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# CRVS Insight

March 2023

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## Register to the Asia-Pacific CRVS Research Forum

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) will organize the [first Asia-Pacific CRVS Research Forum](#) from 3 to 4 April 2023. The two-day online forum will focus on innovative methods and approaches contributing to achievement of the goals of the Asia-Pacific CRVS Decade ([www.getinthepicture.org](http://www.getinthepicture.org)), as well as showcasing country-level success stories. The primary target group is experienced CRVS practitioners from ESCAP Member States. Other welcomed participants include representatives from international organizations, academe, private institutions, and civil society. Funding for the Research Forum is provided by the [Bloomberg Philanthropies Data for Health Initiative](#).

Participants will be able to attend paper presentations and interactive sessions, including networking opportunities. Access the event flyer at this [link](#) and register to the event at this [link](#).

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# The Bloomberg Philanthropies Data for Health Initiative Global Grants Program

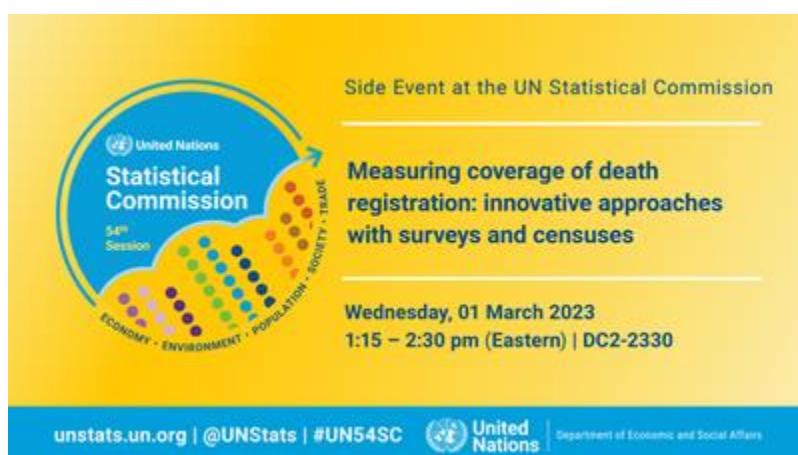
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## Data for Health Global Grants Program Launches New Round of Funding

The Bloomberg Philanthropies Data for Health Initiative's [Global Grants Program](#) (GGP) is launching a new round of funding for projects that strengthen the analysis and use of high-quality data for public health policymaking and system strengthening, including CRVS systems improvements. Countries can apply for grant periods of up to 15 months with a maximum award amount of \$150,000. The first phase of applications must be submitted between **March 13 – April 1, 2023 for screening**. Please see [here](#) for details and links to apply.



## Launch of the Community of Practice on Measuring Adult Mortality at Side Event to the 54th UN Statistical Commission

A new Community of Practice on measuring adult mortality was launched as part of the 54th UNSC side event on "[Measuring coverage of death registration: innovative approaches with surveys and censuses](#)".

The community of practice is established in response to requests from an Expert Group Meeting on Innovative Methods to Measure the Impact of COVID-19 on Mortality through Surveys and Censuses organised in August 2022 by UN-DESA Statistics Division, in collaboration with the DESA Population Division and New York University Abu Dhabi. The meeting was organised under the guidance of the [WHO-DESA Technical Advisory Group on COVID-19 Mortality Assessment \(TAG\)](#). The virtual space will offer experts, NSO's, relevant ministries and other partners an

opportunity to share knowledge and experiences through peer-to-peer exchanges and learning in collecting/analyzing adult mortality data through household surveys, censuses, and integrated data for countries without reliable CRVS systems. Together, community members will also identify areas requiring further methodological development including testing and piloting; and developing guidelines. To join the community, please write to [escap-crvs@un.org](mailto:escap-crvs@un.org)

The side event, measuring coverage of death registration: innovative approaches with surveys and censuses, was organized by the UN Statistics Division, NYU Abu Dhabi and UNESCAP Statistics Division. Speakers included the organisers as well as country representatives from Lao PDR, Colombia, India as well as Bloomberg Philanthropies. The country presentation from Lao PDR focused on the [CRVS inequality assessment work](#), which was a collaboration between Lao Statistics Bureau, UNESCAP, UNFPA and the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA). The Colombia presentation highlighted how the recent census included an additional question to measure both birth and death registration completeness, and innovative strategies to improve completeness and coverage of vital events. The India presentation highlighted how the country's death registration disparity is by administrative units and socio-economic characteristics.

The concept note and presentations from the event are available [here](#).

During the [Statistical Commission](#) (28 February – 3 March 2023), CRVS was in focus during agenda item 5(a) which was supported by the [report of the Secretary-General on demographic statistics](#). The report presents activities carried out by the Statistics Division in this area, including information on the implementation of the United Nations Legal Identity Agenda.

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### **Regional Training Workshop on ICD Mortality Coding in Nadi, Fiji**

A [regional training workshop on ICD mortality coding](#) for Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) was organized from 1-10 March 2023 in Nadi, Fiji. The workshop was organized by the Pacific Community (SPC), in collaboration with Brisbane Accord Group (BAG) partners. It provided guidance on the new version of ICD (ICD-11). This workshop was implemented under the Pacific Islands Regional Programme on Strengthening the Availability and Quality of Causes of Death Data (Pacific CoD Programme) supported by the [Bloomberg Philanthropies Data for Health](#)

**Initiative.** This project builds on the support for CRVS systems strengthening that BAG has provided to PICTs since 2010. This nine-day workshop aimed to:

- Provide training on ICD-10 and ICD-11 mortality coding.
- Discuss and identify regional and individual country needs for support in technical areas to strengthen cause of death data.
- Provide guidance and orientation on options for mortality coding: including automated mortality coding tools and possible support models for centralised coding procedures/ regional coding centre.

The workshop included experts' presentations, practical sessions involving individual and groups exercises as well as group discussion and feedback.

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### **Accelerating Learning on Strengthening the Birth Registration System in Samoa**

The [Accelerator Lab](#) and the core team of the Birth, Death and Marriage division of the [Samoa Bureau of Statistics](#) (BDM-SBS) have partnered to accelerate learning on strengthening the birth registration system in Samoa. The first phase of their joint work involved exploring the current birth registration system to surface gaps and opportunities for innovation and improvements. Their work involved a mapping of the birth registration process at three levels: 1) systems level, 2) direct implementation level and 3) cultural practices level. The Accelerator Lab and the BDM-SBS employed multiple approaches, seeking diverse sources of data and working closely with the community in order to understand how birth registration processes play out in action at the community level.

The second stage of the collaboration between BDM and the Accelerator Lab team aimed to design solutions that are contextually relevant for the communities. Most notably, the project resulted in the prioritization of taking the birth registration system out into the communities via remote access. This proved to be a significant step towards improving accessibility and affordability for families, especially those living in remote or rural areas.

This project demonstrated the power of co-design and collaboration addressing complex social challenges. By working together, the BDM unit and the Accelerator Lab have developed a solution that has the potential to positively impact the lives of families in Samoa.

More information on the process and results can be accessed here: [part 1](#) and [part 2](#).

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### **Integrating Gender Equity in Health Data**

The [Data for Health \(D4H\) Initiative's Gender Equity Unit](#) aims to increase understanding of the need for gender data and how to use such data to inform health policy and programming. The Unit provides training materials to strengthen capacity to collect high-quality health data in over 25 low- and middle-income countries; manages the Gender Equity in Health Data hub; tracks country progress towards key indicators using a gender equity data landscape; and builds country partner capacity to integrate gender equity work. The team works with those collecting and utilizing health data from the community level to the Ministry level to mainstream gender equity in their work. It organizes training sessions, webinars, mentorship, or technical assistance on data collection, analysis, and policy application. It is funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies and housed in the [Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health](#).

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### **CRVS Champion: Treta Sharma**

Each month, our community newsletter puts a spotlight on one person who has gone above and beyond in their efforts to support CRVS programmes, raise awareness of CRVS issues or lead CRVS improvement efforts in Asia-Pacific. This month we are happy to highlight Ms. Treta Sharma from Fiji who is the Chair of the Regional Steering Group for CRVS in Asia and the Pacific.

#### **What is your current title and role?**

I am currently the Administrator General for the Ministry of Justice Fiji. I have been in the position from May 2022 in the acting role and got substantively appointed in September 2022. Prior to my appointment as the Administrator General I was the Registrar of Titles leading the registration of land, titles and deeds in Fiji.

I am lawyer by profession with almost 12 years of experience in the work field post admission to the High Court of Fiji.

The Ministry of Justice Fiji has legal registries such as the Births, Deaths and Marriage office, the Official Receivers Office, the Companies Office and the Registrar of Titles office. My position oversees the legal registries for the Ministry of Justice at strategic level and reporting to the Permanent Secretary for Justice.

In relation to CRVS, the Births Deaths and Marriage office is directly involved in registration of births, deaths and marriages headed by the Registrar General. We have offices across Fiji to ensure that access to justice and registration is available to every individual regardless of their geographical locations.

I am honored and privileged to mention here that I am the chair of the Regional Steering Group for CRVS in Asia and the Pacific.

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

As the chair of the CRVS RSG for Asia and the Pacific, it gives me much pleasure and passion to have CRVS at heart and to ensure that there are improvement to the CRVS, which ultimately would contribute the achievement of the joint vision from 2014.

As the Chair, I reiterate that we all must work together to improve civil registration and vital statistic for Asia and the Pacific.

It is always great to work with people from different backgrounds and experience and share ideas and opportunities.

I believe there are many countries in the region which need guidance and assistance and we all must stand with them. We can share experiences and best practices to improve civil registration.

During my experience in the civil registration field, I notice that we are resource constrained. We don't have enough resources (equipments) to take part in outreach programmes and we don't have enough staffing to take services to the public during busy periods. These are important to achieve results and improve service delivery. I am looking at working on improving and equipping BDM officers in the near future.

**How are you currently involved in CRVS improvements?**

Fiji as a developing country is doing its best to achieve universal civil registrations. With initiatives such as the Parenthood Assistance Programme in 2019, 99% civil registrations rates were achieved for that cohort. The initiative was provided to assist the low income earners who gave birth mainly for child rearing and for education when the child reaches 5 years of age. Such initiatives when rolled out, creates pressure on BDM registry and at the same time improves registration.

The BDM registry is supported by online registration; however the digitization is very limited. Staff still needs to verify computer records with manual records. We have a mobile application for birth registration. The customer can enter data; however for collection of birth certificate and verification of information he or she has to visit the BDM office.

We wish to digitize the marriage and death records as well as achieving another level of digitization. Our aim is to ensure that customers can view their personal records from the comfort of their homes in years to come.

These would be possible if we are able to overcome resource and financial constraints.

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

One has to start from somewhere when it comes to digitization. I urge every country to carry out a proper business process reengineering, digitize records as these are critical data which dates back to 1800's. Every country should aim for 100% civil registration so that 'no one is left behind'.

Improved customer service and improved awareness are key to achieving better civil registration results. These are essential for any Government as well as ultimately achieving the Sustainable Development Goal 2030.

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**RESOURCES**

- Preserving "Family Relations": An Essential Feature of the Child's Right to Identity. Geneva, Switzerland: Child Identity Protection. Access the report [here](#).

- Handbook on Civil Registration, Vital Statistics and Identity Management Systems: Communication for Development. Access the handbook [here](#).
  - Handbook on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems: Management, Operation and Maintenance, Rev. 1. Access the handbook [here](#).
  - Medicolegal Death Investigation International Community of Practice. More information [here](#).
  - Blog: More than 8 Million Deaths in Asia and the Pacific are Never Registered Each Year. ESCAP. Available [here](#).
  - Blog: 850 million people globally don't have ID: Why this matters and what we can do about it? World Bank. Available [here](#).
  - Engaging Civil Society Organizations for Successful ID Systems: Guidance Note. World Bank. Access [here](#).
  - Strategic Communications for Identification Systems: Guidance Note. World Bank. Access [here](#).
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### UPCOMING EVENTS

- **20-22 March 2023:** [Pacific Civil Registrars meeting](#).
  - **23-24 March 2023:** [Meeting of the Brisbane Accord Group members](#).
  - **27-30 March 2023:** [Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development](#).
  - **3-4 April 2023:** [Asia Pacific CRVS Research Forum](#).
  - **24-27 April 2023:** [United Nations World Data Forum](#).
  - **10-12 May 2023:** [Meeting of the Regional Steering Group for CRVS in Asia Pacific](#).
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### CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

- ESCAP, Internship (Civil Registration and Vital Statistics) - Statistics Division. Job opening based in Bangkok, Thailand. Find more details [here](#).
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