CRVS Insight

April 2021

Are we really getting every one in the picture?

In 2014, governments across Asia-Pacific committed to strengthening CRVS systems and advance universal civil registration to support good governance, health and development.

However, due to a lack of data, we do not know if the most vulnerable people are being registered, which could mean hard to reach and marginalized people, including women and girls, remain invisible, compounding the inequality they face.

ESCAP has launched the 'Let's really get everyone in the picture' initiative, to support countries in conducting inequality assessments to make sure we count everyone and leave no one behind.

Read more about it in this blog or on www.getinthepicture.org

Turkmenistan adopts a new civil registration law to include stateless persons

Globally and across Central Asia, UNHCR has been advocating to end statelessness through the #IBelong campaign and has celebrated recent efforts in Turkmenistan to end statelessness by 2024.

A recent Presidential Decree granted citizenship for 2,580 stateless people in December 2020, which followed the implementation of the Law on Civil Status Acts, that was passed last year. The new laws require the registration of all children born in the country, including stateless children, which will grant them greater access to education and health services.

Read more on UNHCR's #IBelong initiative here.

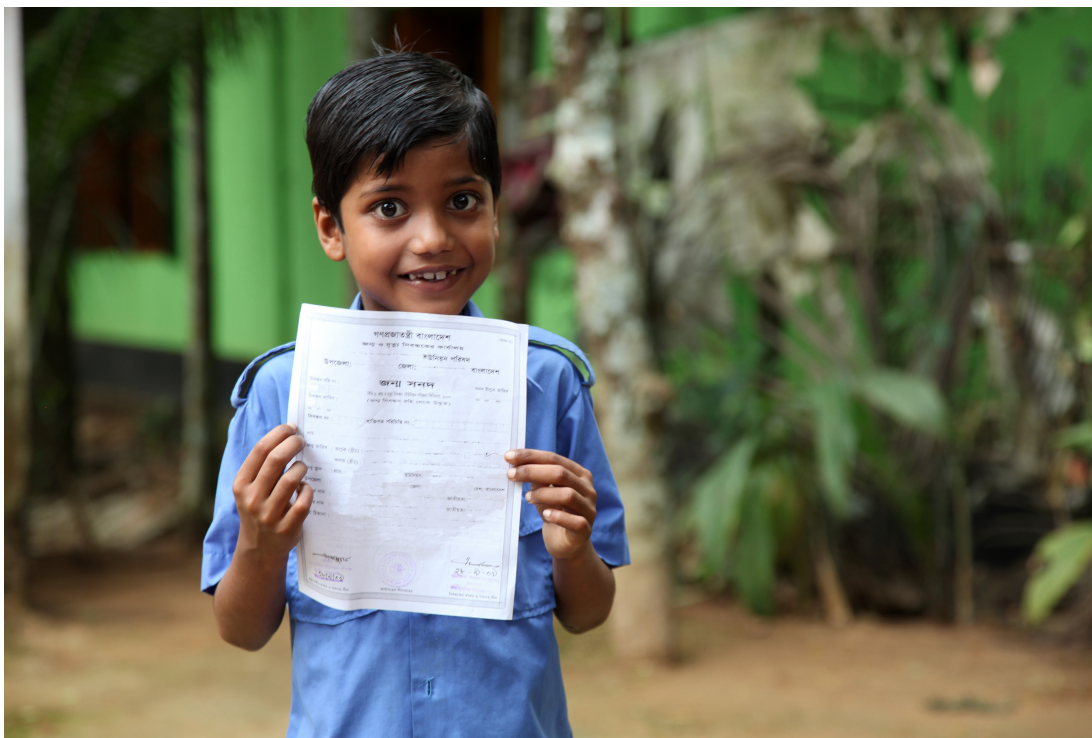**Vanuatu to roll out ID verification system for coming elections**

In 2019, the CRVS Department and the Vanuatu Electoral Office (VEO) established a joint nationwide project to undertake combined civil and voter registration, issuing National ID cards.

A new identity checking system has been established in Vanuatu for coming provincial elections to in May. Scanners will be used to double-check voter's identity and voting eligibility based on their national ID cards.

This comes as the latest development in the Vanuatu Electoral Environment Project (VEEP), supported by UNDP and funded by the Government of New Zealand. It aims at contributing to Vanuatu's democratic development by strengthening institutions and building public trust. This project also plans to fully integrate civil and voter registration, with electoral rolls to be extracted from the civil registry database.

Read more about Vanuatu's new scanning system here.

Data for Health supports national scaling up of Kaliganj model in Bangladesh

The Government of Bangladesh, supported by the Data for Health initiative, has started implementing a nationwide program to strengthen civil registration systems. The model was first implemented in Kaliganj province of Bangladesh for several years and uses frontline medical workers to assist with civil registration of births and deaths. This change of approach has lessened the burden on families and has gained high level government support and strong collaboration between ministries.

This model has proven highly successful, with birth and death registration completeness going from 8 to 94% and 21 to 71% respectively. Coupled with initiatives to develop stronger systems to record of causes of death, results indicate this model will also improve the amount and quality of vital statistics data, which will facilitate governance at all levels.

Read more information on the program here. For information on Data for Health global funding grants click here. The next cycle will open in May, and details for application can be found here.

CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE for CRVS Systems **LE CENTRE D'EXCELLENCE** sur les systèmes ESEC

Launch of the Compendium of Good Practices:
CRVS in Conflict, Emergencies, and Fragile Settings

Wednesday, April 14th, 2021
7:30 – 9:00 am Ottawa / 2:30 – 4:00 pm Amman

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The Center of Excellence launches a compendium of good practices on CRVS in crisis situations

The Center of Excellence has recently published a compendium of good practices on Harnessing Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) in Conflict, Emergencies and Fragile Settings. It provides successful examples of building or managing CRVS systems in times of crises such as conflicts or natural disasters. These situations put strain on CRVS systems while also making registration more critical for people to access their rights. As such, it is an essential tool to understand how to offer continuity of service or build a new system in those extraordinary situations. The countries featured include New Zealand, South Korea and Vanuatu.

The report will be launched on **14 April (7:30-9:00AM Ottawa time) via a webinar**, where experts will reflect on their experiences and delve further on the topic. You can register for the webinar here.

CRVS Champion: Hasibullah Mowahed

Each month, our community newsletter puts a spotlight on one person from Asia-Pacific who has gone above and beyond in their efforts to support CRVS programmes, raise awareness of CRVS issues or lead CRVS improvement efforts in their home country. This month we are happy to highlight Mr. Hasibullah Mowahed from Afghanistan.

What is your current title and role?

I am the Deputy Director General for Statistics of National Statistics and Information Authority (NSIA) of Afghanistan. My role at NSIA is managing and supervising statistical directorate such as Field Operation, Economic Statistics, Population and Demographic, National Account, and Social Statistics. Furthermore, since the Afghanistan Central Civil Registration Authority (ACCRA) has also been merged with NSIA, therefore, I also oversee the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics CRVS system in the country.

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

To have accurate statistics, birth and death registration is extremely important. However, In Afghanistan due to lack of public awareness it is challenging. To increase the coverage area of vital registration as well as increase its accuracy, NSIA has made a number of efforts, including collecting data through systems as well as manually. In addition, NSIA is closely working with

the Ministry of Public Health to improve its Health Information and Management System (HIMS), so it can register births and deaths, as well as determine the cause of death.

How are you currently involved in CRVS improvements?

For improvement of CRVS system in Afghanistan, we are planning to undertake a number of provisions. Among others, which has also been decided in the NSIA leadership committee upon my proposal, is the mandatory registration of births. Furthermore, we are planning to develop a death registration system including cause of death online registration in Afghanistan. We hope that by implementing these provisions we will be able to have a strong CRVS system in the near future.

How would you like to see CRVS in Afghanistan develop by the end of the CRVS Decade?

Now that NSIA is also responsible to provide National E-ID card, we are planning to bring key changes in the system during the CRVS decade. As part of the improvements, we are planning to develop comprehensive online systems and connect them with the social services, and use the birth certificate for all social services such as school enrolment, accessing health care services for children under the age of 15. This will also encourage families to take birth registration seriously and it will increase dramatically in the CRVS decade.

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

In my opinion the most important tools for improving CRVS system are as below: First of all, to have soft infrastructures such as laws and regulations is very important to pave the way for improving of CRVS system. Secondly establishing or improving Management Information Systems within all sectors including public and private sectors and link them with each other is the second important tools for improvement CRVS system. Thirdly, public awareness, advocacy and campaign are other useful tools for improving the system in the country, since without cooperation of the people it will be impossible to improve CRVS system in the country.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The Institute for Statelessness and Inclusion is conducting an online version of the Statelessness Summer Course which will run between **12 - 23 July 2021**. The course is being offered as a four hour daily programme over a two-week period where attendees statelessness issues and the right to a nationality. The deadline for application is **11 April 2021** and to learn more, including cost and registration processes, please visit the course catalog on ISI's website.

The seventh meeting of the Regional Steering Group for CRVS in Asia and the Pacific will take place online on **18 and 19 May**. Following on the Partnership meeting that happened on 6 April, the RSG will serve as a platform of discussion to finalize the preparations for the Ministerial Conference to happen in November. Sessions, preparatory documents and desired outcomes for the conference will be examined and deliberated. You can find more information here.

NEW RESOURCES

UN ESCAP has just released its flagship publication, the Asia and the Pacific SDG Progress Report for 2021. The report not only analyses progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Asia and the Pacific, as well as its five subregions, it also assesses the availability of data and the remaining gaps which must be closed to achieve the goals by 2030. For more information and to download a copy of the Report please visit the UN ESCAP website here.

As part of the Asia Pacific Forum for Sustainable Development 2021, UN ESCAP helped organize a side-event dedicated to the importance of civil registration in times of crisis, including the current one. The recording and presentations can be found here. The general summary of discussions at the forum also highlight the importance of universal registration to achieve legal identity for all and to advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

In preparation of UN ESCAP's 77th Commission session to take place from 26 to 29 April, the secretariat has prepared a note presenting the situation in the region at the midterm of the CRVS Decade, and highlighting the importance of CRVS in responding to crises such as COVID-19 and its links to the 2030 Agenda, especially with regards to the principle of leaving no one behind. For more information on the session and versions of the note in Russian, Chinese and French, please visit this page.

The Philippine Statistics Authority has recently published statistics on death and causes of death, with updated data for 2019 and new data for 2020. These reports, though preliminary, offer an overview of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in the country and provide key insight for governance.

Geostat, the national statistical office of Georgia, has recently published its summary of Vital Statistics for 2020. It offers a comprehensive overview of births, deaths, marriages and divorces in the country, based on civil registration records.