

Strengthening Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Monitoring and Evaluation Systems

BACKGROUND

Civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) in Kenya was developed under the Births and Deaths Registration Act enacted in 1928. Throughout the years, registration of births and deaths has evolved and is now managed by the Civil Registration Department (CRD) within the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government. These data are imperative for national-level allocation of resources, along with planning and the targeting of health interventions.

Unfortunately, the CRVS is hampered by deficiencies such as low birth registration coverage, poor quality data, and issues related to data processing and analysis for everyday decision making. To respond to this need, the MEASURE Evaluation PIMA project works to strengthening the generation and use of quality data among key governmental and non-governmental organizations in Kenya. Data is used to enhance sustainable monitoring and evaluation (M&E) practices, and to influence day-to-day decision making and planning. By working directly with the CRD, we aim to implement key system interventions and thereby improve the quality and use of data.

KEY ACTIVITIES AND SUCCESSES

In partnership with our stakeholders at both the national and county levels, we work to assess how statistics and data are collected, documented, and used. This contributes to establishing a CRVS that is based on global and national standards, while meeting local data needs for planning and decision making. Our role is to review the CRVS system as a whole, identify gaps, strengthen the linkages between key stakeholders, and further improve the functionality of the CRVS. By doing this, the system can produce accurate data for national and local planning and development in addition to prioritizing international assistance to Kenya.

More specifically, we focus on the collection of information related to the causes of mortality. This is undertaken by working directly with the Ministry of Health and local assistant chiefs to ensure that causes of death



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are ascertained both within health facilities and the community. This collaboration leads to the development of a standardized system of collecting causes of death, which in turn lays the foundation for a national death statistic.

One of our first activities was to undertake two key assessments—the M&E Capacity Baseline Assessment and the Baseline CRVS System Assessment—to better understand the current state of the CRVS. In doing this, we were able to strategically plan for needed support, engage with line ministries and other stakeholders, and coordinate with key partners.

The Baseline CRVS System Assessment, which was conducted in April 2013, was adopted by other local and international organizations, which have since used it for their own strategic planning.

From this report, we were able to support the CRD in identifying a number of activities to strengthen mortality and vital events data systems, including:

- Provide assistance to the department and county staff by building their capacity in data collection, data processing, and analysis, and additional M&E activities.
- Address the need to introduce options for transitioning to an electronic data collection system, including the use of mobile phones to accelerate timely decision making.
- Improve the way in which individual instances of death are identified and documented in health facilities and communities. We use tools such as verbal autopsy, which involves sending trained community health workers (CHWs) to ask family members and neighbors of the deceased a set of structured questions, which can be used to derive a probable cause of death.

By standardizing the implementation of the CRVS, we aim to improve coverage in reporting and registration of births and deaths. This, in turn, leads to improved standards for documenting mortality aligned with

national data statistics. Both national and county governments alike will be able to use mortality information to guide key programmatic activities that are needed by the Kenyan public.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

To strengthen mortality and vital events data systems, we work with a number of governmental and non-governmental organizations, including:

The **Civil Registration Department**, our direct counterpart for these activities, leading implementation to strengthen the CRVS.

The **Ministry of Health**, to improve integration of civil registration and the Health Information System at the Ministry for collection and review of accurate vital events data.

The **Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS)**, which is responsible for the compilation and publication of national data to enhance statistical production and utilization.

Local and international organizations that work with the CRD to harmonize CRVS-strengthening activities and plans. We work with these stakeholders in order to complement each other's programmatic activities. They include organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Plan International, World Vision, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Demographic Surveillance Sites (DSS).

Other **government entities** such as the Kenya Police Service, which assists with civil registration in cases of deaths due to unnatural causes, such as accidents, poisoning, fires, suicide, drowning, and attack by animals or snakes.

For more information, see:

www.measureevaluation.org or

<http://www.cpc.unc.edu/measure/countries/kenya>