

Lessons-learned from the pilot projects and potential next steps in the region

Sriprapha Petcharamesree

(Former) Senior research advisor to
UNHCR Regional Office

Structuring the presentation

- The pilot projects in Thailand, Pakistan and Vietnam – Objectives
- Expected outputs
- Challenges and gaps to access civil registration
- Recommendations for ways forward

Objectives

- BP Toolkit –Assists States in assessing and improving national CRVS system to promote universal access to civil registration; particularly among hard-to-reach populations;
- Pilot projects – Evaluate the BP Toolkit for further improvement and adjustments (where necessary); provide a platform for discussions among relevant stakeholders; and draw lessons for its implementation;

Expected outputs

- Assessment report with comprehensive description of the findings and recommendations;
- Action plan that explains how the assessment recommendations will be implemented;
- Targets, milestones or objectives towards which efforts can be directed for measuring progress –quantitative and qualitative;

Challenges and gaps to access civil registration

For officials

- Linking birth registration with acquisition of nationality, a stumbling block
- '(Il)legality' of the stay of the persons prevent them from registering births of their children
- Legal barrier i.e. lack of specific law/policies to facilitate civil registration
- Long procedure and requirements of documentations
- Lack of resources and local capacity, especially at the local level
- Heavy burdens that local officials usually carry
- Many local officials are unable to communicate with ethnic minorities/migrants due to language barriers
- Incompleteness and unavailability of data and vital statistics among the vulnerable and marginalized groups
- 'Incorrect registration' which often becomes the initial barrier for the correct registration and later documentation of the population. To correct this will require extensive purging of the inconsistent documents and registries. Among the most frequent of these "incorrect registration" errors are incorrect dates of birth and spelling errors, in the first and last names due to the difficulty of understanding the names and minority phonetics on the part of the registrars due to language barrier
- There are also issues of corruption related to registering births and issuing of ID cards

Challenges and gaps to access civil registration

For the population

- They do not have clear understanding of civil registration
- Geographical and practical barriers (such as the remoteness and difficult public transportation)
- Having many low-income groups, especially homeless people makes access to birth registration impossible
- Language barrier for hard-to-reach groups
- Armed conflicts and cultural/religious practices present obstacles to register the births.

Recommendations to improve CRVS system

- Improvements to Law and Policy to be Responsive to the Changing Context (Thailand)
- Having a specific legal framework and plan of action for the CRVS of HTRP(Vietnam)
- Expansion of coverage of the national CRVS system to cover HTRP (Pakistan)
- Participatory Process with All Stakeholders
- Priority of Civil Registration Services
- Updating Knowledge and Understanding for Local Authorities and Officials
- increasing online provision of registration services
- improving inter-sectoral cooperation

Reflections and Recommendations on Toolkit

Reflections

Toolkit is useful as it contributes to assessing the situation of the CRVS for hard-to-reach populations with clear methods and tools provided to guide the government and stakeholders

- Extensive details
- Narrow/limited definition of HTRP
- English barrier which leads to heavy burden on translation and editing

Recommendations

- Adjusting the language used, including adding introductory paragraphs about the use of the Toolkit
- Expanding the definition of the 'hard-to-reach' populations to cover wider groups who face difficulties in accessing civil registration.
- Any translation, if necessary, should be based on the needs of each member State of the Bali Process, and should be done on request only to ensure that the translation will be meaningfully used.
- Emphasis on process and ownership in CRVS Toolkit
- Contextualizing the use of the Toolkit in ways that take account of cultural, legal, regulatory and institutional frameworks for CRVS.
- Developing a training package based on the current Toolkit

Recommendations for ways forward

- Awareness raising: increasing awareness among governments and public of the importance of CRVS;
- A strong capacity building and learning agenda on CRVS within the Bali Process forum;
- Learning exchange around legal and regulatory challenges – enabling experienced countries to share knowledge with others;
- Partnerships: Working with partners across the development spectrum, including social protection, security sector in order to enhance equity and ensure that hard-to-reach and marginalized populations benefit from recognition and registration;
- Build inter-sectoral action;
- Ownership :The importance of country ownership and leadership and the important role played by country champions for CRVS;
- Initiating thematic sandbox(es) that can have mutual technical learning and co-design plan of action.

Ways forward

Few questions for further discussions

- How can the success of the pilot projects be built on?
- What regional initiatives could support country efforts to assessing CRVS of the HTRP?
- What role could the private sector/non state actors play in building and operating CRVS?

Ways forward

- The three countries to develop an Action plan for improving CR system;
- Organize one or two peer learning processes to share experiences in using the BP Toolkit to implement self-assessment;
- The Technical Advisory Group of national experts and UNHCR RBAP should be re-assembled to confirm the way forward;
- Continue to provide technical support to BP Members to exercise the self- assessment on request;
- Promote the BP Toolkit in other forums;
- Rebrand The BP Toolkit as “Bali Process Toolkit for inclusive Civil Registration”.