birth registration at the community level

Presenting speaker: Mr Zulfikor Zamonov, Tajikistan

Monday 3 April 2023: Session 2.6

Keywords: Civil registration; Vital statistics; Birth registration; Public services; Community; Rural areas; Tajikistan

The data generated by the civil registration and vital statistics system is a critical and important measure in population analysis. However, a real demographic picture of the population of Tajikistan is not available due to conflicting data obtained by civil registry offices, health and statistics. Among the most demanded civil registration services is birth registration, which is associated with a fairly high level of birth in Tajikistan. Due to the fact that three quarters (74%) of the population live in rural areas, about 60% of birth registrations are led by jamoats (municipalities) at the community level. The crude data indicates that there are discrepancies in birth records between the health statistics and civil registration comprising almost 50,000 individuals. The Ethnographic and Behavioural Insight Research (Action Research) for civil registration was carried out to identify barriers and opportunities for improving civil registration practices in rural areas of Tajikistan.

The objective of the research was to understand and identify an effective model to reduce vital statistics of non-registration rates. Since birth registration is a priority in the context of Tajikistan compared to other types of vital statistics, given the higher level of unregistered births, the focus was specifically on this type of vital record provided to the population as a public service. The research examined social and institutional barriers to birth registration.

To understand the behavioural aspects of people and institutional barriers for the importance of timely birth registration, the method of Diagnostics of Facts on the Ground (DFG) along with some elements of the Reality Check Approach were applied. The DFG method involves the immersion in the daily life of communities, living with people in their households. DFG is primarily an immersive study based on ethnographic principles, but its distinctive features lie in its narrower focus (i.e., relevance, usability) and short immersion time. Therefore, the method often tracks immeasurable and dynamic daily practices of people, their awareness and motivation.

The challenges of late registration are complex and multidimensional which need to be addressed both on the demand side and the supply side of the system.



Asia-Pacific CRVS Research Forum

3–4 April 2023 | Bangkok, Thailand

On the demand side, findings showed that the level of awareness of the importance of timely birth registration can be improved through reform of public services. It is important for the civil registration system to continue running outreach and awareness-raising campaigns to improve people's understanding of the importance of vital registration events and the consequences of late registration. It is pivotal that communication should not only focus on conveying messages on civil registration to the population, but also should nudge people for timely civil registration by using a behavioural insights approach.

On the supply side, the lack of a people-centered approach and prioritization in civil registration by jamoats is one of the factors contributing to the late registration. Despite the weak administrative capacity, the civil registry offices can be considered a high leverage point for having a positive influence on reducing delayed registration practices by optimizing and digitalizing public service delivery.