Assessing inequalities in registration of births and deaths in Fiji

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FIJI GOVERNMENT

Overview of CRVS Inequality Assessment project

Objective: To ensure no one is left behind, further investigation needed to understand whose vital events are least likely to be registered

- A multi-stakeholder team of approximately 30 representatives from relevant CRVS entities in Fiji, led by FBoS
- Series of in-person workshops between January 2022 – February 2023

Methodology

- Final inequality assessment report draws on data sources investigated during a data mapping exercise conducted in 2022:
  - To understand by which variables, registered births and deaths could be disaggregated
  - Once these were identified, the availability of those same variables from other data sources to be used in the denominator (for calculating completeness) were investigated

- MOJ provided Excel datasets upon request with a variety of different variables which allowed an understanding of how birth and death registration completeness could be disaggregated:
  - Examined differentials by sex, age, ethnicity and mother's marital status

- Calculating completeness of birth and death registration by different sub-groups using direct calculation methods as the administrative data sources in Fiji were found to be relatively robust

Estimating completeness

- Direct calculations used the number of registered births or deaths (by sub-group) from the Registrar General's Office at MOJ as the numerator, divided by the estimated number of births or deaths (denominator) from a variety of different data sources

Example: Birth registration completeness

$$= \frac{Births\ occurring\ in\ a\ certain\ time\ period\ registered\ by\ Registrar\ General}{Births\ estimated\ from\ another\ data\ source\ from\ that\ same\ time\ period}$$

Data sources – Birth Registration

Fiji 2021 MICS: some general findings were taken directly from this household survey

For direct calculations, registered births from the MOJ were used in the numerator and recorded (actual) births were taken from the following sources:

1. Recorded births from Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MOHMS)
2. FBoS enumeration data from the 2017 census

Other options investigated:

- Vaccination records from MOHMS
- School enrolment data from the Ministry of Education (MoE)
- United Nations World Population Prospectes

Data sources – Death Registration

For direct calculations, registered deaths from the MOJ were used in the numerator and recorded (actual) deaths were taken from the following source:

1. Recorded deaths from Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MOHMS)

Other options investigated:

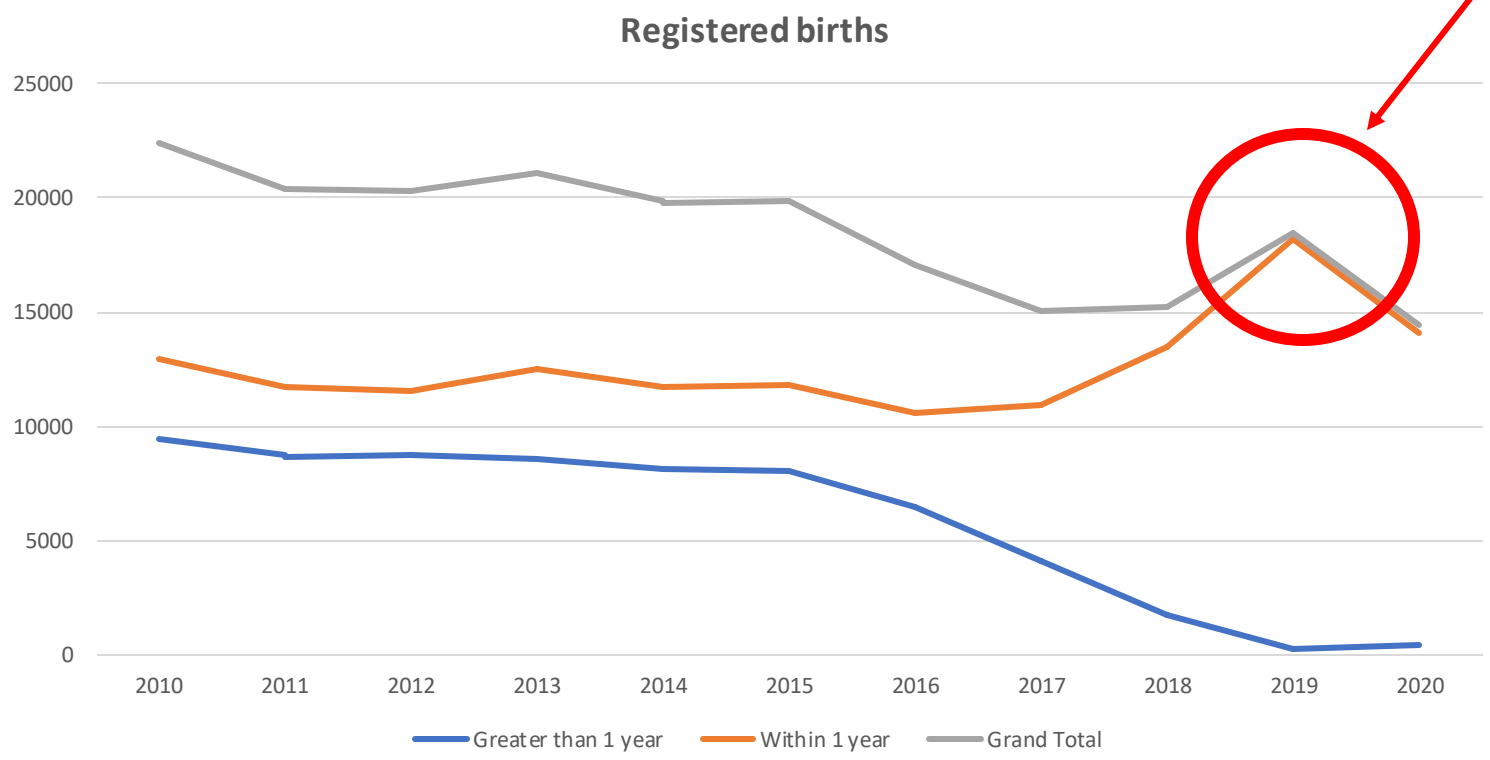
- Indirect estimation of deaths
- United Nations World Population Prospects


Findings:
Birth Registration

Trends in Birth Registration

Trends in birth registration in Fiji, 2010-2020

Impact of Parental Assistance Payment Program (PAPP) from August 1, 2018 – July 31, 2020



Birth Registration (Fiji 2021 MICS)

- Little difference in registration by sex
- Children in urban areas (89%) more likely to have had their births registered compared to children in rural areas (84%)
- The Northern Division had the lowest rates of birth registration for children <5 years (85%)
- Mother's wealth quintile appeared to have the largest impact: mothers in the poorest WQ had the lowest rates of birth registration compared to all over variables analysed (78%)

Table PR.1.1: Birth registration

Percentage of children under age 5 by whether birth is registered and percentage of children not registered whose mothers/caretakers know how to register births, Fiji MICS, 2021

	Children whose births are registered with civil authorities					Percent of children whose mothers/ caretakers know how to register births	Number of children without birth registration
	Have birth certificate						
	Seen	Not seen	No birth certificate	Total registered[1]	Number of children		
Total	**51.8**	**26.4**	**8.3**	**86.6**	**2,115**	**92.0**	**284**
Sex							
Male	52.5	25.4	9.0	86.8	1,139	90.5	150
Female	51.1	27.6	7.5	86.3	976	93.8	134
Area							
Urban	52.0	29.5	7.5	89.0	1,177	93.8	130
Rural	51.7	22.5	9.4	83.6	938	90.6	154
Division							
Central	49.8	28.2	8.7	86.7	925	91.7	123
Eastern	49.4	26.1	15.0	90.5	96	(*)	9
Northern	59.1	19.5	6.6	85.2	305	93.1	45
Western	51.8	27.0	7.7	86.4	789	92.5	107
Age (in months)							
0-11	38.7	16.3	15.7	70.6	437	89.5	128
12-23	60.4	28.1	5.3	93.7	407	(96.1)	25
24-35	57.7	28.8	4.7	91.2	405	(96.2)	36
36-47	51.5	27.3	9.4	88.2	449	90.1	53
48-59	52.0	32.0	5.9	90.0	417	(96.3)	42
Mother's education[C]							
Primary or lower	53.1	28.6	4.4	86.0	168	(*)	23
Secondary	51.7	24.1	8.7	84.5	1156	90.4	180
Tertiary or vocational	52.0	29.1	8.7	89.7	788	96.6	81
Child's functional difficulties (age 2-4 years)[A]							
Has functional difficulty	(36.6)	(33.1)	(15.1)	(84.8)	38	(*)	6
Has no functional difficulty	54.1	29.3	6.5	89.9	1233	94.2	124
Mother's functional difficulties[B]							
Has functional difficulty	(66.4)	(19.3)	(2.0)	(87.7)	48	(*)	6
Has no functional difficulty	51.6	26.6	8.5	86.7	1962	93.3	262
Wealth index quintile							
Poorest	46.6	22.2	9.1	77.9	549	89.8	121
Second	49.1	26.7	11.1	86.9	490	94.0	64
Middle	49.0	33.2	7.2	89.4	417	(90.0)	44
Fourth	57.8	24.1	7.8	89.6	372	(95.0)	39
Richest	62.9	27.0	4.6	94.5	287	(*)	16

[1] **MICS indicator PR.1 - Birth registration; SDG indicator 16.9.1**

[A] Children age 0-1 years are excluded, as functional difficulties are only collected for age 2-4 years.

[B] The disaggregate of Mother's functional difficulties is shown only for respondents to the Adult Functioning module, i.e., individually interviewed women age 18-49 years. and men age 18-49 years in selected households.

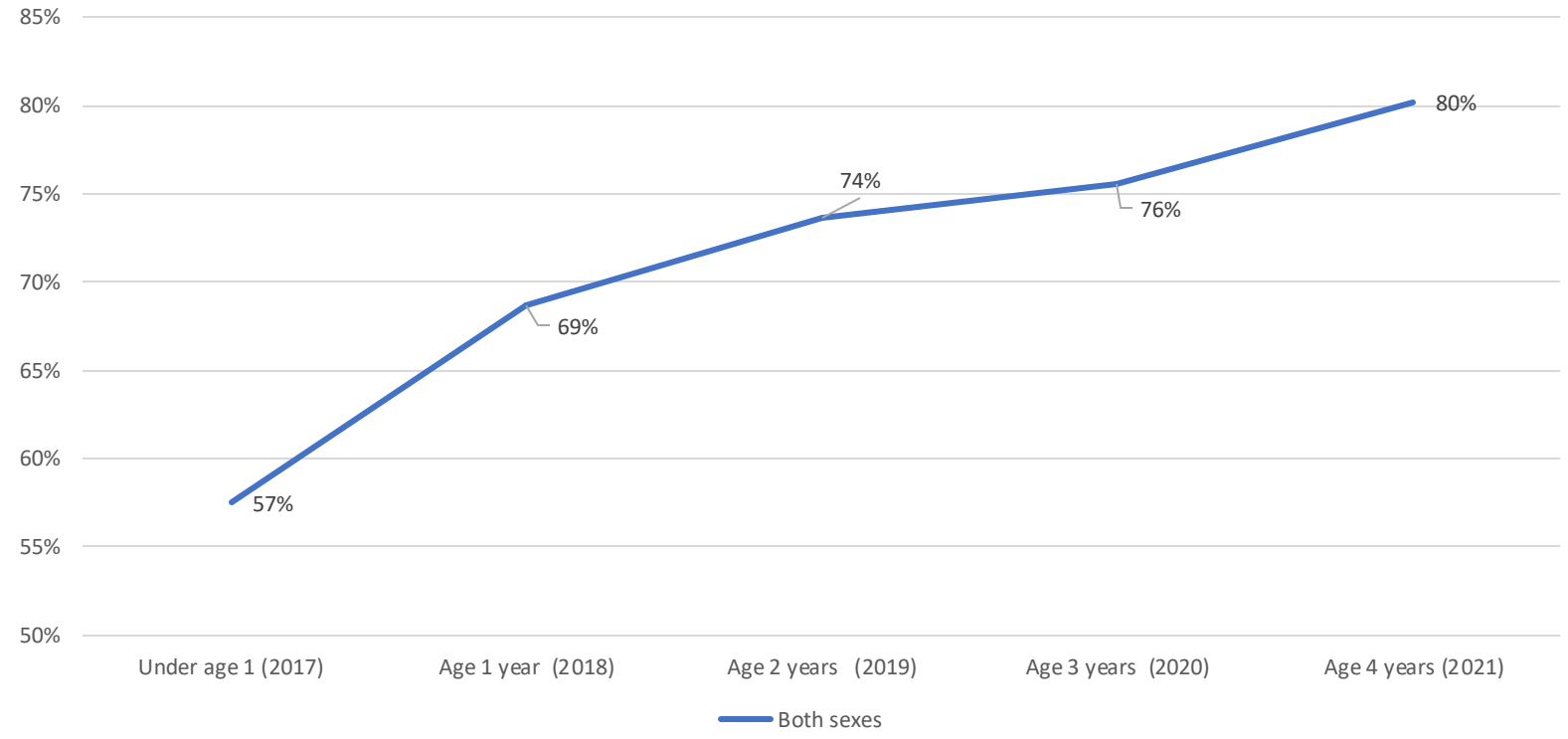
[C] The category of 'Don't know/Missing' in the background characteristic of 'Mother's education' has been suppressed from the table due to small number of unweighted cases.

( ) Figures that are based on 25-49 unweighted cases

(*) Figures that are based on fewer than 25 unweighted cases

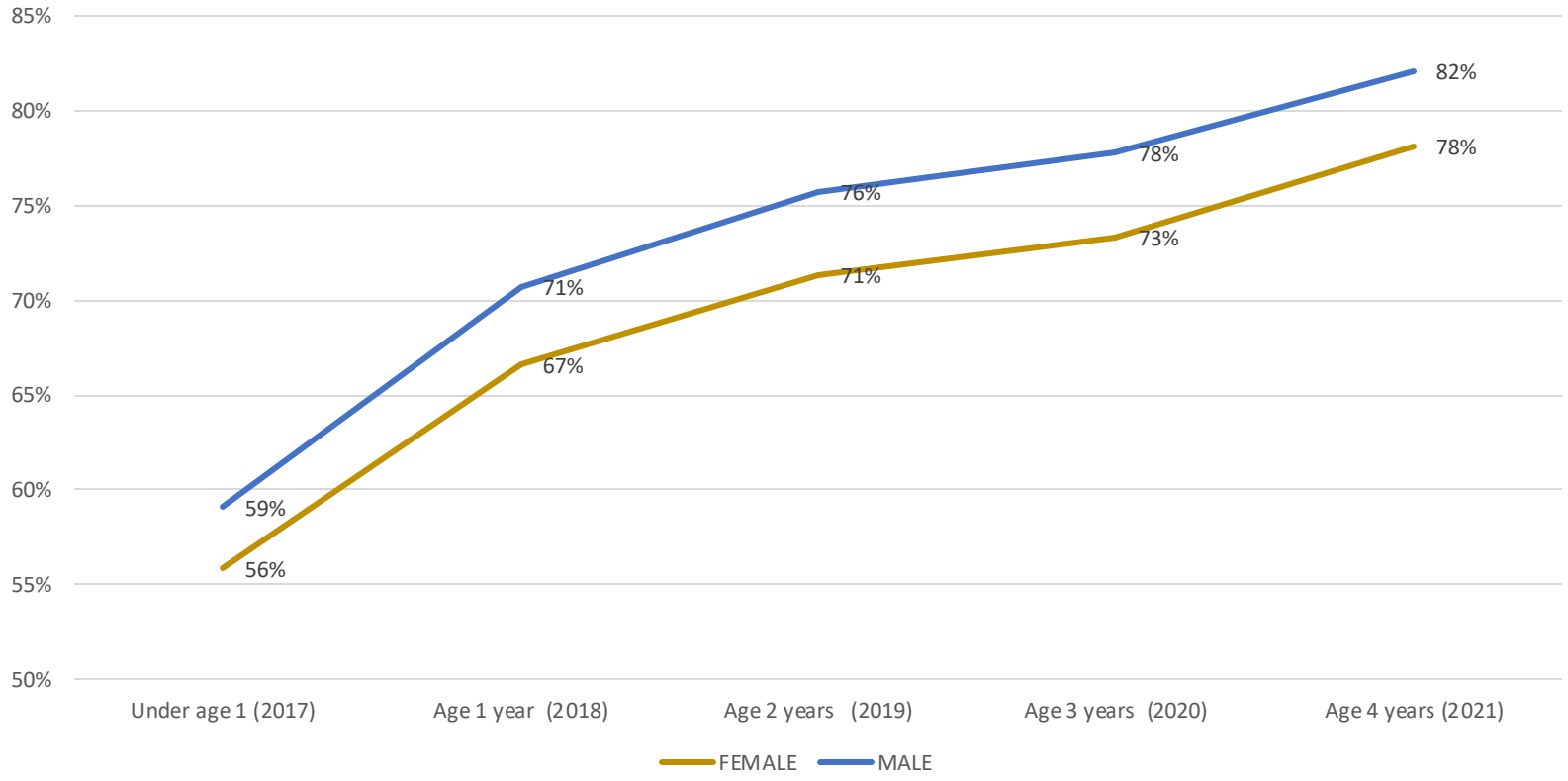
Birth registration completeness

Birth registration completeness for the cohort of children age 0 in the 2017 census



Birth registration completeness by sex

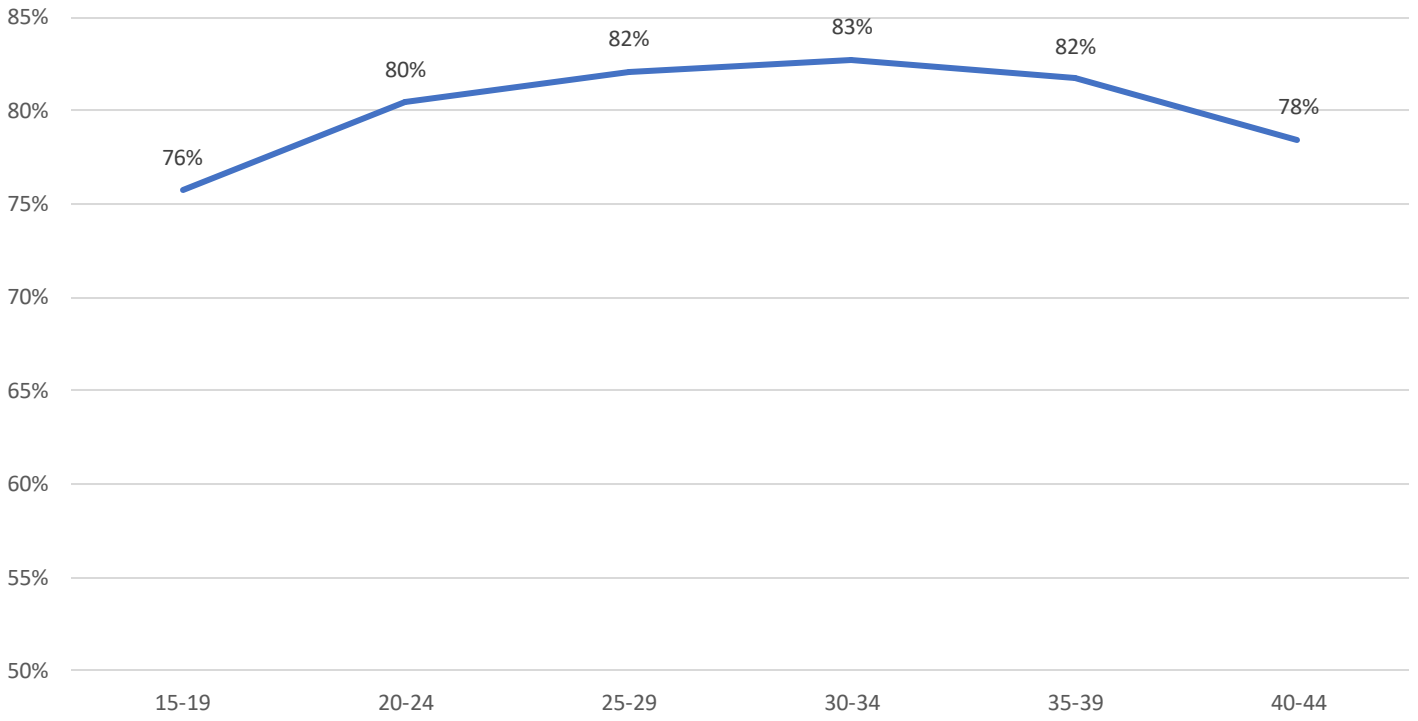
Birth registration completeness for the cohort of children age 0 in the 2017 census, by sex



Birth registration completeness – by mother's age at birth

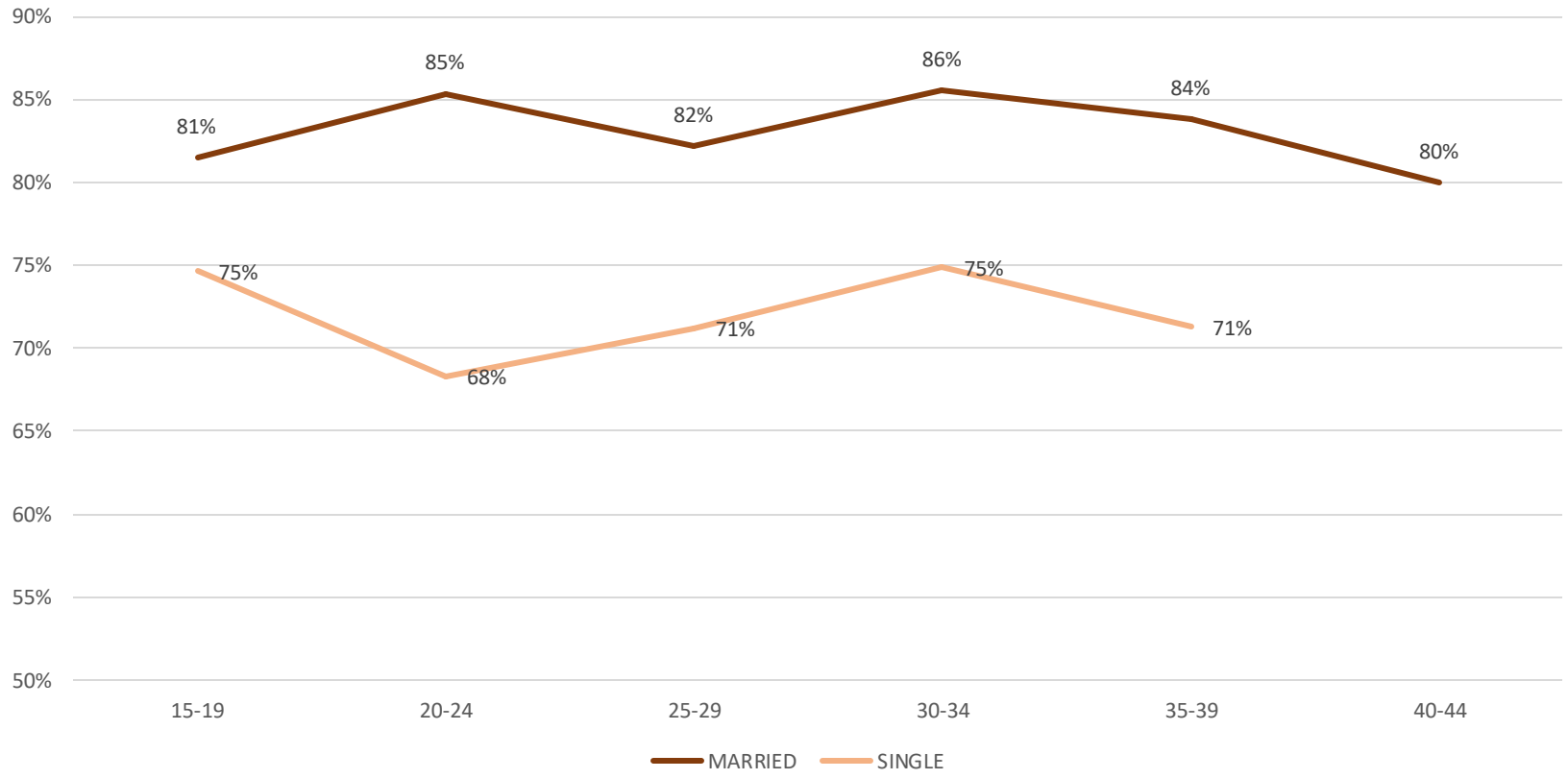
Registration data for births occurring in 2020 and registered by age 1 were compared to NOBs digitized by FBoS combined with MOHMS PATIS+ records

Birth registration completeness by age 1 by mother's age at birth, 2020



Birth registration completeness – Lautoka Health Facility

Birth registration completeness by age 1 for births occurring in Lautoka Health Facility, 2020, by mother's age at birth and marital status



Conclusion and Policy Implications: Birth Registration

- The economic incentives provided through the PAPP had a significant, positive impact on increasing the number of registrations
  - Continuation of economic incentives should be considered to improve the rate of birth registration completeness for all sub-sets of the population

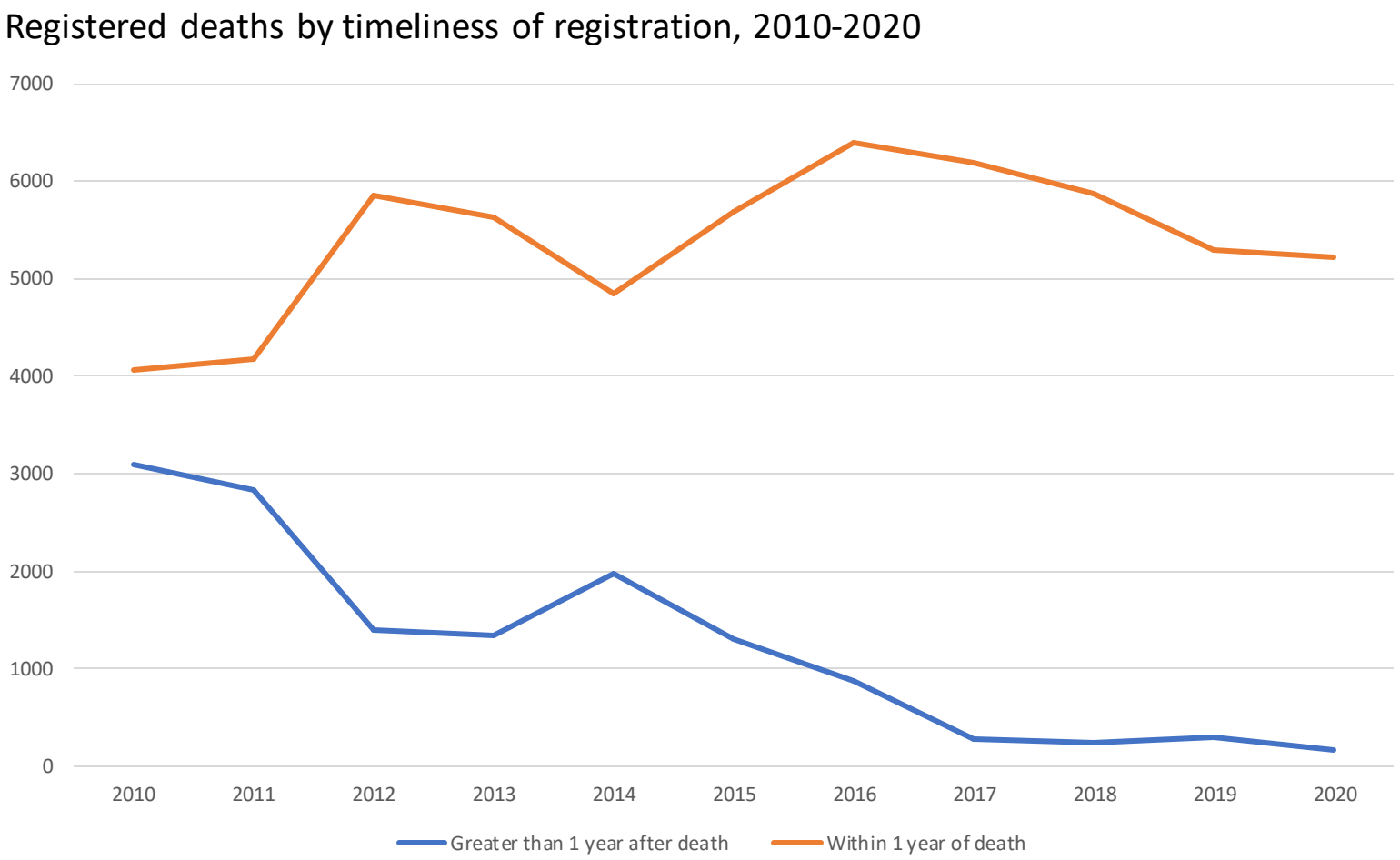
- Findings from the MICS and census date were in alignment, showing birth registration was lowest for children under age 1 and increased with age of the child
  - Targeting mothers of infants to register within the legal timeframe (within 1 year of birth in Fiji) should be a key policy focus

- The MICS found that mothers in the lowest wealth quintile were the least likely to register births, and there was also a disparity in registration between urban and rural residents
  - Better understanding of the barriers to registration for low-income mothers or those residing in rural areas is key for improving registration among this population

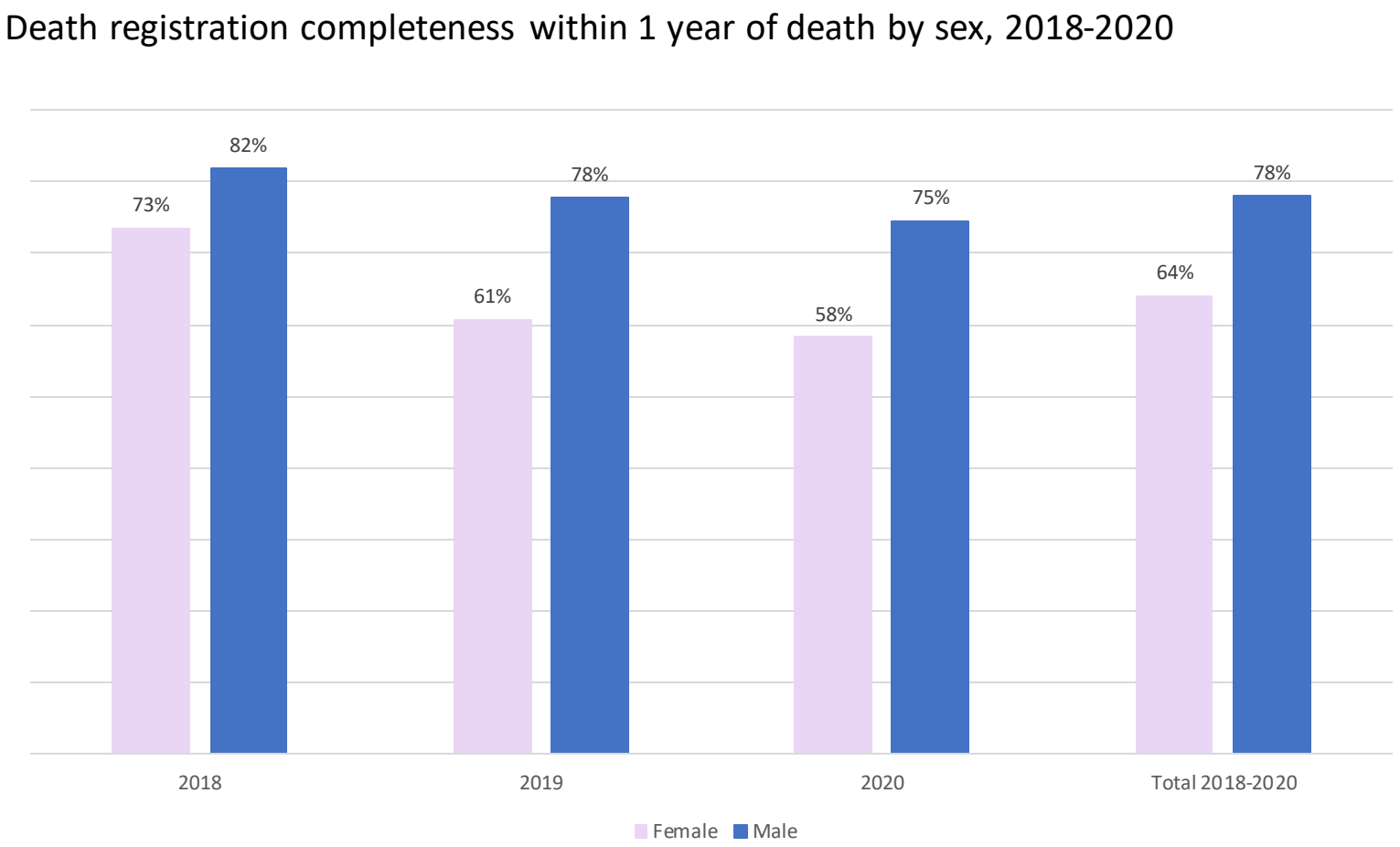
- Analysis suggested that unmarried mothers and teenage mothers were less likely to register their births
  - Registration processes may be examined and re-designed where necessary to be inclusive, welcoming and free of stigma, regardless of a mother's age or marital status


Findings:
Death
Registration

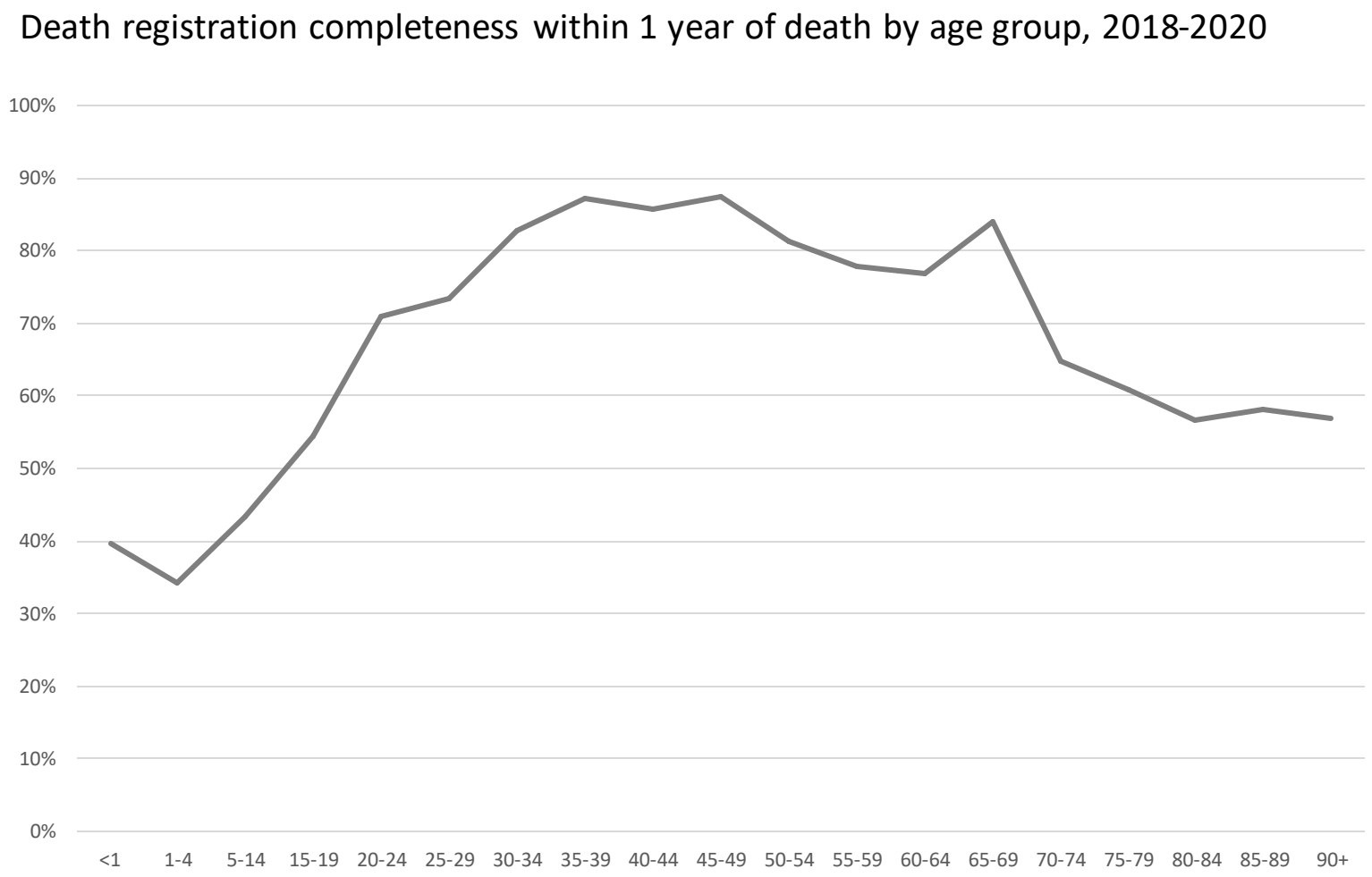
Timeliness of death registration



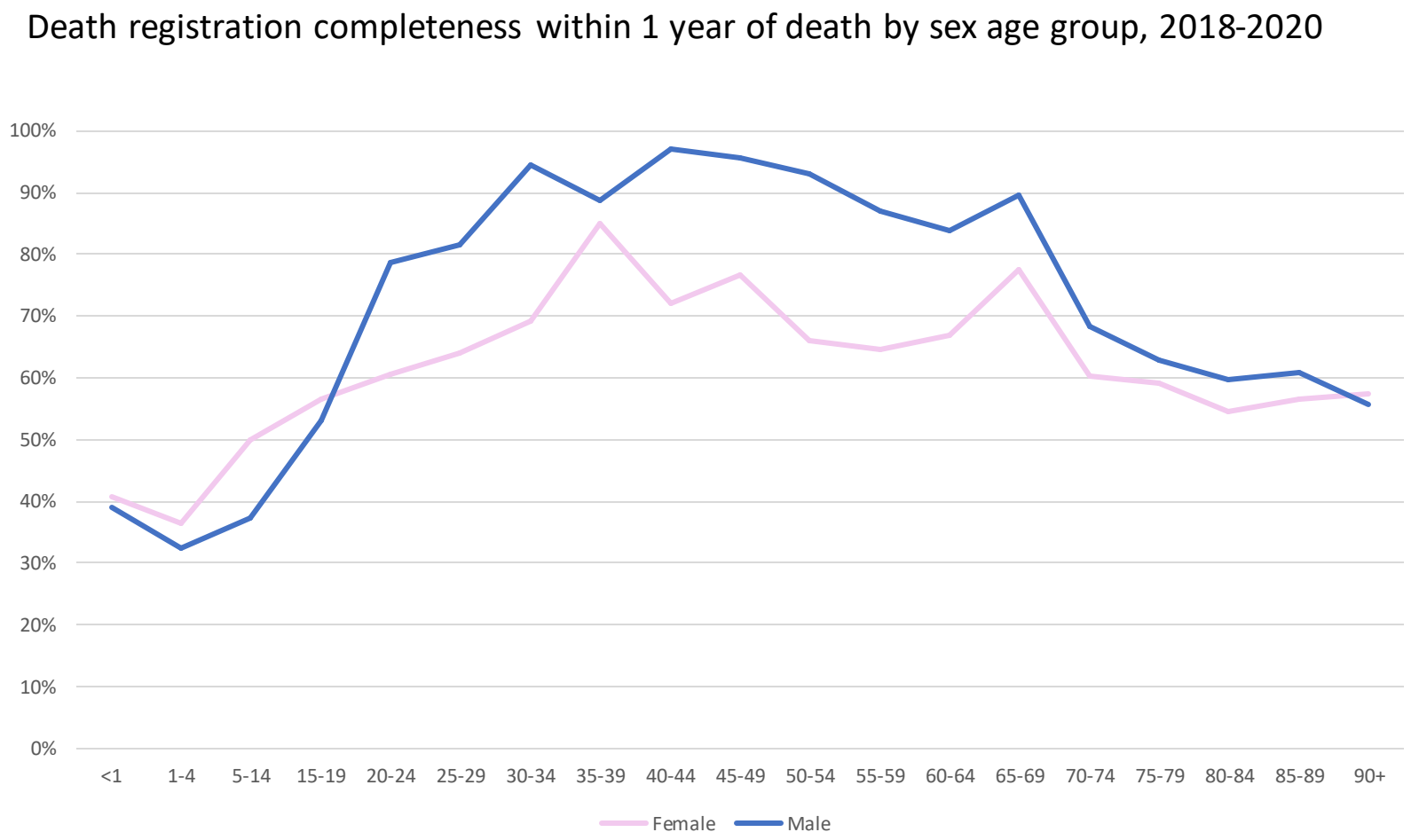
Death registration completeness, by sex



Death registration completeness, by age group



Death registration completeness, by sex and age group



Conclusion and Policy Implications: Death Registration

- Children under the age of 5 years were the least likely to have their deaths registered, likely due to the few economic incentives to register a child's death: children do not possess a pension and have little, if any property to bequeath to their surviving family members
  - Processes to support family members to register deaths and ease the process during their grieving period should be considered

- A decline in death registration from age 70 and above was also observed
  - A better understanding of why this may be happening is needed, in order to implement interventions to improve registration for older descendants. Encouraging persons to establish a will, outlining their property and wishes for inheritance may be one way in which to empower vulnerable populations and encourage surviving family members to register deaths

- A differential was also observed by sex, with higher rates of male compared to female deaths registered
  - Education around the importance of death registration may be one possible modality to overcome this differential. Cultural heritage groups or women's groups could be points of access for outreach, encouraging families to register the death of female family members, even when there is no economic incentive to do so

Next Steps

- Further research needed to improve inequalities in birth and death registration (perhaps qualitative assessments)
- Potential Business Process Improvement (BPI) activities to identify bottlenecks and gaps in the system, to allow for a more efficient and user-friendly interface with the public
- Development of policy briefs to communicate quantitative evidence in support of civil registration incentives
- Plans under discussion to standardize the Notification of Birth (NOB) form

Thank You!
Q&A