Implementing inequality assessments of civil registration: Why and how?

First capacity building workshop for assessing inequalities in civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) in Bangladesh

19 to 21 December 2022

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Outline of presentation

- Where do inequality assessments fit into the Asian and Pacific CRVS Decade?
- Regional progress
- Importance of inequality assessments
- Snapshot of civil registration inequalities (by gender, income, geographical location, education)
- Good practices to overcome civil registration inequalities
Asia Pacific CRVS decade: 2015-2024

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

“...by 2024, 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”
The regional ambition for the Decade

Goal 1: Universal registration of births, deaths & other vital events

Goal 2: All individuals are provided with legal documentation of civil registration of births, deaths and other vital events, as necessary, to claim identity, civil status and ensuing rights

Goal 3: Accurate, complete and timely vital statistics (including on causes of death) are produced based on registration records and are disseminated
REGIONAL ACTION FRAMEWORK (RAF)

**Implementation Steps**

1. Coordination mechanism
2. Comprehensive assessment
3. National targets set
4. Monitoring and reporting plan
5. Inequality assessment
6. National strategy developed
7. Focal point assigned
8. Reporting to ESCAP

**Goals**

1A. Civil Registration
1B. Legal Documents
1C. 1D. 1E.

**Targets**

3A. 3B. 3C. 3D. 3E. 3F. 3G. 3H.
Implementation Steps: Midterm review

Figure XIV: Status of implementation steps

- Coordination mechanism:
  - Completed: 38
  - Plans to complete: 11
  - Not completed: 13
  - No data: 13

- Comprehensive assessment:
  - Completed: 31
  - Plans to complete: 9
  - Not completed: 13
  - No data: 13

- National targets set:
  - Completed: 41
  - Plans to complete: 9
  - Not completed: 21
  - No data: 13

Inequality assessment:

- Focal point assigned:
  - Completed: 53
  - Plans to complete: 9
  - Not completed: 19
  - No data: 14

- Reporting to the secretariat:
  - Baseline:
    - Completed: 43
    - Plans to complete: 19
    - Not completed: 17
    - No data: 14
  - Midterm:
    - Completed: 45
    - Plans to complete: 17
    - Not completed: 17
    - No data: 14
ESCAP support

- Series of Expert Group Meetings (2021) to provide guidance for countries on inequality assessments
  - Qualitative assessments and the Bali Process toolkit
    https://tinyurl.com/2ymdjyp9
  - Quantitative assessments using secondary data sources and indirect demographic methods
    https://tinyurl.com/ehss9kmz
- Information note on inequality assessments in the region
  https://tinyurl.com/d6spkntn
- 3 regional workshops (2022)
- National capacity building workshops (2022)
# Regional progress in inequality assessments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Inception workshop</th>
<th>1st CB workshop</th>
<th>2nd CB workshop</th>
<th>Closing workshop</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>Completed (completeness/inequalities in death registration)</td>
<td>Completed (completeness/inequalities in birth registration)</td>
<td>TBC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao PDR</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>Completed (life table and mortality analysis)</td>
<td>Completed (demographic skills)</td>
<td>December 2022 (TBC)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>December 2022</td>
<td>TBC</td>
<td>TBC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>Completed (completeness of birth, death and marriage registration)</td>
<td>TBC</td>
<td>TBC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoa</td>
<td>February 2023 (TBC)</td>
<td>TBC</td>
<td>TBC</td>
<td>TBC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Upcoming project countries: Philippines (TBC), other countries under consideration
Importance of understanding inequalities

- To ensure that civil registration is truly universal and fully inclusive, it is important to address disparities in civil registration completeness and coverage.

- As coverage and completeness of civil registration increases, exclusion remains a risk.

- Information on hard-to-reach and marginalized population groups is vital for evidence-based policy and planning.

- Key to the realization of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.
Who might be left out?

Factors affecting civil registration include:
- Gender
- Education level
- Place of birth (hospital/community)
- Income
- Ethnicity
- Religion
- Geographic location

Hard-to-reach and marginalized populations include:
- People living in rural, remote, isolated or border areas
- Minorities
- Indigenous people
- Migrants
- Non-citizens
- Asylum seekers
- Refugee
- Stateless people
- People without documentation
- People living with disabilities
Intersectionality: overlapping vulnerabilities

- Vulnerabilities and marginalization intersect and can be compounded to intensify exclusion
- Not mutually exclusive
- Can magnify risks for women and girls
How much information do we have on population sub-groups?

- Although data coverage has improved, this has largely been the result of investment in collecting data on birth registration through household surveys.

- In the absence of reliable administrative records, household surveys have become a key source of data to monitor levels and trends in birth registration.
  - However, household surveys do not always capture all sub-populations that may be missing out on civil registration.

- Only a few countries in Asia and the Pacific have conducted inequality assessments.
Civil registration context

**Global**

One in four children under age 5 (166 million) do not have their birth registered

40% of annual deaths are registered. Most that are registered do not have a clear cause, or no cause at all.

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**Asia and the Pacific**

One in five children under age 5 (64 million) in Asia and the Pacific are not registered

Only one third of deaths in the region receive a death certificate and medically certified CoD.
Number of children under age 5 whose births are not registered by sub-region

Thank you!

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https://getinthepicture.org/
Gender Inequalities

Globally and in Asia and the Pacific: no significant differences found in the prevalence of birth registration between boys and girls

- However, women face critical barriers to register their children, marriages and divorces (especially for non-marital childbearing)

- The quality of cause of death reporting for women varies by region, but at the global level, causes of death reported by countries are of lower quality than those reported for men.

Asia and the Pacific

- In some countries in the region, the law specifies that the head of the household (usually male) is responsible for registration of a child, creating barriers for women to register their children.

- Women’s deaths are less likely to be registered than men’s.
Income Inequalities

➢ Even when birth registration is free, opportunity costs (travel costs, loss of work) may directly affect registration levels.

Asia and the Pacific

• In nearly all countries in the region, children under 5 years from the richest households are more likely to have their birth registered, than children from the poorest households.

• South Asia has the greatest income disparities: 86% of children in the richest households are registered, compared with just 53% in the poorest households.
Not all urban children benefit equally – intra-urban inequalities strongly associated with household wealth

Asia and the Pacific

- In most countries in region, children under 5 years residing in rural areas are less likely to have their birth registered than children residing in urban areas.

- In many countries of the region, a large number of deaths are still taking place outside of medical facilities and without the attendance of a medical practitioner, preventing the assignment of a medically certified CoD. This is even more pronounced in rural areas.
Education inequalities

➢ In half of 45 countries globally (with available data), a majority of mothers/caregivers of unregistered children lack knowledge of how to register a child’s birth

- Globally, about 80% of children whose mothers have secondary education have their births registered
- This falls to just 60% among children whose mothers have no education
Marginalized population groups

- In some countries, children from marginalized groups may face higher barriers to registration.

- These barriers can result from living in remote areas or among communities that frequently move, making access to birth registration services more difficult.

- However, marginalized populations are often left out of routine data collection, which further marginalizes them, making them essentially invisible.

Asia and the Pacific

- The region has the largest mobile population in the world as well as a large stateless population.

- It is also the most disaster-prone region in the world, with many minority groups and vulnerable populations residing in the most disaster-prone areas.
Examples of good practice to overcome civil registration inequality

- **Kiribati**: mobile registration teams were deployed to register hard-to-reach populations living on remote islands.

- **Thailand**: reformed the civil registration act to overcome gaps in birth registration completeness of various subgroups, regardless of nationality or legal status of parents.

- **Australia**: active data improvement strategy for ensuring the consistency and quality of indigenous identification across jurisdictions.

- **Kyrgyzstan**: as part of initiatives under the *Ibelong* campaign, a local NGO and UNHCR proactively identified individuals without birth certificates and identity documents and they worked with government officials to support granting documentation to these individuals.
Thank you!

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