


Vanuatu – Engaging other sectors to increase coverage for “hard to reach” populations

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Summaries of the Business Account Group (BAG)

SPC UNICEF UNFPA WHO PCRM UNSW

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Introduction and Country Background

- Vanuatu is an island nation of 271,089 people
- There are 6 provinces with 14 main inhabited islands
- 70% of the population live in the Rural areas with few living in traditional lifestyles and having little interaction with government.



- CRVS in Vanuatu is operated under the Ministry of Internal Affairs
- Registration is compulsory, but has largely not been enforced.
- Data on births and deaths is also collected through the hospitals, with aggregate data collected from health centres.

VANUATU has a national Task Force for CRVS and is currently developing a national CRVS plan following the completion of their comprehensive assessment

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CRVS challenges

The comprehensive assessment and mapping exercise recently completed in Vanuatu identified a range of issues to be address.

Among the highest ranked priorities were:

- i. The difficult of capturing births and deaths occurring in the communities (outside of health centres)
- ii. A high reliance on family to transfer data between departments (for example to take a notification of birth from the Ministry of Health to the Civil registry office to complete a formal birth registration)
- iii. A need for improved coverage and accessibility to registration



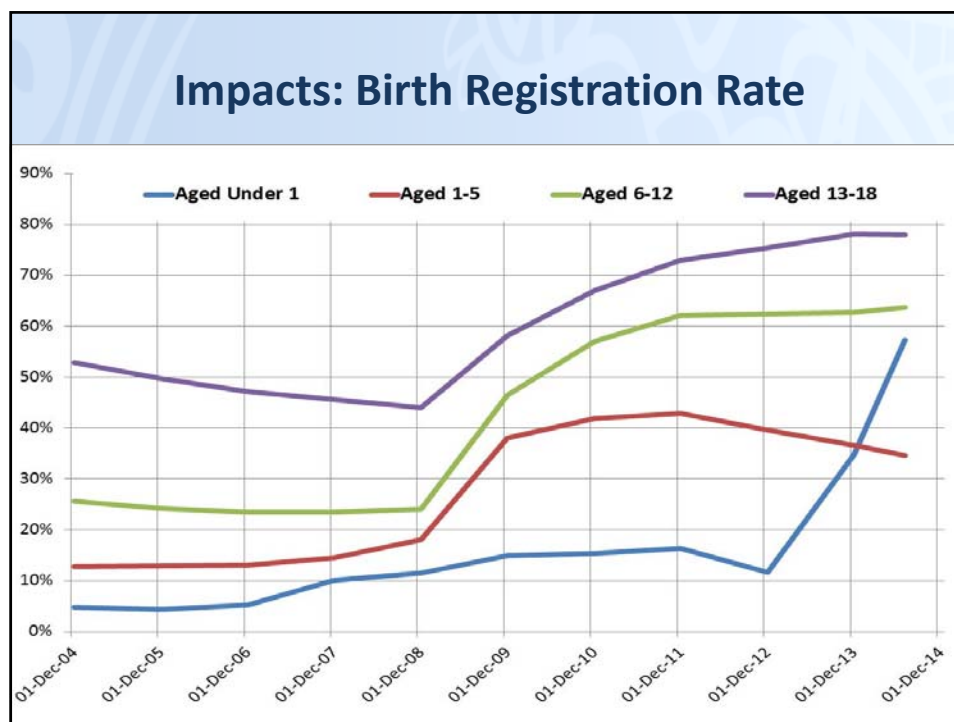
Improving CRVS coverage

- **Vanuatu has greatly improved birth registration in the last few years by:**
 - i. registering children through schools as part of their initial enrolment processes
 - ii. registering new births at hospital prior to discharge
 - iii. “catch up days” in remote areas that do not have regular contact with government
- **These activities have been supported by the roll-out of IT connectivity to provincial centres and the development of a national CRVS database.**




*An MoU between the MoA and MoE has been signed allowing delegation of registry functions to Education staff.
A similar MoU is also in place with MoH*





Impacts

- Linking birth certification to school enrolment has increase registration of school age children significantly; while
- Birth registration in hospitals has greatly increased registration of newborns
- **In just one year (2013), birth registration rates for children under age 5 increased from 40% to 53%.**
- Use of information:
 - I. Planning purposes such as Mobile registration for children 2 – 4 years and those in 'hard to reach communities'.
 - II. Policy paper: To have all births registered before Mothers leave the Health Facilities.


 Sources: UN Business Action Group (UBAG)

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A regional collaboration

- Vanuatu has been working closely with UNICEF on the MoU's signed with the MoE and also the rollout of registration to provincial areas
- We have also had ongoing support from Australia to support the development of the IT system, and from WHO on upgrading the HIS system.
- Vanuatu initially attended a BAG workshop in early 2013, and has since been supported to hold two national workshops as well as a number of technical visits.
- The support from BAG partners in providing the initial catalyst to form a national task force, to conduct the comprehensive assessment and to develop a draft national plan has provided a platform to coordinate improvement activities, build political and community support, and develop a national vision for the collaboration. The result has been a greater impact combined than activities would have had on their own.
- Vanuatu has benefitted from the lessons learnt in other Pacific countries in undertaking this process, and has been able to draw upon these experiences through BAG partners in planning workshops, setting priorities, and identifying solutions to challenges.
- Vanuatu will also have the opportunity to share some of their experience with others in the region – for example through their participation in reviewing the draft Pacific IT standards for CRVS.



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Next steps and lessons learnt

- The next step for Vanuatu is to complete the draft national CRVS improvement plan for presentation to DCO, Council of Ministers and the Parliament.
- A key focus will be to build on the current momentum to ensure all births in Vanuatu are registered; and to improve death registration coverage.
- Key lessons learnt include:
 - The importance of using decentralisation and existing contact points with government to bring registration to communities.
 - A strong IT infrastructure is important to supporting expansion of registration activities.
 - Multi-sectoral cooperation is key for CRVS improvements.



Photo birth certificates are a great incentive for registration in the community



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