

Civil Registration and Vital Statistics 2013:

challenges, best practice and
design principles for modern systems



CONTENTS

Abbreviations.....	v
Executive summary	1
Section 1. Civil registration and vital statistics information systems	3
1.1 What is CRVS?	3
1.2 The importance of CRVS IS and their current neglected state	6
1.3 Trends emphasizing the importance of CRVS IS	7
Section 2. Current status and challenges relating to CRVS IS	9
2.1 Status of information systems for recording and notification	12
2.2 Status of information systems for registration	15
2.3 Status of information systems for vital statistics	16
2.4 Key underlying characteristics of the existing systems.....	17
Section 3. Best practices of CRVS information systems	21
3.1 Examples from developed countries	21
3.2 Examples from low and middle income countries	24
Section 4. Challenges and opportunities for CRVS systems	29
4.1 Scaling up.....	29
4.2 Innovation	30
4.3 Integration of systems.....	32
4.4 Business process streamlining.....	34
4.5 Automation of CRVS processes	36
Section 5. Reflections on design principles for modernizing CRVS IS	39
5.1 Five design principles	39
5.2 A case-study from Tajikistan	41
Section 6. Conclusions	45
References	49

ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
BCRS	Barangay Civil Registration System
BRIS	Birth Registration Information System
COD	cause of death
CoIA	United Nations Commission on Information Accountability
CPR	Central Population Register
CSB	Citizen Service Bureau
CR	civil registration
CRVS	civil registration and vital statistics
HIS	health information system(s)
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
HMN	Health Metrics Network
HRS	Household Registration System
ICT	information and communication technology
INDEPTH	International Network for the Demographic Evaluation of Populations and Their Health
IS	information system(s)
MOVE IT	monitoring of vital events using information technology
MCD	Municipal Corporation of Delhi
NSO	National Statistics Office
PIN	personal identification number
SMS	short message system
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VA	verbal autopsy
VS	vital statistics
WHO	World Health Organization
WOMB	Watching over Mothers and Babies

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Within the domain of public health, information obtained from civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) is critical, allowing tracking of individual births and building profiles of mortality and causes of death. These data play a fundamental role in planning and monitoring public health outcomes, as well as a broad range of outcomes in other policy domains.

CRVS information systems (IS) may be paper based or increasingly technology-driven, and incorporate multiple business processes including: recording of all details related to the vital event, for example a birth or a death; notification of the event to the authorities; registration of the event; and generation of VS. A variety of actors are involved in the recording, notification and registering of these vital events, as well as in the use of the system's outputs. The involvement of multiple institutions and actors in CRVS makes coordination and governance a key challenge in building effective CRVS IS.

In recent times, there have been various efforts in countries to harness the potential of technologies, computer and mobile based, to strengthen CRVS IS and the CRVS as a whole. This report seeks to study experiences and best practices of such systems from different countries. This analysis helps to identify best practices associated with well-functioning systems, and also the various design and implementation challenges that exist and potential approaches. A key effort is made to identify how existing best practices from well-functioning systems in both developed countries and low and middle income countries can be adapted and applied to others engaged in currently strengthening their CRVS IS. Considering the experiences of countries across the development spectrum, the challenges and opportunities for CRVS IS are identified as scaling up, innovation, integration of systems, business process streamlining and automation of CRVS processes.

Five design principles are proposed in this report to support improvement of CRVS IS: (a) establish CRVS as a public good; (b) establish institutional incentives to keep the CRVS updated and of good quality; (c) establish a holistic approach to CRVS design; (d) establish the business relationships of identified information flows; and (e) develop the technical approach for operationalization of these relationships.

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