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Date: 14 October 2024 at 4:27 PM
To: >> jeffmontgomerynz@gmail.com



October 2024

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Warm Pacific Greetings to You

Increased effort and momentum to strengthen Pacific civil registration systems is evident in this newsletter. Many countries in the Pacific, with support from development partners have active programmes to improve rates of birth and death registration, make processes easier for the public and those working within the system, and to enhance the quality of information being supplied for vital statistics or evidence of identity purposes.

There are two events being planned for 2025 where some of these initiatives will be showcased - mark the dates in your calendar now:

- Pacific Civil Registrars Network meeting - tentative dates 25 to 27 March, Nadi, Fiji
- Ministerial Conference on CRVS in Asia and the Pacific, including Senior Officials sessions - confirmed dates 24-26 June, Bangkok, Thailand

More details including support available for those wishing to participate should be available before the end of the year. Stay tuned!

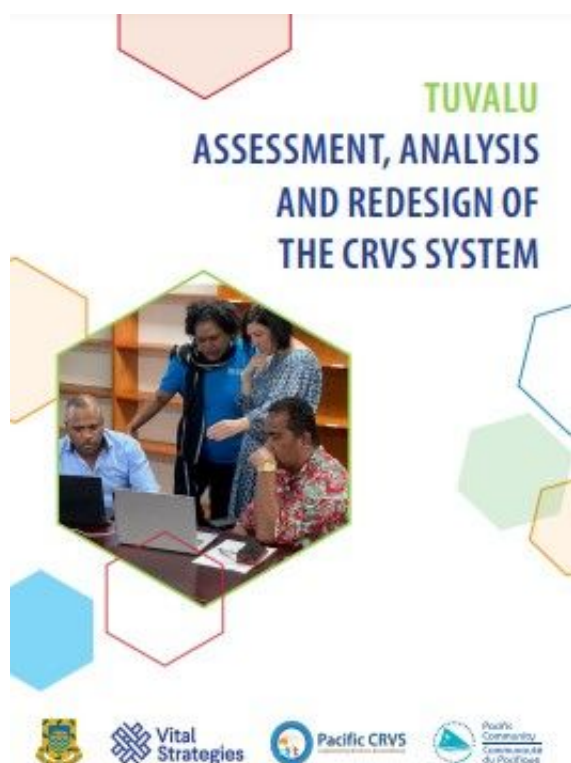
Funding available for CRVS research

ESCAP have announced that applications for Cohort 2 of the CRVS Applied Research and Training (CART) Initiative are now open and close Friday 25 October! CRVS practitioners from Asia and the Pacific can submit their application via the online submission page here:

<https://getinthepicture.org/2024-crvs-applied-research-training-initiative>

CART aims to strengthen the capacity of CRVS practitioners to conduct high quality, relevant research. This involves designing projects to address practical questions, employing robust methodologies, and identifying key personnel for effective implementation and publication. As part of the initiative, participants will work through a series of online modules on core research principles, gain access to global technical experts via live webinars, 'ask an expert' sessions and regular office hours, and be provided with mentorship as they work through each stage of the research process - from developing a formal proposal to conducting the research and writing up results.

Tuvalu civil registration and vital statistics plan



The Assessment, Analysis and Redesign of the CRVS System in Tuvalu report explores civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) in Tuvalu, from the recording of births, adoptions, marriages, name changes, divorces and deaths, and their flow-on use in official statistics for planning at the population level.

The report advocating both short-term improvements and a long-term shift to an electronic civil registration and vital statistics system.

Read the report [here](#).

Australia pilot digital birth certificates

The New South Wales government has started the pilot programme for digital birth certificate on 9 April 2024, for people born in NSW in 2024. The digital birth certificate project, led by the NSW Registry of Births, Deaths & Marriages, is housed within a stand-alone application and will provide users with access to and use of their Australian birth certificate in a secure digital format. It is a choice for people how to prove their identity as they can choose to use either paper birth certificates or digital ones. Read more about the [digital birth certificate](#) here.

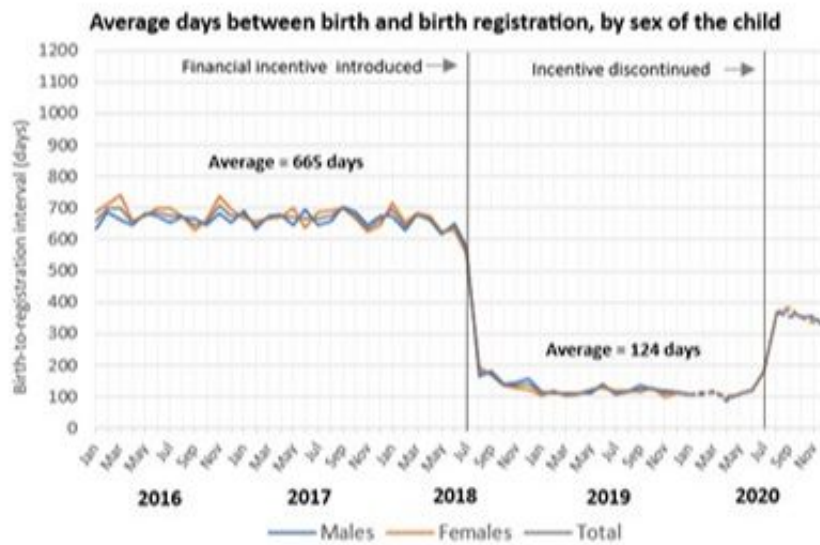
Fiji releases several key reports

The Government of Fiji, in collaboration with the ESCAP, UNSW, Vital Strategies and SPC, has completed the analysis and redesign of its CRVS processes - see [report](#).

Moreover, CRVS-related data and evidence in Fiji has been analyzed to understand key issues of interest towards gender-sensitive policy recommendations (or Evidence to Action). Two policy areas of interest have been analyzed, firstly the magnitude of disparities in on-time birth registration among population groups in Fiji when financial incentives tied to on-time birth registration were not available; and secondly adolescent pregnancy and the intersectional identities of adolescent mothers. This has led to elucidating how policies and programmes in Fiji could best support population groups likely to be left behind in timely birth registration, specifically children of single, young, adolescent mothers from the iTaukei population, who typically have limited autonomy in decision making and access to resources and services.

Also, a new research article highlights effectiveness of a financial incentive tied to on-time birth registration in Fiji. The article documents the sharp improvement in on-time birth registration nationally in Fiji from 58% prior to the incentive to 93% during the two years the incentive was available (August 2018 - July 2020). After it was discontinued, the timeliness of birth registration deteriorated sharply, highlighting the need to consider reinstatement of incentives tied to on-time birth registration in Fiji. Even small economic incentives, or coupons to exchange for items required to care for a newborn,

are likely to have a positive impact on birth registration and exploration of these options is recommended. For more information, please click [here](#).



Verbal Autopsy Workshop in Solomon Islands

The Solomon Islands government, in partnership with Bloomberg Philanthropies Data for Health Initiative, World Health Organization (WHO), CDC Foundation, and University of New South Wales (UNSW), organised a Verbal Autopsy Workshop during 23 - 24 July 2024. The workshop involved senior officers from provincial health services and the Ministry of Health and Medical Services who discussed how verbal autopsies can be embedded in the health system to strengthen data for health.

The workshop concluded with achievable recommendations, and the provincial targets for death notification and verbal autopsy coverage were established. These targets will allow the National Health Information System Unit and CDC Foundation to assess the provinces' performance by March 2025. For full article, please click [here](#).

American Samoa Cause of Death training

American Samoa recently received training for over 50 medical practitioners on the correct process and description when recording causes of death as part of ICD10 medication certification of cause of death, plus development of action

plans for the improvement of CRVS generally. In association with SPC, ABS and PIHOA with funding support from Vital Strategies.

<https://sdd.spc.int/events/2024/08/medical-certificate-cause-death-training-and-crvs-action-planning-workshop>



PNG mobile enrolment kits

The Government of Papua New Guinea, with the support by UNICEF PNG, aims to boost birth registration to ensure all children have a legal identity. UNICEF has provided 44 innovative mobile enrolment kits across the country, aiming to boost PNG's registration capacity tenfold, with each kit capable of handling more than a thousand registrations per month. For more details, please see the press release [here](#).

Online BD+M soon for the Cook Islands

A proposed redesign of how key events like births, deaths and marriages has been considered by the Cook Islands government following the publication of a new report advocating digital transformation and integration between public agencies in the nation and with New Zealand.

The report [Cook Islands: Assessment, analysis and redesign of the CRVS system](#) encompasses a cradle-to-grave look at civil registration and vital statistics in the country, referring to the recording of births, adoptions, marriages, name changes, divorces and deaths, and their flow-on use in

marriages, name changes, divorces and deaths, and then how on use in national statistics for evidence-based policy and decision-making.

The joint work of the Pacific Community (SPC)'s Statistics for Development Division with Cook Islands' authorities saw collaboration across justice, health, statistics, police, internal affairs, and the Prime Minister's office. The initiative was funded from the [Vital Strategies–Bloomberg Philanthropies Global Grants Program](#) that supports health and statistical agencies in developing countries.



Queensland BDMR Act 2023 changes

The new Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 2023 (Qld) (BDMR Act) will commenced on 24 June 2024 and ensures life event registration services in Queensland remain relevant, responsive and contemporary. The key elements of the Act are:

- strengthening the legal recognition of trans and gender diverse people;
- better recognise contemporary family and parenting structures;
- facilitate improvements in the operations of the registry;
- support fraud prevention and minimise misuse of the life event system; and
- clarify the information collection, use and sharing powers of the registrar.

Further information can be found at www.qld.gov.au/law/rbdm and Qld RBDM's prohibited sex descriptor policy and other new policies relating to the BDMR Act can be found at <https://www.publications.qld.gov.au/dataset/rbdm-policies>.

Regional Cause of Death Pilot

Health, civil registration and statistics agencies in Fiji, Tonga and Tuvalu have begun a pilot to share expertise in understanding causes of death, a project supported by SPC that promises to improve health and development planning, programmes and statistics at both the national and regional level.

The initiative sees deaths occurring in one country being coded by another country according to the International Classification of Diseases (ICD). The ICD serves as a global standard for categorising and coding causes of death, providing essential data for public health analysis and policy response. Fiji will use their expert coders and automated tools to assist partners Tonga and Tuvalu. The test-and-learn trial will run from 1 July until 1 March 2025, with the potential for a regional scale-up in 2025.



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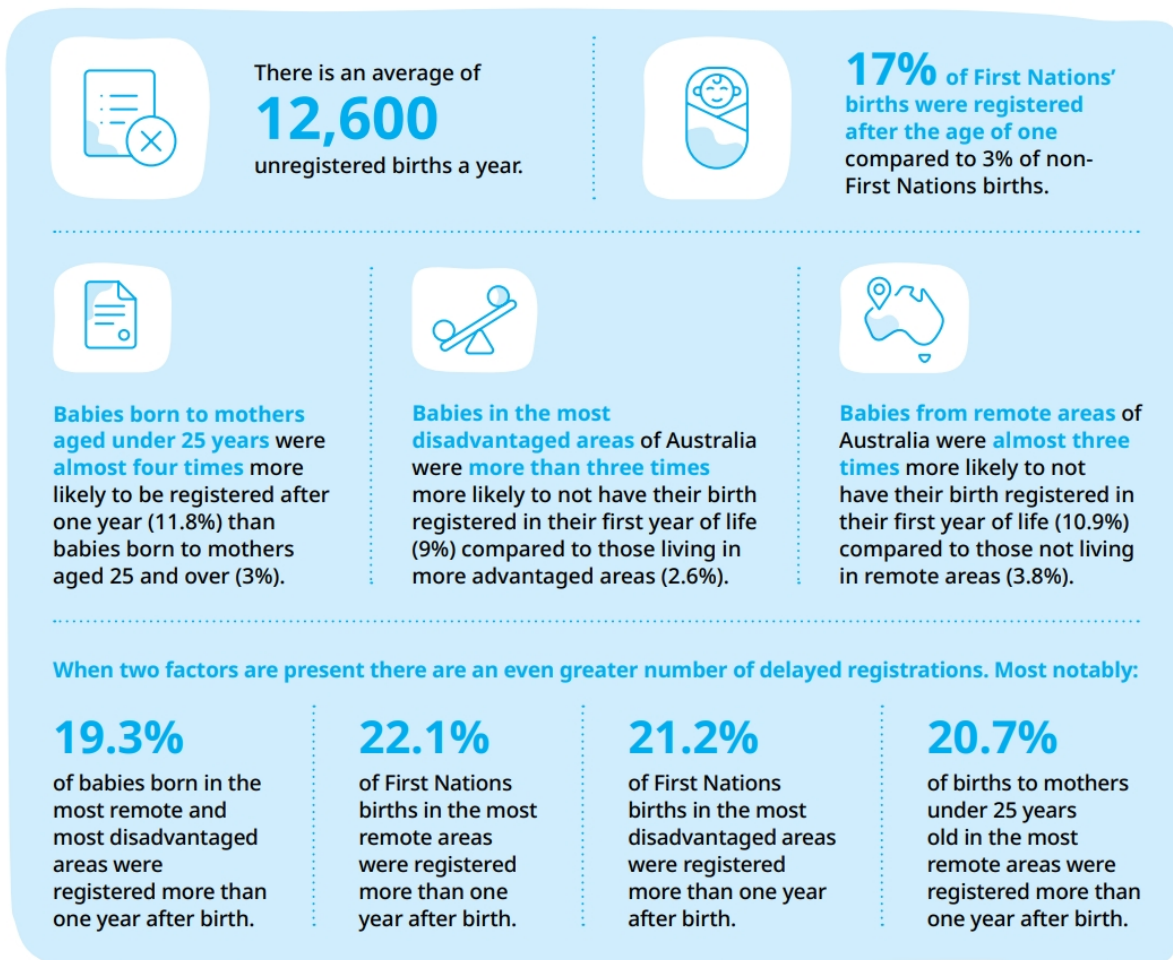
Vital statistics for Pacific US Territories

A 5-day workshop is jointly organised by the Pacific Island Health Officers Association (PIHOA), The Pacific Community (SPC) and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). The workshop provided health and vital statistics personnel from Guam and American Samoa with the time, knowledge and skills they require to develop a vital statistics report. Improving statistical production, management and use is a priority under the recently developed [Action Plan for Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics \(APPCRVS\), 2023-2026](#), in which coverage of civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) data and indicators on

births and deaths is included. <https://sdd.spc.int/events/2024/09/vital-statistics-report-workshop-pacific-us-territories>

UNICEF examines Australia Birth Registration

A recently [released report](#) concludes that Australia has many of the necessary political, economic and social conditions for universal birth registration, however there are still gaps. Currently, Australia still has some way to go to achieve universal birth registration, but it is not unattainable. It is a vision achieved in many parts of the developing world, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cuba and Uzbekistan, some of which have comparatively less resources than Australia.



Kiribati CRVS Action Planning

A series of one day events were held



to develop a CRVS Action Plan for Kiribati, provide training and complete a Vital Statistics Report, and training medical practitioners on ICD10 medication certification of cause of death. In association with ESCAP with funding support from Vital Strategies.

<https://sdd.spc.int/events/2024/09/cr-vs-action-planning-vital-statistics-and-medical-certificate-cause-death>

Upcoming meetings:

- **CRVS Gender Data Analysis training** - tentative dates 3 to 5 March, Nadi, Fiji
- **ANACOD training for Cause of Death statistics** - tentative dates 6 to 8 March, Nadi, Fiji
- **Pacific Civil Registrars Network meeting** - tentative dates 25 to 27 March, Nadi, Fiji
- **Ministerial Conference on CRVS in Asia and the Pacific**, including Senior Officials sessions - confirmed dates 24-26 June, Bangkok, Thailand

About PCRN

PCRN is an independent network of Civil Registrars in the Pacific, established in 2014 for sharing knowledge, lessons learned and good practice in Civil Registration among practitioners. We foster peer-peer relationships and support in tackling common challenges affecting the implementation of CRVS systems in the region. We are key participant in the implementation of the [Action Plan for Pacific CRVS](#) and the Asia-Pacific Regional Action Framework on CRVS.

Before the pandemic we met annually (sometimes more often). Significant conferences were held around the topics of Disaster Planning and Response, IT Systems and Cloud Technology, Legal Identity and Security and Improving the Quality of Mortality Data. Our most recent in-person meeting was in March 2023 - [see report](#) - and we met online 31 July 2024 - [event page](#).

More information, including a copy of our strategic plan (needing updating) is available at <https://sdd.spc.int/pacific-civil-registrars-network-pcrn>.



Pacific CRVS

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Forward this email to a colleague who might like to be involved
