



CRVS Legal Review

The Data for Health Initiative and the Role of a CRVS Legal Review

The Data for Health Initiative

Nearly forty percent (40%) of all births worldwide are not officially registered, and less than half of all deaths around the world are registered with a cause of death. This lack of data means that many health policy and administrative decisions are made without adequate information. The Data for Health Initiative (D4H), funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies, works collaboratively with governments worldwide to help strengthen the tools and systems that are necessary to collect and use data to prioritize health challenges, develop policies, deploy resources, and measure success. To date, D4H has partnered with more than twenty countries.

Purpose of a CRVS Legal Review

Civil registration - the continuous, permanent, compulsory and universal recording of the occurrence and characteristics of vital events (including births and deaths) - is the best source of vital statistics; statistics that are crucial to government decision-making. Civil registration is also the best foundation for a national identity management system, with birth registration providing the entry point to the system and death registration resulting in the retirement of a legal identity.

A strong legal framework is the foundation from which well-functioning CRVSID systems are built, and is a necessary step toward achieving complete civil and identity registration. A strong legal framework clarifies the roles of the specific agencies responsible for civil registration, vital statistics, and identity management functions; specifies uniform standards and processes for the collection and use of the records and information gathered through the system; and guarantees the privacy and security of those records. In short, the legislative framework gives the system an essential foundation to be able to operate successfully throughout the country.

Undertaking a CRVSID legal review is a means to catalyze improved effectiveness, efficiency, and security of CRVSID systems, as well as demand for CRVSID services. Potential benefits include strengthened governance and coordination amongst stakeholders, inclusion in government and private sector services, as well as better health outcomes and life expectancies for the population.

The CRVS Legal Review Methodology

In collaboration with other D4H partners, the Global Health Advocacy Incubator (GHA) developed a toolkit that provides a guide for analyzing all the laws that support and pertain to a country's CRVSID systems. Based on international best practices and good practices set out in documents from the United Nations, the World Health Organization and other international bodies, the toolkit helps government stakeholders identify gaps or obstacles in the CRVSID legal framework and highlight opportunities for improvement.

Recognizing that not all countries have the same needs, the toolkit consists of eleven chapters and is customizable. Legal reviewers may complete the chapters that are relevant and of interest to the stakeholders of a country's CRVSID systems. The topics addressed in the toolkit include:

- Chapter 1: Purpose, Scope and Methodology for a CRVS Legal Framework Analysis
- Chapter 2: Structure of Civil Registration Authority
- Chapter 3: Registration of Birth and Death
- Chapter 4: Stillbirth Reporting and Registration
- Chapter 5: Determining and Certifying Cause of Death
- Chapter 6: Medicolegal Death Investigations
- Chapter 7: Registration of Marriage and Divorce
- Chapter 8: Inclusion of Women and Children
- Chapter 9: Production of Vital Statistics
- Chapter 10: National ID Systems
- Chapter 11: Equal Access for LGBTI Individuals
- Chapter 12: Population Register
- Chapter 13: Personal Privacy and Data Protection

The Legal Review Process

The first step of the legal review process is to identify in-country lawyers to lead the legal review. Lawyers are vetted by D4H partners and approval is sought from government stakeholders before bringing a legal team on board. The legal review is a collaborative and inclusive process. Before undertaking a legal review, D4H partners host a workshop for all stakeholders. This enables D4H partners and the approved legal team to understand current CRVSID systems, allows for an introduction of the legal review process, and provides an opportunity to discuss stakeholder questions and concerns.



The legal review is then undertaken through use of the toolkit, during which time laws are collected, with the support of stakeholders to ensure completeness, and analyzed. The review generally takes 3 to 6 months to complete and culminates in a recommendations workshop, where the legal team presents their draft analysis and findings for stakeholder discussion with the aim of generating stakeholder priority recommendations. After this workshop, the legal team provides a final report on the legal review and stakeholder recommendations. Stakeholders are actively engaged throughout the process and it is our goal that the process and recommendations be led by the government stakeholders.

The Global Health Advocacy Incubator

As a D4H partner, the Global Health Advocacy Incubator (GHA I) provides technical assistance and support to D4H countries when analyzing their CRVSID legal frameworks. GHA I is a Washington, D.C. based non-profit that supports governments and civil society organizations for the advancement of public health policies that reduce death and disease. GHA I builds on lessons from 20+ years of advocacy on numerous public health issues and a network of government and civil society partners in more than 50 countries. GHA I works with governments and partner organizations to provide legal and policy analysis, as well as strategic advocacy planning and execution.

Where can I get more information and updates?

To stay up to date with GHA I's CRVS Legal Review work, visit our website at www.advocacyincubator.org or contact Robert Eckford, the Program Director for the Data for Health program: reckford@advocacyincubator.org.

The Global Health Advocacy Incubator (GHA I), a project of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, supports civil society organizations advocating for public health policies that reduce death and disease. We bring a proven advocacy approach and a global network of local partners, built on a 25-year track record of success across multiple issues in more than 60 countries.

