

An efficient system to collect vital health data is crucial to measuring progress. The Global Financing Facility (GFF) has thus prioritized the strengthening of civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) systems as an important data source for monitoring progress made in ending preventable maternal, newborn, child and adolescent deaths; and as an area that has been inadequately funded in the past. A well-functioning CRVS system ensures the universal recording of the occurrence and characteristics of such vital events as births, deaths and causes of death, marriages/registered partnerships, judicial separations, divorces/legal dissolutions of registered partnership, annulments of marriage, adoptions, legitimations, and recognitions.

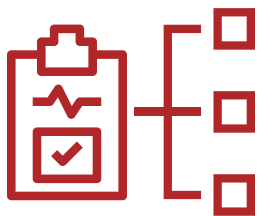


Photo: UNICEF Sierra Leone / Oliver Asselin

WHY CRVS MATTERS

An efficient CRVS system, which collects and processes accurate and timely information on vital events, enables the production of real-time vital statistics at national and sub-national levels and supports the availability of data that contribute to improved monitoring and evaluation of reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health and nutrition (RMNCAH-N) programs and progress on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These data, particularly on births and deaths, provide information that can be used to calculate health indicators and are useful for making evidence-based policy decisions

Improvements in birth registration help children realize their rights to a name and nationality, thus establishing their identity and facilitating access to health care, education, and other social benefits. Coupled with marriage registration, birth registration also contributes to the protection of young girls from early marriage, which is directly linked to early pregnancies and childbearing (with adverse health outcomes) and limited future socio-economic prospects. Death registration is important for establishing rights to property and inheritance and access to social benefits associated with orphanhood or widowhood. Real-time data, disaggregated by gender and other socio-economic variables, can highlight inequalities and discrimination and help to determine priority groups that are disadvantaged.

GFF'S CONTRIBUTION TO CRVS

The availability and quality of data on the registration of births, deaths, and marriages in the 16 GFF countries is poor and diverges significantly between countries. For example, birth registration rates varied from 2.7 percent in Ethiopia to 95.5 percent in Guatemala and 96.1 percent in Vietnam. Data on death registration rates are not available in many GFF countries, but Guatemala had 92 percent death registration with causes of death classified according to the International Classification of

Diseases, 10th revision (ICD-10). Information on marriage registration coverage is non-existent for all GFF-supported countries, but data show that many girls aged 20-24 married before age 18 (from 10.6 percent in Vietnam to 58.6 percent in Bangladesh).

Given the status of the CRVS systems in GFF-supported countries and many other low- and lower-middle income countries, the GFF Trust Fund is providing financing and technical assistance to Governments, through the responsible ministries, to strengthen CRVS systems and protect the basic human rights of women, children, and adolescents.

The GFF facilitates the development of a country-led “investment case,” which can include investments that need to be made to strengthen data systems to better measure results, including CRVS. The GFF supports the strengthening of CRVS systems by ensuring that CRVS components for the provision of timely and accurate health data are included in RMNCAH investment cases. Countries that explicitly include CRVS in investment cases can receive financing from the GFF Trust Fund and IDA. The GFF also aids analysis of the CRVS system to identify gaps and key interventions required to strengthen CRVS. Although priorities vary, CRVS has been included in the investment case (final or draft) of the following countries: Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Mozambique, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Uganda.

With financing from the GFF Trust Fund and lending operations from the International Development Association (IDA), seven projects with a CRVS component were approved in 2015-2017 as highlighted below:

- **Cameroon:** With IDA/GFF Trust Fund financing, Cameroon aims to strengthen its CRVS system by increasing registration rates for both births and deaths, as part of its Health System Performance Project. Priority activities include increasing registration centers and officials, improving the interoperability of systems, using performance-based financing to ensure death audits are conducted, and piloting and scaling the District Health Information System, version 2 (DHIS-2).
- **Democratic Republic of Congo:** With IDA/GFF Trust Fund support, the Democratic Republic of Congo will reform and strengthen its CRVS system to increase birth registration. Priority activities include undertaking a comprehensive assessment and developing a costed national CRVS strategy and implementation plan, supporting “catch-up” registration campaigns through schools and communication campaigns aimed at parents.
- **Ethiopia:** The GFF Trust Funds/IDA is providing technical assistance, capacity building, and the procurement of information and technology to support Ethiopia’s development of a centralized electronic civil registration system. This operation is also

supporting the procurement of storage equipment and vehicles for supervising and monitoring registration activities, as well as advocacy activities.

- **Kenya:** Kenya has a relatively good system in terms of registration coverage of births and deaths, but data on causes of death per ICD-10 are almost non-existent. The IDA/GFF Trust Fund focuses on linking birth registration with maternal and child health services; incentives to improve birth registration coverage; capacity building to improve data quality and collection and coding of causes of death; and piloting mobile registration for remote areas.
- **Liberia:** Liberia’s GFF Trust Fund focuses on improving birth and death registration services in general, beginning in three target counties, as well as developing uniform registration forms and training manuals, performance-based incentives for maternal and death audits, developing and implementing detailed costed plans (including for ICD-10 training), information management, and advocacy to improve coverage.
- **Tanzania:** To address Tanzania’s low birth registration rates (25 percent) and limited information on death registration and causes of death, the IDA/GFF Trust Fund P4R health project prioritizes registration of these data at health facilities as part of an incentivized results-based financing program.
- **Uganda:** A legal framework and responsible agency were established in 2015. IDA and GFF Trust Fund-financed activities in Uganda focus on setting up registration offices and training staff, developing registration tools and cause of death certification in line with international standards, and establishing a monitoring and evaluation system to promote the use of CRVS data for planning purposes.

OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPAND THE BENEFITS OF CRVS

There has been considerable interest in the GFF’s CRVS work from country governments and opportunities to expand it are significant. New partner investments during the replenishment will support the scaling up of CRVS across existing and new GFF countries, including establishment of innovative ways to accelerate birth, death and marriage registration. Additionally, support will be provided to undertake activities to facilitate broader knowledge sharing and learning; partnering with Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, to boost birth registration through immunization processes; and collaboration with Canada’s Centre of Excellence for CRVS to support the development and implementation of CRVS components in the investment cases.