



Project to Strengthen the National Capacity in Producing and Disseminating Vital Statistics from Civil Registration Records in Asia and the Pacific

10 – 14 December 2018
Bangkok, Thailand

Workshop on Dissemination and Communication of Vital Statistics Data¹

Introduction

The workshop on communication and dissemination served as the concluding activity for Phase One of the “Project to Strengthen National Capacities in Producing and Disseminating Vital Statistics from Civil Registration Records in Asia and the Pacific”. The workshop enabled countries to produce several key outputs; e.g., a strategic communication plan, verbal communication “pitches” articulating key messages, infographic designs and post-event work plans.

Following the Project’s first and second workshops² focusing on civil registration data analysis and vital statistics report preparation, and held between January and March 2017, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) continued supporting countries in the development and publication of their vital statistics reports. However, given the difficulty faced in disseminating their vital statistics data, countries favoured the implementation of the third workshop to emphasize communication efforts. Consequently, ESCAP partnered with Vital Strategies between 10 – 14 December 2018 in Bangkok, Thailand to support the Project’s eight countries³ in developing communication and dissemination materials.

Workshop Design

The workshop was structured to be driven by each country’s production of communication materials and consisted of facilitator presentations, working sessions and feedback sessions. The presentations allowed facilitators to provide information on general approaches and techniques for effective communication of vital statistics. The working sessions apportioned time for country teams to develop specific material for use in their own communication and dissemination efforts. And the feedback sessions allowed country teams to present the materials they developed during the working sessions, while facilitators and other participants provided comments and suggestions for improvement.

¹ Additional information, including the participant list, concept note, presentations and programme of activities can be found by visiting either <https://bit.ly/2A59rqN> or <https://bit.ly/2rDkW49>.

² Additional information about the first and second workshops can be found by visiting <https://bit.ly/2Lp2R2F> and <https://bit.ly/2QzY1pa>, respectively.

³ The Phase One countries include: Bhutan, Georgia, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Timor-Leste and Vietnam.



Considering the design, the participants were also asked to send the most recent draft of their national vital statistics reports prior to attending the workshop. The facilitators used this information to inform their presentations and the country teams were able to leave the workshop with usable communication products based on their previously developed vital statistics data.

Outputs

The country teams represented at the workshop comprised participants from a wide-variety of agencies and ministries, including, for example, civil registration authorities, national statistical offices, health ministries, finance ministries and immigration departments. With this variety in mind, the country teams designed the following workshop outputs for specific audiences:

- Output no. 1: Strategic communication plan
- Output no. 2: Verbal pitches
- Output no. 3: Long-form persuasion presentations
- Output no. 4: Visualization designs with key data findings
- Output no. 5: Infographics sketches
- Output no. 6: Post-event work plan

The workshop thus began by having countries develop Output no. 1; a strategic communication plan. Defined as a “concise statement that defines how an organization intends to advance an important goal through the delivery of information to critical external and internal stakeholders”, Output no. 1 focused country work on the outcomes (the results expected from the audience) and the outputs (audience outreach methods). Output no. 1 also focused efforts on the creation of a “single overarching communications outcome” (SOCO) specific for each team and their intended audience. Each team’s SOCO then served as the platform for subsequent products.

Following, participants learned the fundamental principles behind data-driven messages, including how to characterize their target audiences, construct messages incorporating audience-relevant facts, identify the anticipated benefits of new information and construct calls for action from their target audiences. Participants also learned how to create message platforms, including the interdependent structure of key messages, supporting messages and the strength of creating a narrative from vital statistics data to produce an audience reaction.

From the instruction on data-driven messages, country teams successively developed Outputs nos. 2 and 3; verbal (i.e., “elevator”) pitches meant to elicit an audience’s interest during a brief interaction, as well as long-form presentations meant to persuade or inform an audience during longer interactions and formal meetings.

Next, facilitators presented materials for both data visualizations (charts, graphs, etc.) and design principles for creating infographics from vital statistics data. As before, these presentations led into working sessions where countries produced Output nos. 4 and 5; preliminary visualization



designs with key data findings and visualization types, as well as a preliminary sketch for a vital statistics infographic.

Finally, based off the previous work, facilitators requested that countries develop Output no. 6; a post-workshop plan, in which country teams were expected to identify additional SOCOs, different target audiences, as well as additional communication materials to be used in disseminating their data.

Way Forward

Reliable, responsive and complete vital statistics provide essential information on populations and are critical for sustainable and inclusive development in areas ranging from health and education to governance and justice. Recognizing this, countries in Asia and the Pacific agreed on the 2014 Ministerial Declaration to “Get Every One in the Picture” (E/ESCAP/71/14), which committed to improving regional production of vital statistics.

To help expand the use of data in guiding policy and program decisions, ESCAP and Bloomberg Philanthropies are organizing Phase Two of the “Project to Strengthen National Capacities in Producing and Disseminating Vital Statistics from Civil Registration Records in Asia and the Pacific”, set to occur between January and April 2019. Phase Two will follow a similar path as Phase One and help six, new countries analyse civil registry data and develop vital statistics reports.