

CRVS INSIGHT - ASIA PACIFIC



Smart phone app to revolutionize the birth registration system in Pakistan

[Plan International](#) Pakistan has launched an innovative, new project to improve birth registration rate using mobile technology. The “Digital Birth Registration (DBR)” project is a joint effort between Plan International Pakistan and the Sindh and Punjab provincial governments, and builds on an initiative started by [UNICEF](#). The program is a pilot for a broader Plan international digital birth registration initiative and will initially be implemented in two districts in Sindh province and one district in the Punjab province.



The project features the use of mobile phones to register births directly at home by a visiting health worker or a Nikah Registrar, who inputs the data into the DBR app on his/her phone. The data is then automatically transferred to the local union council responsible for registration for validation, after which a unique identification number is sent directly to the applicant’s phone. The applicant then presents this number, together with the required documents, to collect his/her birth certificate at the union council. This way, the DBR system saves the applicant at least two visits to the government offices. This is important, since parents fail to register their children primarily because they do not want to lose working days due to traveling to and from union councils.

The program is expected to improve the old manual birth registration system and increase birth registration rates in the targeted districts to up to 80% by 2018. This target represents a significant improvement over the current situation: according to the Pakistan Demographic & Health Survey 2012-13 only 25.1% of children under the age of five in Sindh and 46.1% in Punjab are currently registered.

In addition, the new system allows a gradual transformation to a robust digital civil registration database – a key tool for the government to plan more effectively for all services that a child needs including vaccination programs and education, as well as establishing legal protection from abuse and exploitation.

Afghanistan making strides towards universal registration

Afghan authorities have made significant progress towards improving the country’s birth registration completeness rate over the past few years. Although the majority of people in Afghanistan



do not have a Tazkira (ID card) and 42% of children under the age of five lack a birth certificate, new projects aim to remedy this situation.

Afghanistan's registration network is comprised of over 5000 focal points in 34 provinces, 384 districts and numerous villages and remote areas throughout the country. A new online registration system, now available in some of Afghanistan's provinces, permits these registrations to be uploaded to a central database. A joint initiative led by the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Public Health also now provides immediate registration in health facilities, increasing the number of newborns receiving a birth certificate.

Thanks to these initiatives and in partnership with [UNICEF](#), Afghan officials are now able to register around 560 000 newborns and children into the database every year, up from just 100 000 previously. Registration allows children to receive access to vaccination programmes and schooling, as well as establishes legal protection to prevent exploitation and abuse. Despite difficult security challenges, officials hope to get this number even higher in the years to come.



Improving the Legal Framework for Civil Registration, Vital Statistics and Identity Management Systems

Statisticians, civil registrars, legal professionals and other government representatives from 14 countries and 9 development agencies took part in the [Technical Seminar on Legal Framework for Civil Registration, Vital Statistics and Identity Management Systems](#) in Manila from 17-19 July 2017. The meeting was organized by the [UN Statistics Division](#), the [Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe \(OSCE\)](#) and the [Asian Development Bank \(ADB\)](#), and was supported by the [Philippines Statistics Authority \(PSA\)](#). The goals of the seminar were to: 1) Provide inputs to the new Guidelines on the Legislative Framework for Civil Registration, Vital Statistics and Identity Management; and 2) Provide an opportunity for countries and partners to share experiences in upgrading their legal frameworks to improve CRVS and ID Management.

The Guidelines on the Legislative Framework is an update of a 1998 manual that was part of the Handbook on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems: Management, Operation and Maintenance. The Guidelines are currently being developed by United Nations Statistics Division and will become part of the international standards and guidance to help member States implement the [UN Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System, Revision 3](#).

Recommendations of the seminar highlighted the importance of ensuring that confidentiality and data protection play a key role in the development of legal frameworks, as well as identifying emerging areas of concern. The recommendations further stressed the need for universal registration, including registration amongst hard to reach and marginalized groups. Documents and presentations from the meeting are available [here](#).



Myanmar adopts new national Manual on Vital Registration

The Government of Myanmar has endorsed a new national [Manual on Vital Registration](#) which will be used to guide birth registration campaigns in 8 states and regions. The endorsement of the Manual was accompanied by a simplification of registration procedures, including the removal of fees.

The government began work on the project in 2014, in partnership with [UNICEF](#) and the European Union, and since then the Manual has undergone several field tests across the country. With this final endorsement, Myanmar will be able to build new momentum towards its target of registering the births of all children under 10 regardless of parents' nationality, ethnicity and citizenship status.

Events & Media

[Pacific Ministers of Health Meeting](#)

28-30 August 2017,
Rarotonga, Cook Islands

[Pacific Civil Registrars Network Workshop on Disaster Planning and Response](#)

2-4 October 2017,
Suva, Fiji

[Third Meeting of the Regional Steering Group for CRVS in Asia and the Pacific](#)

18-20 October 2017,
Bangkok, Thailand

A Call For Contributions

Do you have anything you want to share? We welcome contributions to the newsletter and website. If you have a story on CRVS, insights, events, information or tools, please send them through to sejersent@un.org

For more information, contact the Statistics Division of United Nations ESCAP at stat.unescap@un.org or +66 2288 2593, or visit www.getinthepicture.org

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