

# The Potential for Cross-Border Collaboration Between Civil Registrars in South Asia

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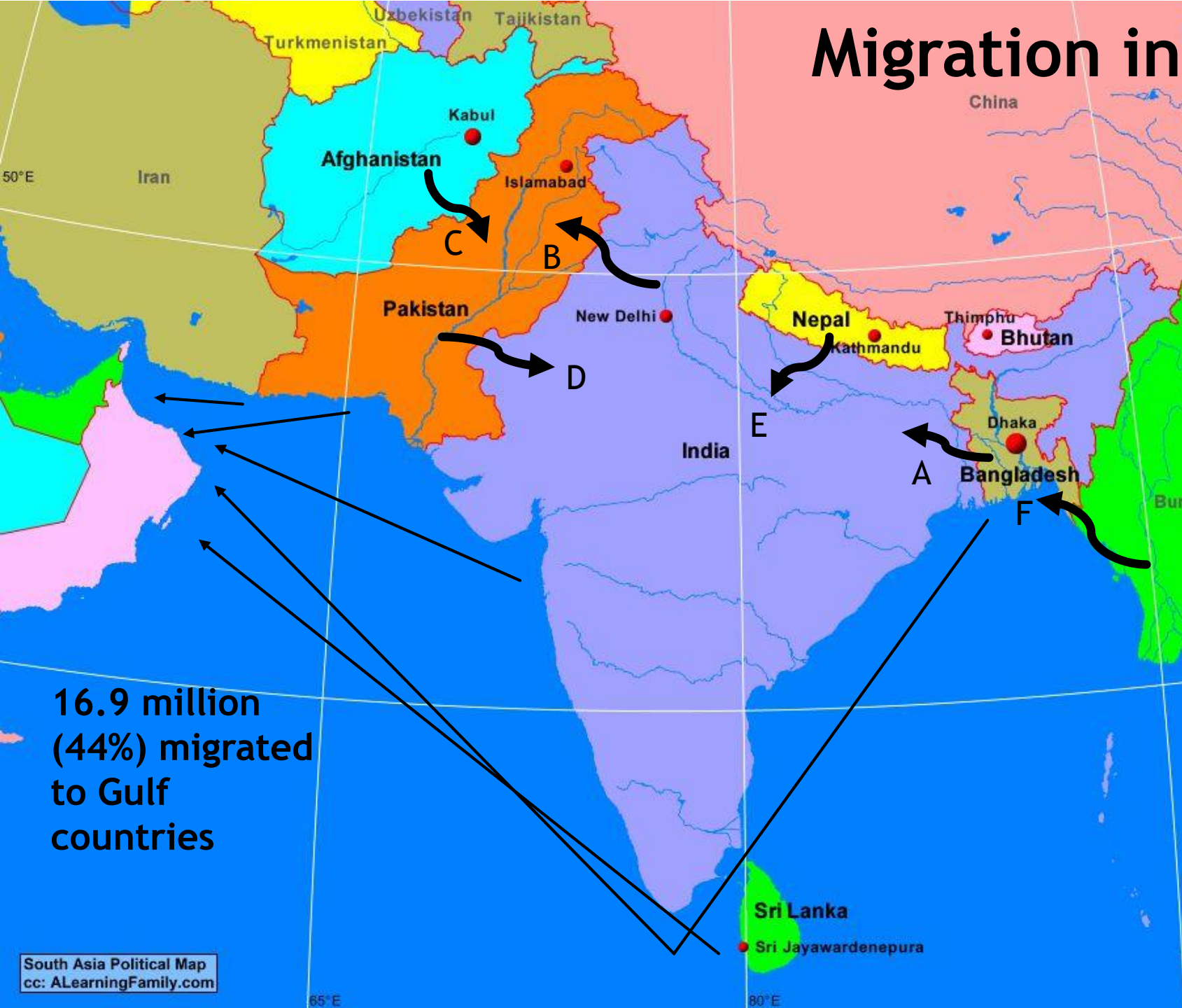
South Asia Civil Registration Meeting, Kathmandu, 23-24 July 2018

ESCAP Regional Action Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific set forth the goal of **universal registration** of births, deaths, and other vital events.

But what does this mean for the Region?



# Migration in South Asia, 2017



- 38.4 million South Asian emigrants
- 10.9 million international immigrants in South Asia
  - 9 million from other South Asian countries

## Intra-regional

A: 3.1 million Bangladeshis in India

B: 1.87 million Indians in Pakistan

C: 1.5 million Afghans in Pakistan

D: 1.1 million Pakistanis in India

E: 537,000 Nepalese in India

F: 882,676 Rohingyas in Bangladesh

As people cross-borders, the daily tasks of life do not cease, and neither does the occurrence of vital events such as births, deaths, and marriages.

- ▶ Cross-border movement can result in a person being born in one country, getting married in another country, and perhaps even dying in a third country.



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# Registering vital events with an international element adds complexity

- ▶ **For births, the registrar may need to verify:**
  - ▶ The parents' marriage certificate if it was issued overseas
  - ▶ The child's birth certificate if it was originally issued overseas
- ▶ **For marriages, the registrar may need to verify:**
  - ▶ That a foreign individual is not currently married
  - ▶ Previous marriage and associated divorce records
- ▶ **For deaths, the registrar may need to contact a foreign civil registry office to:**
  - ▶ Request a copy of a death certificate to close out a record, transfer property or funds, terminate a pension etc.
  - ▶ Request a copy of a birth certificate or marriage certificate to list next of kin when the deceased was born or married overseas



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# Benefits to civil registrars of cross-border collaboration

- ▶ Establishes a network for points of contact - Who do I ask to verify this certificate?
- ▶ A formal registrars' network can also facilitate:
  - ▶ Sharing of knowledge, good practices, and lessons learned
  - ▶ Sharing innovations in IT and other arenas
  - ▶ Coordination of inputs and information collection where application
- ▶ Can facilitate a formal agreement and establishment of a framework for:
  - ▶ Which data can be verified and/or shared
  - ▶ Whom information can be shared with
  - ▶ How data can be shared
  - ▶ SOPs for information requests



## Examples and characteristics of regional civil registrars' networks

	Pacific Civil Registrars Network (PCRN)	Latin America and Caribbean Council for Civil Registration, Identity and Vital Statistics (CLARCIEV)	European Association of Civil Registrars (EVS)
Membership	Civil registrars in the Pacific Region (TOR)	Member States of the OAS (by-laws)	10 EU countries with several others closely contributing
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share information, lessons learned and good practices;</li> <li>foster coordination and peer-peer relationships and support in tackling common challenges</li> </ul>	Facilitate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>coordination, support, and cooperation of member states;</li> <li>modernization and incorporation of technologies;</li> <li>bilateral, multilateral, and sub-regional cooperation mechanisms to improve registration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate sharing of information, best practices, and legal developments within member countries;</li> <li>Advise EU policy makers on the need for harmonization of laws</li> </ul>
Meetings	Aim: every 2 years	Annually	Annually

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# Examples of regional cross-border collaboration projects



# PCRN - bilateral agreements to share death and name change records



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- ▶ Births, deaths, and marriages occurring overseas not being registered on home island
  - ▶ Pacific Island citizens travel overseas for work, education, and medical treatment- many pass away in New Zealand and Australia
- ▶ Data sharing trial of death records and name changes was implemented between New Zealand and the Cook Islands in 2016
- ▶ New Zealand now has five data sharing agreements either in place or in the works with New South Wales, Australia; Victoria, Australia; the Cook Islands; Tokelau and Niue

# OAS: Universal Civil Identity Program in the Americas (PUICA) to improve civil registration

- ▶ Supported El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala in improving birth registration in the border regions where these three countries meet
- ▶ Established:
  - ▶ civil registration offices in border points
  - ▶ common criteria for the registration of births in border areas
  - ▶ information campaigns about the importance of civil registration targeted to border populations
  - ▶ technical committee comprised of the civil registry offices of these 3 countries



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# European Union's European Civil Registry Network (ECRN)

- ▶ Many Europeans migrate to other European countries for work, education, and even healthcare
- ▶ European Union recognized the need to share and verify data across civil registries
- ▶ Developed an interoperable system for civil registry offices to contact one another and request and verify certificates
- ▶ Governed by the Vienna Convention on multilingual extracts from civil-status acts which:
  - ▶ outlines the minimum information to be filled out for a valid birth, death, and marriage record, and
  - ▶ sets up a standard template which can be translated to many different languages



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# Comparison of key characteristics of regional data sharing and/or verification projects

Characteristics	PCRN: Bilateral agreements with New Zealand	OAS: PUICA facilitated civil registries of Colombia and Ecuador to verify ID information*	EU: ECRN
Legislation	Bilateral agreements for data sharing between New Zealand and each country	Bilateral or multilateral agreements between countries are created for data sharing and collaboration	34 conventions regarding data exchange or the issuance of civil documents signed by various EU countries; Vienna Convention on multilingual extracts from civil-status - signed by most EU countries - acts as the basis
Type of data verified and/or shared	Death and name change information relating to a person whose birth is registered in the State in which the foreign registration authority has jurisdiction	Confirmation of a match of: a) biometric and biographical data; b) biographical data (when there is no biometric information and all biographical data match); c) Some biographical data match (when the result is a partial coincidence) or; d) no match.	Birth, death, marriage data and certificates as requested

Characteristics	PCRN: Bilateral agreements with New Zealand	OAS: PUICA facilitated civil registries of Colombia and Ecuador to verify ID information*	EU: ECRN
Method of data transfer	Secure on-line computer connection or an encrypted CD	Email as needed	Electronic submission as needed, systems are interoperable in that they connect to a database to “talk to each other” and send information
Response time	N/A: Data transferred on a predetermined timeframe i.e. every 12 weeks transfer all relevant data	2 days to 4 weeks	2-3 days

## Cross-border collaboration has supported civil registrars in improving registration

- ▶ Foster relationships between civil registrars
- ▶ Facilitate sharing innovations and good practices
- ▶ Development of a framework for data verification and/or sharing to improve registration of vital events with an international element, working towards the goal of **universal registration**

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Thank you