



# Asia-Pacific CRVS Research Forum

3–4 April 2023 | Bangkok, Thailand

## Integrating gender-equity in CRVS legal review and reform processes

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### **Introduction**

Due to cultural, social, and religious traditions, discriminatory laws and practices, and registration services that are shaped around binary conceptions of gender – women, children, and individuals that identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) face unique challenges in registering vital events and obtaining identity documents in many low and middle-income countries. Recognizing the long-term impacts resulting from a lack of birth registration and identity documents, the Global Health Advocacy Incubator (GHA) implemented an inclusive, human rights-based approach to the topic of gender and civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) by incorporating gender equity within the ongoing legal review and reform work.

### **Methods**

In 2021-2022, GHA added three new equity-themed chapters to the CRVS Legal and Regulatory Review Toolkit (“toolkit”) focusing on Stillbirth Reporting and Registration, Inclusion of Women and Children, and Equal Access for LGBTI Individuals. Along with ten other chapters of the toolkit addressing different aspects of CRVS systems, the three equity-themed chapters assist countries in ensuring that their civil registration systems are designed and guided by legal frameworks that protect every person’s equal access to civil registration and identity management services.

### **Results**

Piloted in Thailand in 2021, the Stillbirth Reporting and Registration chapter led to a policy victory by informing stakeholders’ decision to make stillbirth reporting compulsory for all public and private hospitals and update the reporting forms to include stillbirth. Implemented in Uganda in 2022, the Women and Children toolkit chapter helped identify the gaps in existing laws limiting women’s and children’s access to vital event registration services. The recommendations from the analysis made using this chapter will inform legal and policy reforms that can address the challenges faced by these population groups in attempting to



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register births, deaths, stillbirths, marriages, divorces, and other vital events. The three equity-themed toolkit chapters are currently being implemented in other countries within the Bloomberg Philanthropies Data for Health initiative.

## **Conclusion**

Over the last two years, GHAI integrated gender equity into CRVS legal review and reform initiatives by adding three equity-themed chapters to the CRVS legal review toolkit that help countries build inclusive CRVS systems in line with international human rights principles. By providing guidance for evaluating national legal frameworks against international best practices for stillbirth reporting and registration, and women's, children's, and LGBTI individuals' access to civil registration services, these toolkit chapters help countries fulfil their international human rights obligations and achieve universality in their civil registration services.