

CRVS ESEC

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CURRENT STATE OF CRVS: An Overview

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PURPOSE OF THIS PAPER

Recent momentum for development of CRVS systems — including cross-system linkages to health and identity systems — has been strong. This paper overviews developments over the period 2012–2017, including academic and grey literature, with a focus on system improvements and innovation, and includes global and regional momentum that has supported the development of these systems as a priority.

This report captures the current state of CRVS, documenting global knowledge and recent momentum. Reporting over the past five years (2012–2017), it is a key background document for the Canada IDRC-UNICEF-World Bank-WHO Global CRVS Conference in Ottawa (27–28 February 2018).

1. CURRENT STATE OF CRVS

Around one-third of all births are not registered, with around half of all deaths going unrecorded. Combined with the knowledge that more than one billion people do not have a legal identity, this means that many in the world are potentially denied rights, access to services including health and education, and participation in governance and economic development. This disparity is most apparent in low and middle-income countries, and is known as the 'scandal of invisibility'.

Regional and global momentum to improve the status of CRVS systems, including significant country commitment and action, has been only relatively recent. While efforts have focussed largely on improvement of CRVS systems for births, deaths, causes of death, marriage, and divorces, acknowledged within the approach is recognition that there is mutual benefit in strengthening systems such as health and ID systems in tandem.

2. GLOBAL DIRECTIONS

Since 2012, there has been significant global attention on CRVS system development, although work began earlier in many regions and countries. This focus has resulted from unique multi-stakeholder partnerships, spanning geographic boundaries, culminating in the securing of the agenda in many global policies and strategies, including in the Sustainable Development Goals. This section highlights the increasingly integrated approach across global development policy which delivers an increasing platform for coordinating CRVS system development.

2.1 Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals enshrine this CRVS in multiple ways as important to the global development agenda. The multiple references to CRVS across the SDGs highlight the benefits of CRVS as a system (Table 1), providing legal identity, and delivering vital statistics for measuring sustained progress, as articulated particularly for the health goals and targets where well-functioning CRVS systems are fundamental properly monitor mortality and related indicators .



TABLE 1: CRVS ACROSS THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

GOALS	RELEVANT TARGETS	RELEVANT INDICATORS
<p>GOAL 3 - Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.</p>	<p>Target 3.1: By 2030, reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births</p> <p>Target 3.2: By 2030, end preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age, with all countries aiming to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1,000 live births and under-5 mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births</p> <p>Target 3.4: By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being</p> <p>Target 3.6: By 2020, halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents</p> <p>Target 3.9: By 2030, substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination</p>	<p>3.1.1 Maternal mortality ratio 3.1.2 Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel</p> <p>3.2.1 Under-five mortality rate 3.2.2 Neonatal mortality rate</p> <p>3.4.1 Mortality rate attributed to cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes or chronic respiratory disease 3.4.2 Suicide mortality rate</p> <p>3.6.1 Death rate due to road traffic injuries</p> <p>3.9.1 Mortality rate attributed to household and ambient air pollution 3.9.2 Mortality rate attributed to unsafe water, unsafe sanitation and lack of hygiene (exposure to unsafe Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for All (WASH) services) 3.9.3 Mortality rate attributed to unintentional poisoning</p>
<p>GOAL 16 - Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels</p>	<p>Target 16.9: By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration.</p>	<p>Indicator: 16.9.1 Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority, by age</p>
<p>GOAL 17 Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development</p>	<p>Target 17.19: By 2030, build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement gross domestic product, and support statistical capacity-building in developing countries</p>	<p>Indicator: 17.19.2 Proportion of countries that (a) have conducted at least one population and housing census in the last 10 years; and (b) have achieved 100 per cent birth registration and 80 per cent death registration</p>

The Global Plan articulated the benefits of CRVS to individuals, and to across government and the private sector, including:

- **Governance:** Legal identity and vital statistics underpin development, implementation and monitoring of government policies, programmes, and services. Reliable data on population size and distribution at all levels, on trends in fertility, and on patterns and causes of mortality, providing data for targeting resources across public and business sectors. Efficiency and effectiveness is improved through the ability to target services and increase the efficiency of resource allocation. Accountability is enhanced by providing the means of holding governments accountable for their policies, and determining the extent to which services meet economic and social needs.
- **Economic Participation:** legal status providing individuals with the legal documentation and proof of identity necessary to bring them into the modern economy and access inheritance rights and obtain passports, open bank accounts, get driving licenses and facilitates access to services such as health care, education and social security. Business and commerce are improved when companies to better able to identify population needs and banks and insurance companies the information they need to provide their services.
- **Human rights** by providing individuals with proof of identity from birth, by realizing their social, economic and human rights, by improving the efficiency and fairness of the justice system and by helping to avoid identity fraud.
- **Health** thought providing reliable vital statistics, highlighting emerging health threats and high risk groups, and tracking health progress and the health status of population at national and sub-national levels.
- **Impact for women:** marriage and divorce registration contribute to women's ability to inherit property, and to registering girls at birth and recording their marriages to help prevent early and forced marriage.
- **Aid effectiveness** is improved as development partners, donors and foundations all benefit from high quality statistics to improve allocation and monitoring of aid. For example, knowing how many children are born, or how many people are dying from HIV/AIDS .

Case Study: The Asian and Pacific CRVS Decade (2015-2024)

At the 2014 Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) in Asia and the Pacific, Governments adopted the Ministerial Declaration to 'Get Every One in the Picture' and proclaimed the 'Asian and Pacific CRVS Decade'. The Ministerial Declaration outlines the commitment of governments to achieve the shared vision that, by 2024, all people in Asia and the Pacific will benefit from universal and responsive civil registration and vital statistics systems that facilitate the realization of their rights and support good governance, health, and development and lays out the following goals:



- a. Goal 1: Universal civil registration of births, deaths and other vital events;
- b. Goal 2: All individuals are provided with legal documentation of civil registration of births, deaths and other vital events, as necessary, in order to claim identity, civil status and ensuing rights;
- c. Goal 3: Accurate, complete and timely vital statistics (including on causes of death), based on registration records, are produced and disseminated.

5. GAPS, CHALLENGES, FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

There remain many gaps and challenges related to scaling CRVS systems for best effect.

5.1 The Need to Improve Operational Research

There is a lack of documentation using formal operational research outlining country success in scaling CRVS systems; and while there is emphasis on the mutual benefits between systems such as CRVS, health and ID systems, operational research into how countries have benefitted from this cross-system development is also inadequate. As such there is little advice for countries at present as to how to manage existing or emerging technology pressures, or guidance on cross-system coordination and interoperability for best effect. However, the emerging use of business process mapping within CRVS systems, championed by the Swiss Tropical Health Institute and showcased in this conference, shows great potential for the ongoing improvement and management of CRVS systems.

5.2 The Potential for Modern Data Analysis

Data is usually considered an output of a CRVS system, yet in evidence-based design, data can be regarded also as an input. Data (or lack of data) from a CRVS system can tell us about where coverage is weak, and hence where attention is needed in systems design. There is little in the literature about how countries can use incomplete data from systems for analysis and for strengthening systems, or how modern data analysis techniques could be used to strengthen vital statistics systems and reporting. Vital statistics systems in many low- and middle-income countries have been traditionally weak, and there is an overreliance on use of estimates for reporting. While this may suit broad analytical purposes, it will not deliver the needed benefits at citizen level which accrue from legal identity acquired through registration of births, deaths and marriages, for example.



ENDNOTES

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