ESCAP
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific



Researching CRVS for better Policy

The programme will start at 11:00 (GMT+7 Bangkok)

ESCAP
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

9 February 2026

RESEARCHING CRVS FOR BETTER POLICY

This session examines how evidence strengthens CRVS systems by identifying bottlenecks, guiding interventions, and tracking progress. It highlights practical ways to generate and apply evidence, with insights from partners and practitioners. The session also introduces the upcoming CRVS Research Forum, a platform for applied research and innovation.

Register here:
https://forms.office.com/e/GrpRku7zHm

Join the meeting:
hhttps://shorturl.at/4Uxmn

9 February 2026
11:00am-12:00 pm (UTC+7)

Asia-Pacific Stats Café
Join the session to learn why why evidence matters for strengthening CRVS systems

Speakers



Sana Naffa
Senior Program Specialist, Canada International Development Research Centre (IDRC)



Meli Nadakuca
Principal Statistician, Fiji Bureau of Statistics



Nicola Richards
CRVS Research Lead, Statistics Division, ESCAP

Opening Remarks



Tanja Sejersen
Statistician and CRVS Lead, Statistics Division, ESCAP

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STATS CAFE
Good coffee makes your day but good data helps you decide.



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DATA FOR HEALTH INITIATIVE

How ESCAP Supports CRVS Research and Improvements

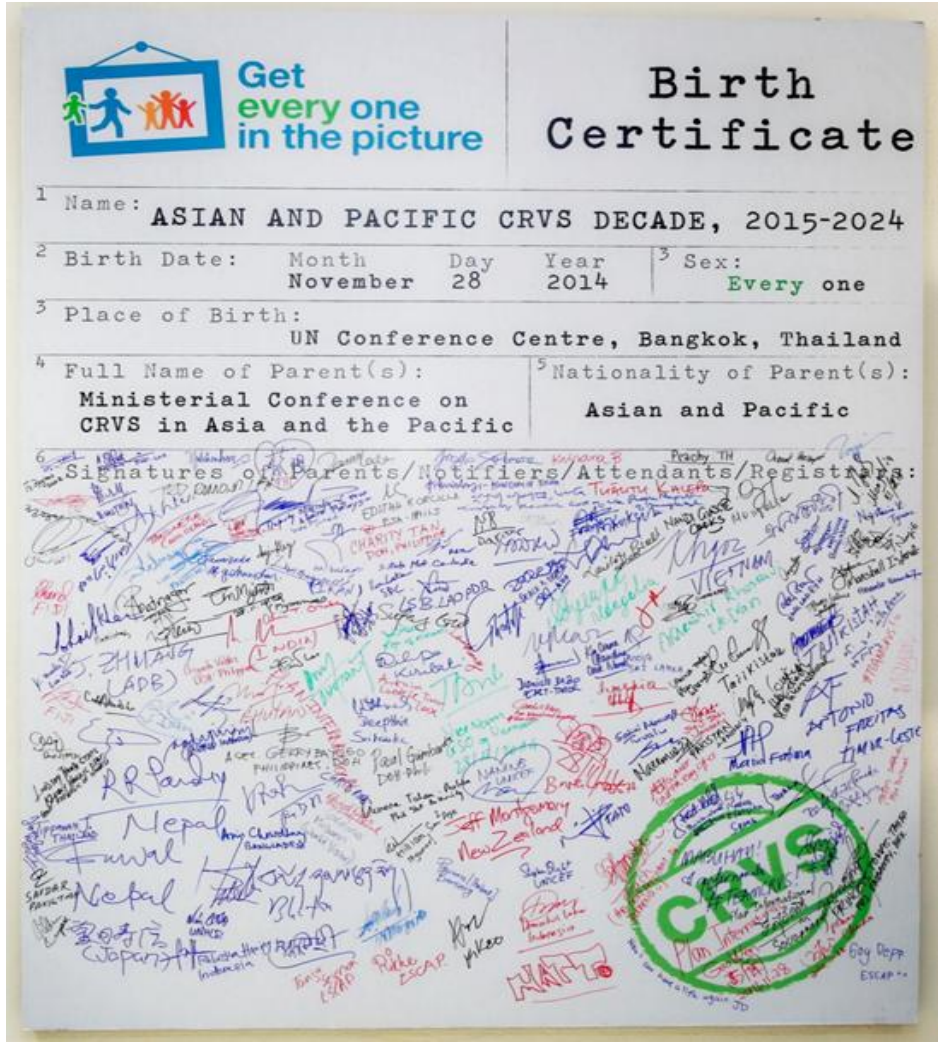
Tanja B. Sejersen,

CRVS Lead and Statistician, ESCAP

Asia Pacific CRVS extended decade: 2015-2030

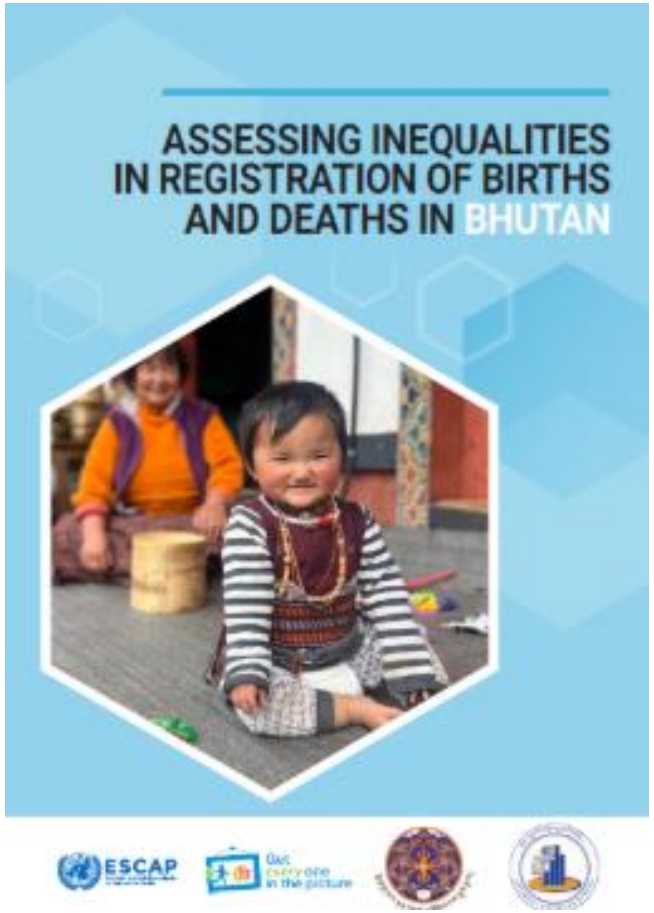
Building on the agreements from 2014 to achieve our shared vision:

"…all people in Asia and the Pacific will benefit from universal and responsive CRVS systems that facilitate the realization of their rights and support good governance, health and development"



ESCAP support countries in developing:

1) CRVS Inequality assessments
2) Vital Statistics Report
3) Business Process Improvement
4) Evidence to Action
    - CRVS Applied Research Training
    - CRVS Research Forum
    - Knowledge products



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DATA FOR HEALTH INITIATIVE

The importance of evidence for public health and policy planning

Sana Naffa,

Senior Program Specialist, Canada International Development Research Centre (IDRC)



Why Evidence Matters for CRVS

Informed Decision Making

Accurate evidence enables data-driven policies and resource allocation for stronger CRVS systems.

Identifying Gaps and Solutions

Research evidence helps find weaknesses and design targeted interventions to improve CRVS systems.

Ensuring Inclusivity and Sustainability

Reliable evidence supports the creation of inclusive, sustainable, and responsive CRVS systems that meet population needs.

Promote human rights

Ensure all citizens are able to access basic rights including health and education services, social and political rights



Sana Naffa

Sana Naffa

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DATA FOR HEALTH INITIATIVE

Fiji's experience and how CRVS evidence informs policy

Meli Nadakuca,

Principal Statistician, Fiji Bureau of Statistics

Identification of Priority Geographic areas for Targeted Interventions to Reduce Gender Inequalities in on-time birth registration

Mr. Meli Nadakuca (Principal Statistician)

Fiji Bureau of Statistics

Asia Pacific Stats Café: Researching CRVS for Better Policy.

Monday, 9th November 2026

Fiji CRVS Stakeholders

Government Ministries and Departments

- Fiji Bureau of Statistics
- Ministry of Health and Medical Services
- Civil Registry – Ministry of Justice
- Ministry of iTaukei Affairs
- Ministry of Women, Children & Social Protection
- Ministry of Education
- Fiji Immigration Department
- Fiji Police Force
- Fiji National Provident Fund
- Digital Government Transformation Office (DGTO) – Ministry of Communication

Identifying Targeted Areas for Interventions - Methods

- In April 2025, following standardisation of the 'place of birth registration' variable, analysis of on-time birth registration by individual registry offices was undertaken.
- The dataset used for analysis was extracted from the national birth registration database on 18th February 2025, and included all birth registration records in the Fiji national birth registration database with a date of birth (of the child) from 1st January 2015 to 31st December 2024.
- The total number of birth registration records extracted from the database across the ten year period was 158,153, and all records have been included in the current analysis.

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Count	20,669	19,154	19,334	19,417	20,088	18,931	14,006	12,321	8,761	5,471

Administrative Data – Ministry of Justice

Background –

1. Fiji has recently undertaken analysis of on-time birth registration by gender disaggregations (including sex of the child, maternal age and marital status) and identified the presence of gender inequities.
2. To date, understanding the magnitude of these inequities by geographic location has not been possible due to a lack of standardised geographic variables in the national birth registration database
3. Standardisation of geographic variables has enabled analysis of on-time birth registration disaggregated by place of birth registration (i.e. Registry Office) in order to identify priority geographic areas that could be prioritised for targeted and gender-sensitive birth registration awareness campaigns and outreach programs.

Findings

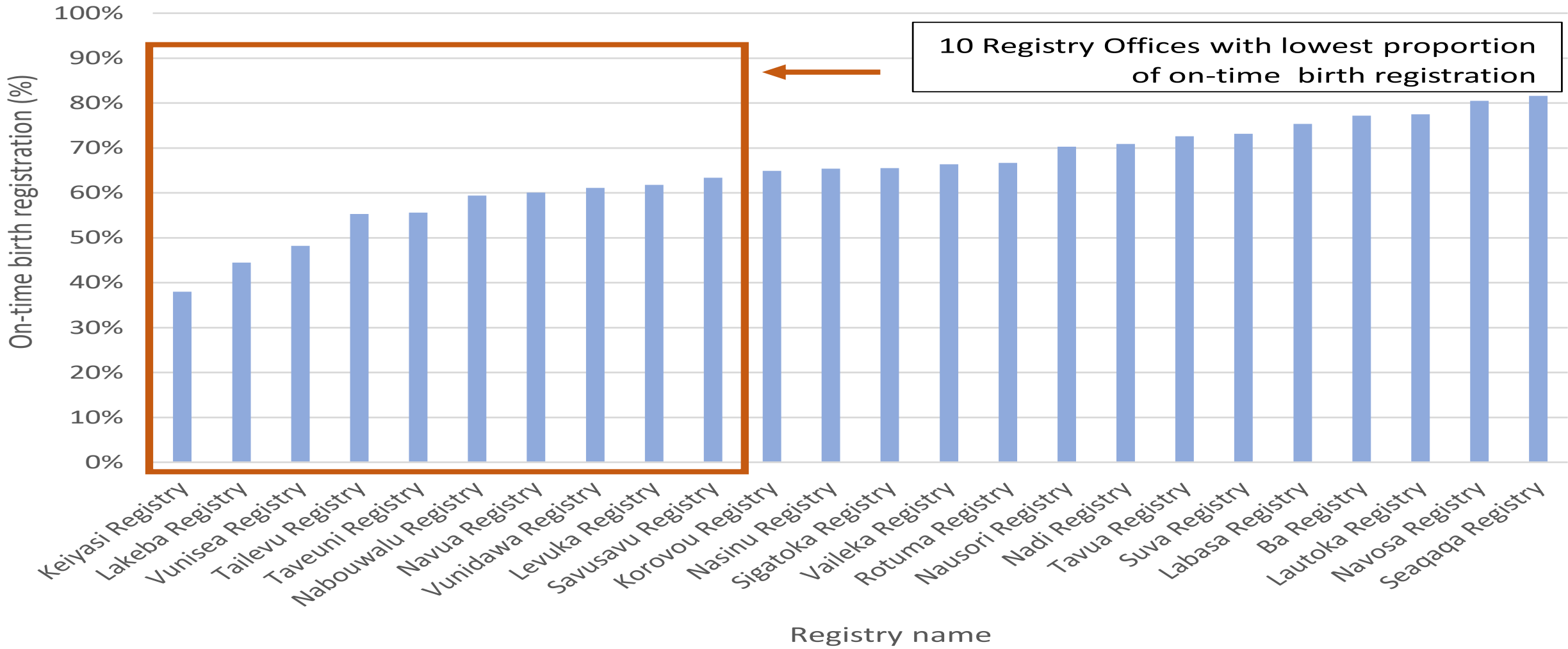
- There is large variation across civil registry offices in Fiji in the total number of birth registrations that were completed for children born during 2015-24, and the timeliness of those birth registrations with respect to the average number of days between a child's date of birth and date of birth registration, and the proportion of births that were registered on-time (≤365 days).
- The largest number of birth registrations for children born during 2015-24 were at Suva Registry, where 36.2% (n=57,304) of all birth registrations occurred. This was followed by Lautoka Registry with 13.7% (n=21,725), Labasa Registry with 9.5% (n=15,088), Nausori Registry with 7.3% (n=11,585) and Nadi registry with 6.9% (n=10,929) of all birth registrations. The remaining registry offices each individually constituted <5% of all birth registrations, and ranged from 4.2% (n=6,707) for Ba Registry to <0.0% for Rotuma Registry (n=78), Seaqaqa Registry (n=49) and Navosa Registry (n=41)

Findings - Registry Offices with the largest delays in birth registration

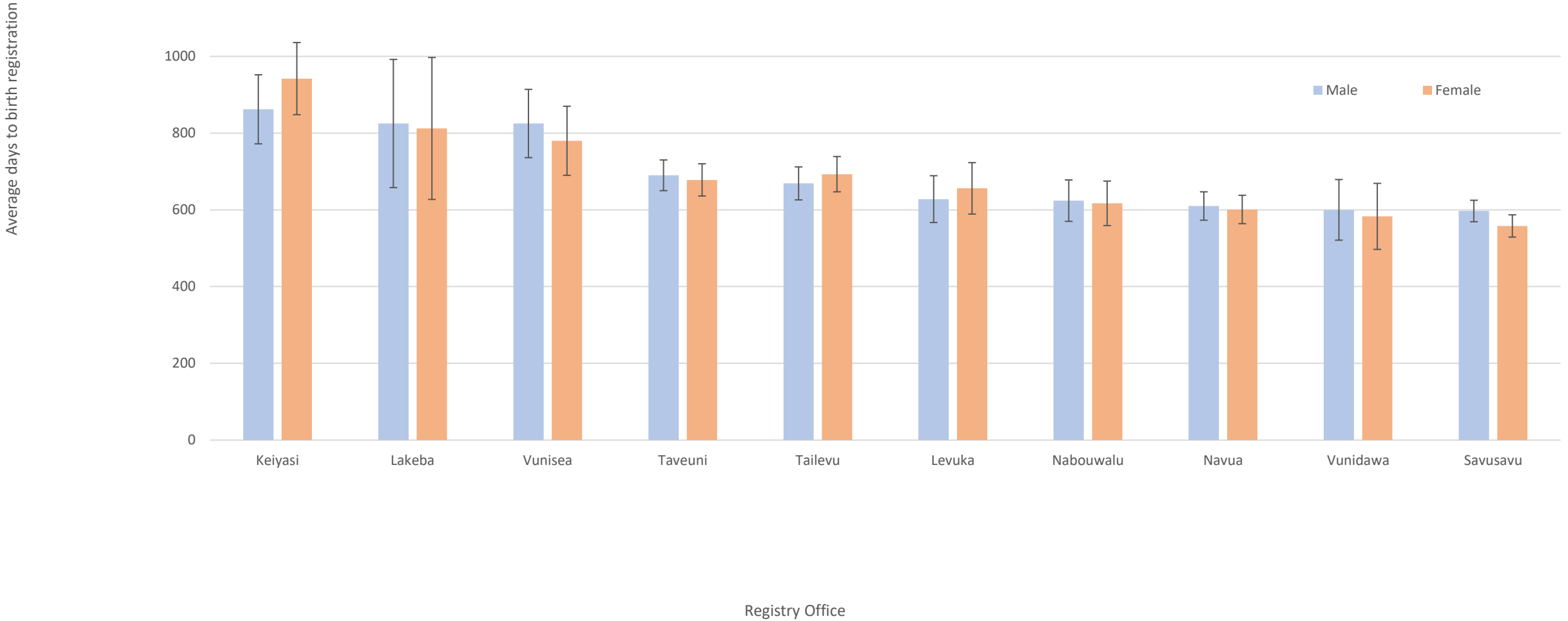
	Registry Office	Division	Number of registrations	% of total	Average days to birth registration	On-time birth registration (%)
1	Keiyasi Registry	Western	587	0.4%	901 (836-966)	38.0%
2	Lakeba Registry	Eastern	155	0.1%	819 (696-942)	44.5%
3	Vunisea Registry	Eastern	635	0.4%	804 (741-866)	48.2%
4	Taveuni Registry	Northern	2,632	1.7%	685 (656-713)	55.6%
5	Tailevu Registry	Central	2,242	1.4%	681 (650-712)	55.3%
6	Levuka Registry	Eastern	1,108	0.7%	641 (596-686)	61.8%
7	Nabouwalu Registry	Northern	1,313	0.8%	621 (581-660)	59.4%
8	Navua Registry	Central	2,840	1.8%	606 (579-632)	60.1%
9	Vunidawa Registry	Central	552	0.3%	593 (535 -651)	61.1%
10	Savusavu Registry	Northern	5,009	3.2%	579 (559 -599)	63.4%
	TOTAL		**17,073**	**10.8%**	**642 (631-653)**	**NA**

% of total = the number of records in each registry office expressed as a percentage (%) of the total number of birth registration records from all registry offices; Average days to birth registration = average number of days between a child's date of birth and date of birth registration; on-time birth registration (%) = the percentage of births registered within 365 days of their date of birth.

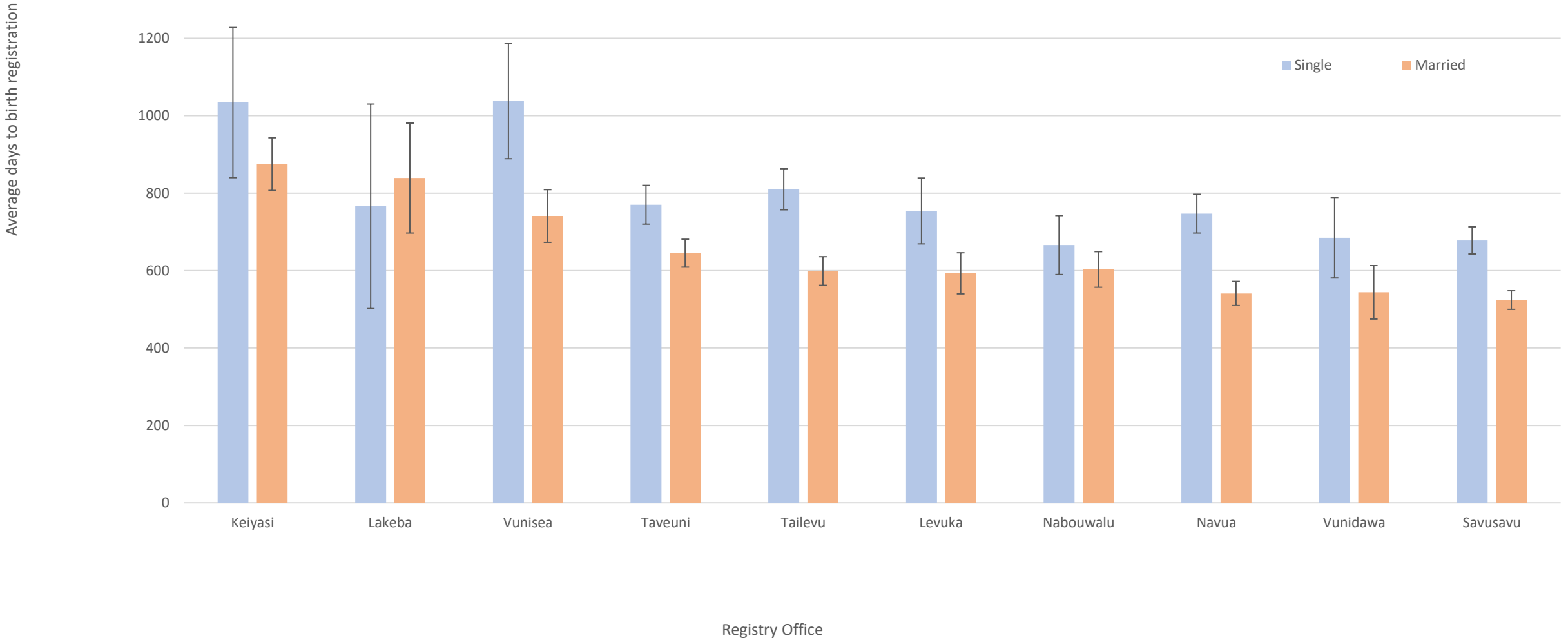
Figure 3. On-time birth registration (%) by Registry Office (records with date of birth 2015-2024)



Timeliness of birth registration by sex of the child in priority areas



Timeliness of registration by mother's marital status (records with date of birth 2015-2024)



Key Findings – Gender Specific Barriers to On-Time Birth Registration

1. **Geographical & Access Barriers**

- Long travel distances from rural, highland, and maritime communities
- Limited transport availability.
- Mothers relying on home deliveries with no direct connection to registry offices

2. Knowledge & Awareness Gaps

- Limited understanding of importance and process of on-time registrationLack of community awareness campaigns in both rural and urban areas

3**. Cultural & Traditional Influences**

- Cultural naming practices delaying formal registrationTraditional norms prioritising customs over official processes

4. **Financial Barriers**

- Costs for transport, ID documents, and reprints
- Late registration penalties (e.g., $34.50)
- Mothers unable to afford reprinting of Notification of Birth forms

5. **Documentation Challenges**

- Missing or lost Notification of Birth forms
- Mothers lacking valid identification
- Additional requirements for single, young, or widowed mothers

6. **Social & Institutional Stigma**

- Teen and single mothers delaying registration due to fear and judgement
- Compounded by additional documentary requirements

Recommendations (Key Highlights)

1. **Community Awareness**

- Expand awareness programs across rural and urban areas.
- Prioritize locations with longest registration delays.

2. Stronger Collaboration with iTaukei Affairs

- Joint engagement to understand cultural and community-based barriers.
- Improve support structures for iTaukei mothers.

3**. Awareness in Child Health Clinics**

- Display awareness banners in childhood wellness and immunization clinics.
- Avoid additional workload on health staff.

4. **Strengthening Hospital-Based Registration**

- Prioritize establishment of registration desks in major hospitals
- Improve linkages between MoHMS and MoJ

5. **Mobile Registration Services**

- Deploy mobile teams to identified high-delay regions.
- Target remote, hard-to-reach villages and settlements

6. **Digital Transformation**

- Support development of online and mobile registration platforms.
- Ensure equitable access for rural and low-connectivity communities.

Overall Highlight

- The consultations clearly show that **gender, geography, financial capacity, cultural norms, and institutional processes** all intersect to create delays in birth registration.
- Addressing these barriers requires **multi-sectoral collaboration**, targeted community outreach, and a strengthened MoHMS–MoJ integrated system.


FIJI BIRTH REGISTRATION PROCESS


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Registration
Statistics




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Fiji Civil Registration & Vital Statisitics




FIJI BIRTH REGISTRATION PROCESS
MINISTRY OF JUSTICE
TO BE THE PREMIER MINISTRY BY BUILDING TRUST AND CONFIDENCE IN SERVICE DELIVERY TO ALL FIJIANS.

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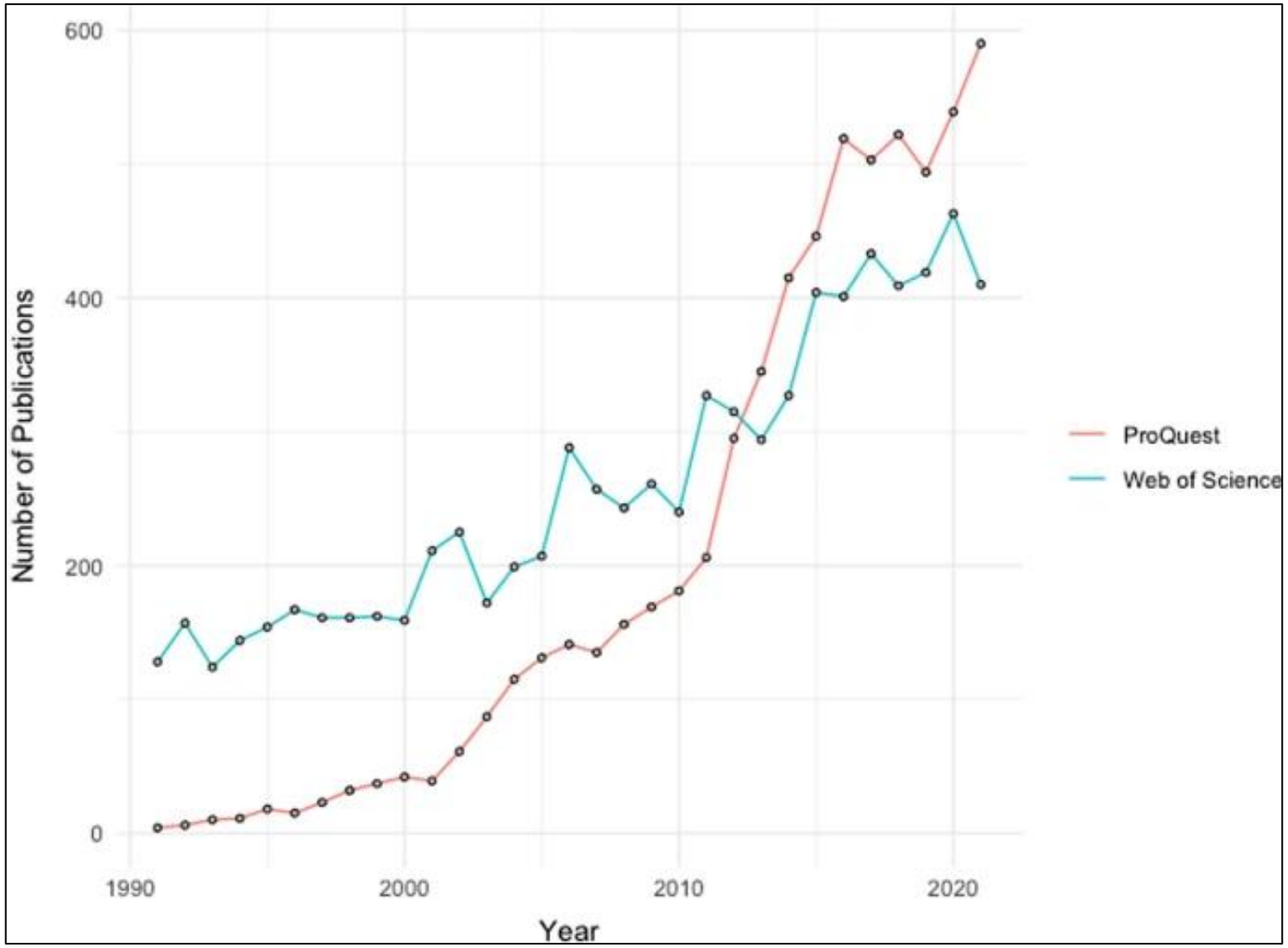
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Why evidence matters for strengthening CRVS systems

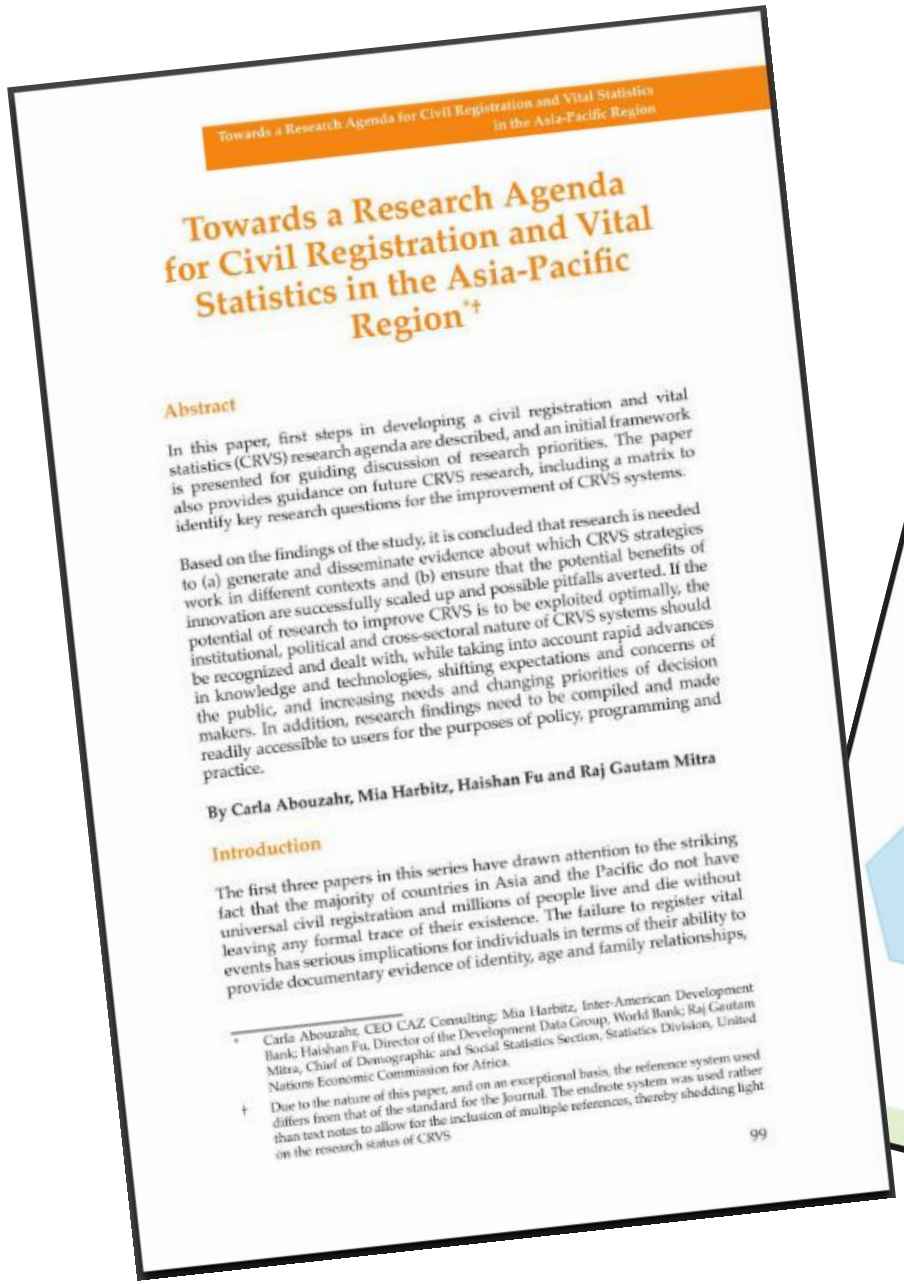
Nicola Richards, ESCAP

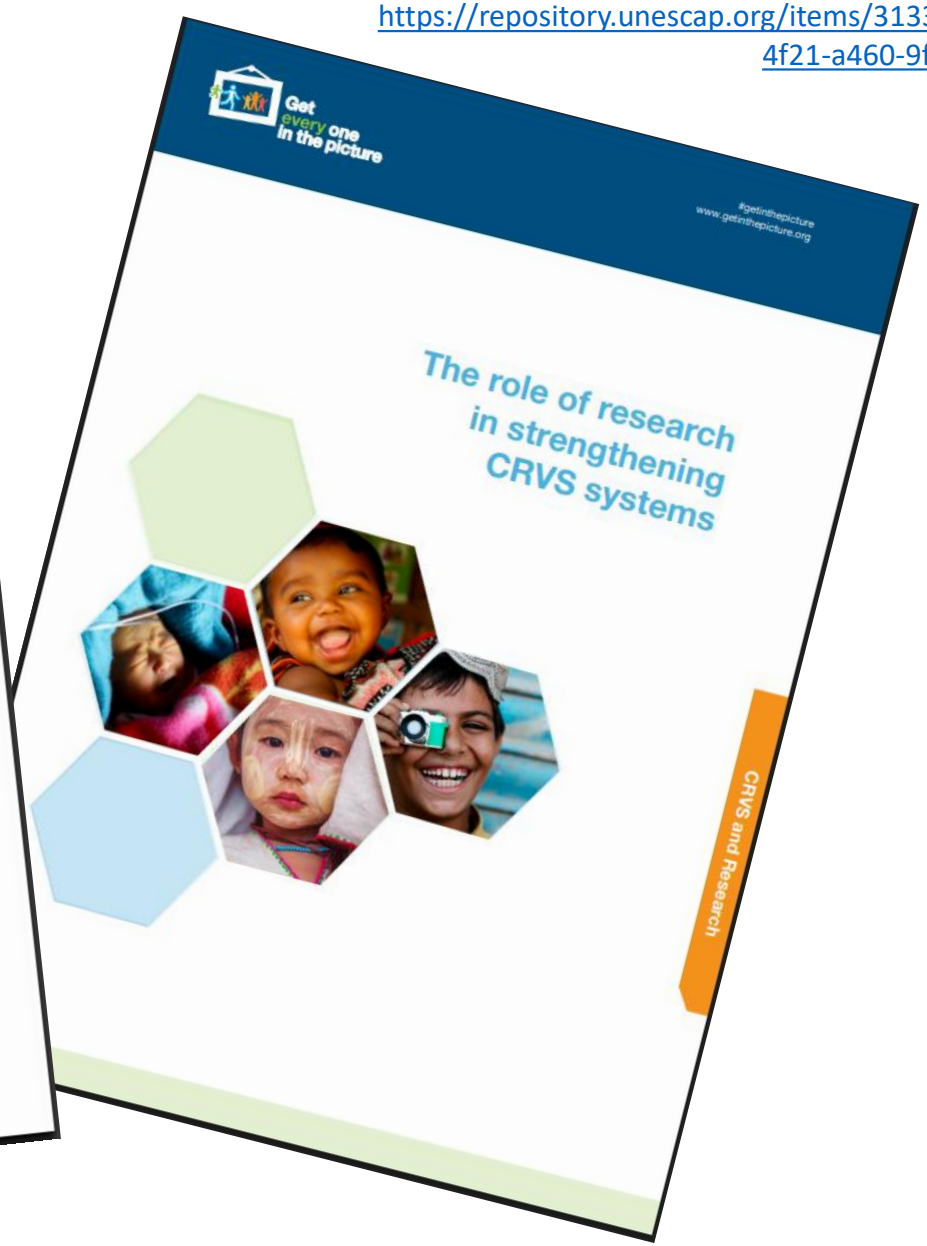
Asia-Pacific Stats Café series

Peer-reviewed publications on CRVS, 1999-2021



Source: Silva, R. Population perspectives and demographic methods to strengthen CRVS systems: introduction. Genus 78, 8 (2022) https://doi.org/10.1186/s41118-022-00156-8





Available at: https://repository.unescap.org/items/3133c5b3-6ad5-4f21-a460-9fdf6768a8a9

Available at: https://www.un-ilibrary.org/content/journals/15644278/29/1/7/read

Does research matter for CRVS system strengthening?

- **Inclusive equity**
  - More CRVS research ensures equitable inclusion of all societal groups, fostering fairness and access to services
- **Policy precision**
  - Research findings enhance policymaking by providing accurate data and insights for targeted interventions
- **Methodological evolution**
  - Research drives innovation in methods, adapting to changing needs, technology or processes for CRVS systems improvements

We are all researchers!

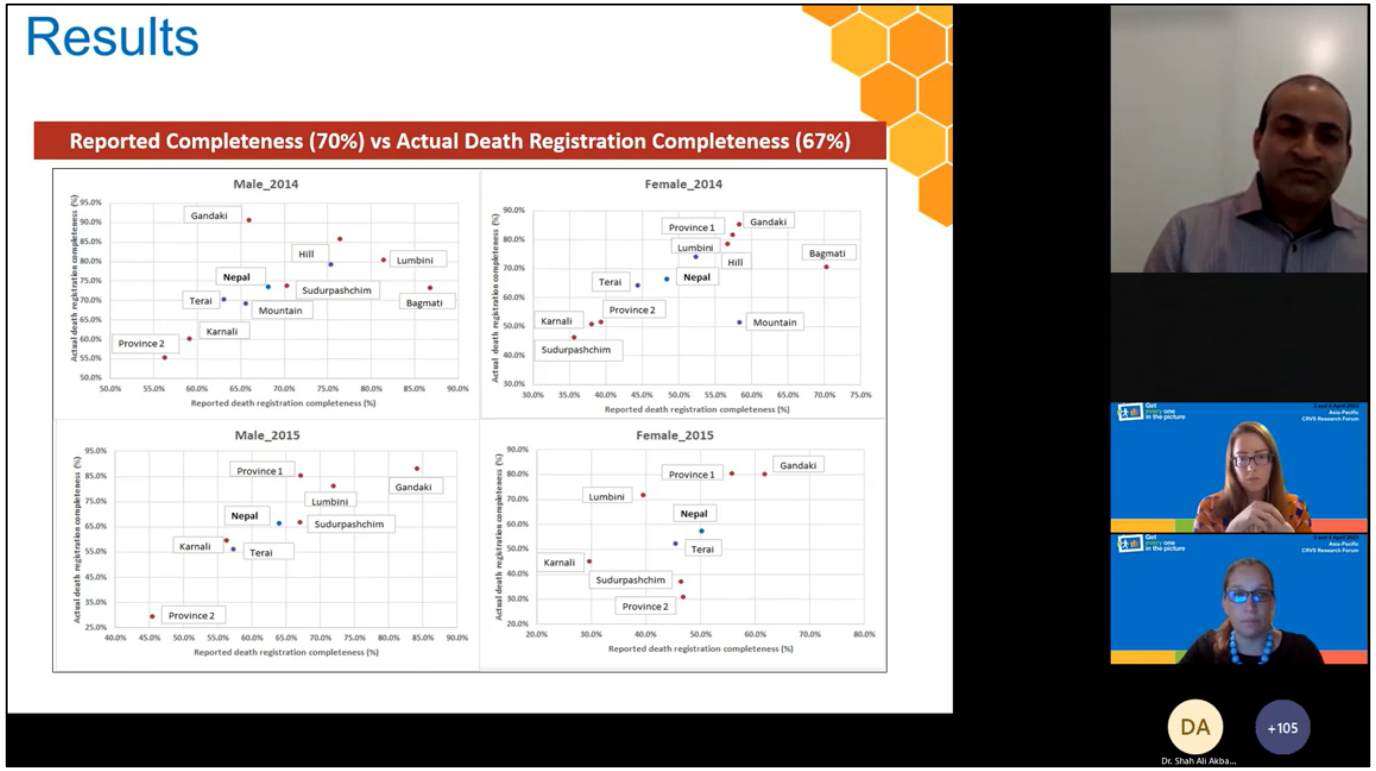
1. **Operational research**: Addresses issues of concern on national and local levels of action; such as a local registration office or a local health facility where births and deaths occur. The findings of such research are mainly relevant to specific, local contexts and circumstances.
2. **Implementation research**: Predominantly of use to higher-level managers; for example, when considering how to roll out a large-scale improvement efforts. While contextual factors remain important, the findings can often be generalized to other settings within the country or even to other countries.
3. **Systems-wide research**: Primarily aimed at improving weaknesses in CRVS systems as a whole and is of most use to those who manage or need to design policies, programmes, and business processes for CRVS. Systems-wide research requires a high degree of cross-sectorial collaboration and use of interdisciplinary methods.



Source:
https://medium.com/@padmavatigopalan1988/research-in-ux-writing-3e8da749ba3a

2023 Asia-Pacific CRVS Research Forum

- Offered a major research, information sharing, capacity-building and networking opportunity for participants
- A total of 390 participants from 62 countries/territories registered to attend the forum
- Identified a **shortage of research capacity on CRVS**



[Session 1: Asia-Pacific CRVS Research Forum, 3-4 April 2023 (youtube.com)]

CRVS Applied Research Training (CART) Initiative

- Facilitate the improvement of CRVS systems through applied research and evidence-based interventions
- Strengthen CRVS professionals' research capacity:
  - Equip them with necessary skills to produce high-quality research
  - Build a mass of trained researchers to increase research capacity on CRVS-related topics









Joint initiative between ECA and ESCAP

- Sharing experiences and expertise
- Develop areas of potential synergy and cooperation
- Identify future opportunities for partnership and coordination
- Importance of cross-regional cooperation in addressing CRVS
- Shared vision of towards universal CRVS systems



2026 CRVS Research Forum

- **Barriers to registration and opportunities for improved community engagement**
  - Individual-level barriers, systemic issues, equity
- **Innovations in strengthening CRVS systems**
  - Financial, legal reforms, quality, surveillance
- **Digitization**
  - Integration and interoperability
- **Improving cause of death data**
  - Medical certification, community deaths, coding, technology, quality assessments, integration
- **Equity**
  - Gender gaps in registration, legal identity, geographic differences
- **Vital statistics**
  - Data quality, M&E, integration, completeness, health outcomes

https://crvs.unescap.org/2026-crvs-research-forum

Search

CIVIL REGISTRATION AND VITAL STATISTICS
IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

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- CRVS APPLIED RESEARCH TRAINING
- CRVS RESEARCH FORUM
  - 2026 CRVS Research Forum
  - Document and Resources
  - 2023 CRVS Research Forum

2026 CRVS RESEARCH FORUM

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), in collaboration with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), and Vital Strategies will organize the **second CRVS Research Forum** on **30 March - 1 April 2026** in Bangkok, Thailand.

Along with transforming the Forum from a regional platform to a global one, the 2026 Forum will be run as a hybrid event at ESCAP's headquarters in Bangkok. Organization of the forum is supported by funding provided by the Bloomberg Philanthropies Data for Health Initiative.

The event will offer another major research, information sharing, and capacity-building opportunity for participants.

In April 2023, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) organized the first Asia-Pacific CRVS Research Forum. Attended by 390 participants from 62 countries and territories, the fully online event offered a major research, information sharing and capacity-building opportunity for CRVS practitioners.

Based on the success of the 2023 event, ESCAP, in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and Vital Strategies, are pleased to announce the 2026 CRVS Research Forum. Along with transforming the Forum from a regional platform to a global one, in 2026, the Forum will be run as a hybrid event at ESCAP's headquarters in Bangkok, Thailand. Organization of the forum is supported by funding provided by the Bloomberg Philanthropies Data for Health Initiative.

Register for the event here

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Q & A

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Next Stats Café

DEATH REGISTRATION: UPDATED ESTIMATES, GENDER DYNAMICS, AND COUNTRY PERSPECTIVES

23 February 2026
11:00am-12:00pm (UTC+7)

Death registration remains one of the least complete parts of CRVS systems. While birth registration has improved, death registration still lags, weakening mortality data, affecting population estimates, and obscuring true causes of death, including gender-based violence.

Asia-Pacific Stats Café

Join the session to learn why strengthening death registration matters — and how countries can accelerate progress.

Register here:
https://forms.office.com/e/q1N9BnJJQp

Join the meeting:
https://shorturl.at/K6Vly

Speakers



Chandan Kumar
Doctoral Fellow, Department of Biostatistics and Epidemiology, (IIPS), India, Alumnus, CART Programme, ESCAP



Atiya Rahman
Assistant Scientist, BRAC James P Grant School of Public Health, BRAC University

Opening Remarks



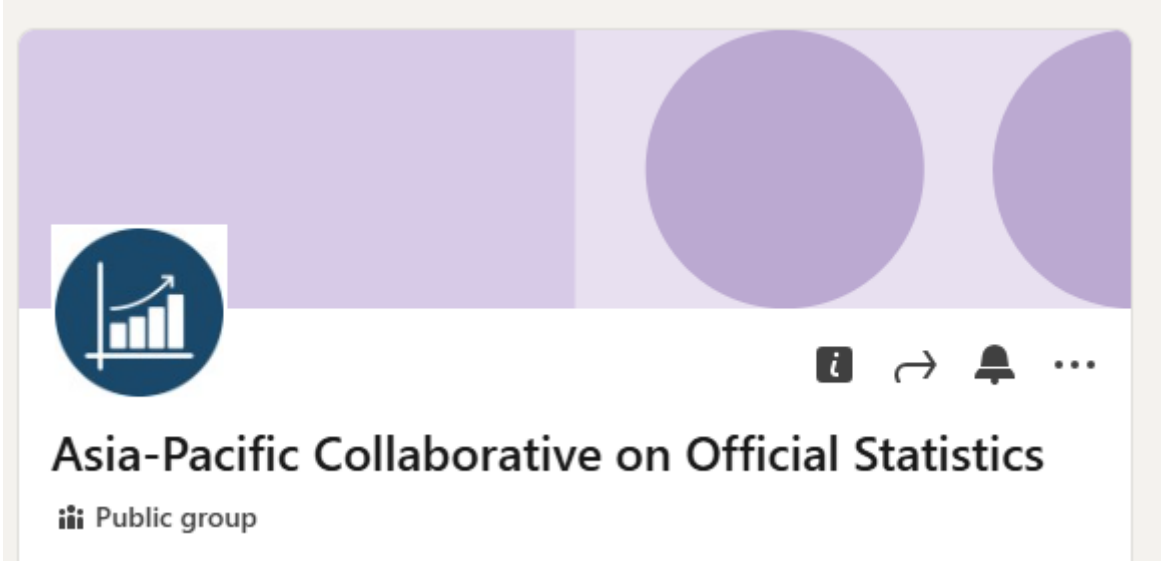
Wiraporn Pothisiri
Statistician, Statistics Division, ESCAP



Tanja Sejersen
Statistician and CRVS Lead,, Statistics Division, ESCAP



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