Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS)
For Monitoring Health Policy Impacts in the Cook Islands

H.E. Mr. Nandi Glassie

The Cook Islands

- 15 islands – 12 inhabited; 7 without routinely scheduled transport
- Resident population of 14,974 (2011)
- Diaspora .....
Our CRVS System

Event

- Radio Programme in the mornings announcing the birth of the child and mother.
- Baby vouchers offered by businesses.

Record

- Ministry of Health notifies the event to Civil Registry.

Register

- Compulsory registering Birth or death certificate issued
- Allowance for baby bonus NZ$1,000
- Child benefit 0 to 12 years
- Pensioners expenses are met by the Ministry of Internal Affairs
- Passports, national ID

Report

- Statistical reports produced
- Provides a solid foundation for planning
- Efficient allocation and use of resources

Key Challenges to the CRVS

- National Agencies still operate in silos, making coordination difficult
- Increased capacity to record, compile, analyse and disseminate complete and reliable statistics on vital events;
  - With nearly 100% registration – there is data available - but it is not always in a format that makes it easy to link to policy and planning decisions
- Data may be affected by:
  - Poor certification
  - Off island events “skewing” statistics and cause of death distributions as many vital events may happen overseas as Cook Islanders have NZ passports
- Small population numbers may lead to misleading reporting of trends
What was done

• Starting in 2011 with a sub-regional workshop hosted by BAG

• Mechanisms established for effective coordination among key stakeholders;
  – The establishment of CRVS Committee
  – WHO Comprehensive Assessment and informal plan
  – Cook Islands NSDS, supported by Paris21 and SPC
  – New Statistics Legislation

• Capacity and capability building across all sectors – as per the plan
  – Training for doctors in certification
  – Analysis and report writing training

CRVS data show policy changes led to a decrease in IMR

Data showed a dramatic drop in IMR from **15.3** in the period of 1999 – 2003 to **3.6** in 2009-2013.

- Over the last 5 years, interventions encouraged pregnant mothers to:
  - attend antenatal check-ups
  - receive counselling of proper antenatal care
  - eat well, exercise, stop smoking, and avoid alcohol.

- Policies ensured:
  - mothers received antenatal care
  - transport costs were covered to reach the main hospital in Rarotonga for delivery
  - high risk births were transferred early to the hospital on the main island of Rarotonga or New Zealand
Impact

Data showed policy changes enacted by the MOH were effective and resulted in a marked decreased in IMR.

A regional collaboration

- Share experiences with countries of similar size and with similar challenges
- Training (such as the Analysis and Report Writing workshop) has come directly from country needs
- Regional training builds a group of professionals from around the Pacific Islands for support and encouragement
- A national vital statistics report is being prepared as an outcome of the training and is due for release shortly. This will provide further information for senior managers.
- Regional partners such as BAG and PHIN provide a network of support for Health Information professionals and others involved in statistical analysis of CRVS data.
Next steps and lessons learnt

Next steps:

• Update and formalise a National CRVS Improvement plan – including an emphasis on routine analysis and publication of time series data from CRVS
• Working with the registrar in NZ, and other Pacific countries on data sharing for vital events that happen overseas.

Lessons learnt:

• CRVS data can be a powerful tool to demonstrate policy impact and advocate for policy change
• Even though the Cook Islands has a strong CRVS system, there is more that can be done to make data more available and meaningful for policy and planning
• Good data in the Pacific setting requires cooperation across national boundaries, and a network of support to professionals working in this area in the region.

Conclusion

EVERY LIFE SHOULD BE VISIBLE
AND
SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO FALL BETWEEN THE CRACKS BECAUSE OF INCOMPLETE DATA

KIA MANUIA