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# Evaluation of UNICEF Work in Strengthening Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems

2021

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75

# Evaluation Objectives



The findings and recommendations generated by the evaluation are intended to be used to influence the organization's strategic direction, to inform the theory and practice of programming, to improve measurement of progress, and to build partnerships.

# Evaluation Governance

## UNICEF Evaluation Office, Management

Beth Ann Plowman, *Senior Evaluation Specialist (oversight)*  
 Eduard Bonet Porqueras, *Evaluation Specialist (management)*  
 Mariel Kislig, *Evaluation Officer (support)*

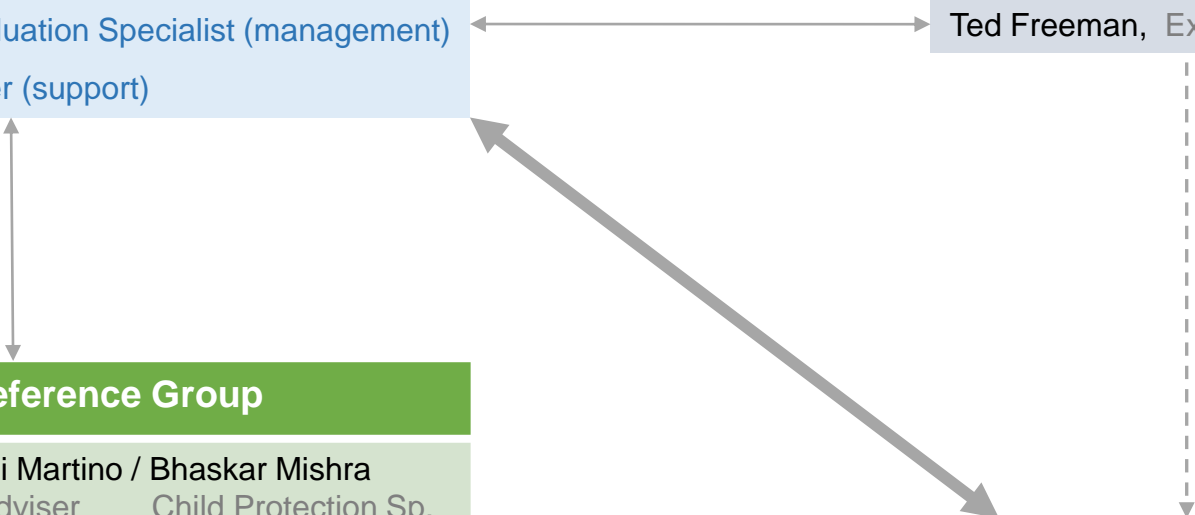
Ted Freeman, *External Reviewer*

## Evaluation Reference Group

PG Child Protection (HQ)	Kirsten di Martino / Bhaskar Mishra Senior Adviser / Child Protection Sp.
DAPM (HQ)	Claudia Cappa Senior Adviser Statistics and Monitoring
PD Health (HQ)	Remy Mwamba Statistics and Monitoring Specialist
Child Protection (LACRO)	Kendra Gregson Regional Adviser
Child Protection (WCARO)	Cecilie Modvar Child Protection Specialist
Cote d'Ivoire (CO)	Mirkka Tuulia Mattila Chief Child Protection

## Evaluation Team

- Zoran Dokovic, *Senior Consultant*
- Ann Livingston, *Consultant*
- Vasu Anandan, *Consultant*



# Evaluation Questions

Evaluation criteria	As applied to UNICEF CRVS systems strengthening
<b>Relevance</b>	UNICEF demonstrates responsiveness to the needs of rights-holders and duty-bearers, understands context and adapts as needed to changing contexts and conditions.
<b>Effectiveness</b>	UNICEF makes unique, identifiable contributions to stronger CRVS systems, in particular birth registration, and does so in a manner focused on vulnerable and excluded groups.
<b>Coherence</b>	UNICEF engages in strategic partnerships around CRVS and works effectively with partners through coordination and synergized implementation.
<b>Innovation</b>	UNICEF introduces and uses new hardware, digital capacities and 'soft' approaches to enhance its contributions to CRVS systems strengthening and legal identity management and positions the same for uptake.

# Contribution Analysis Model

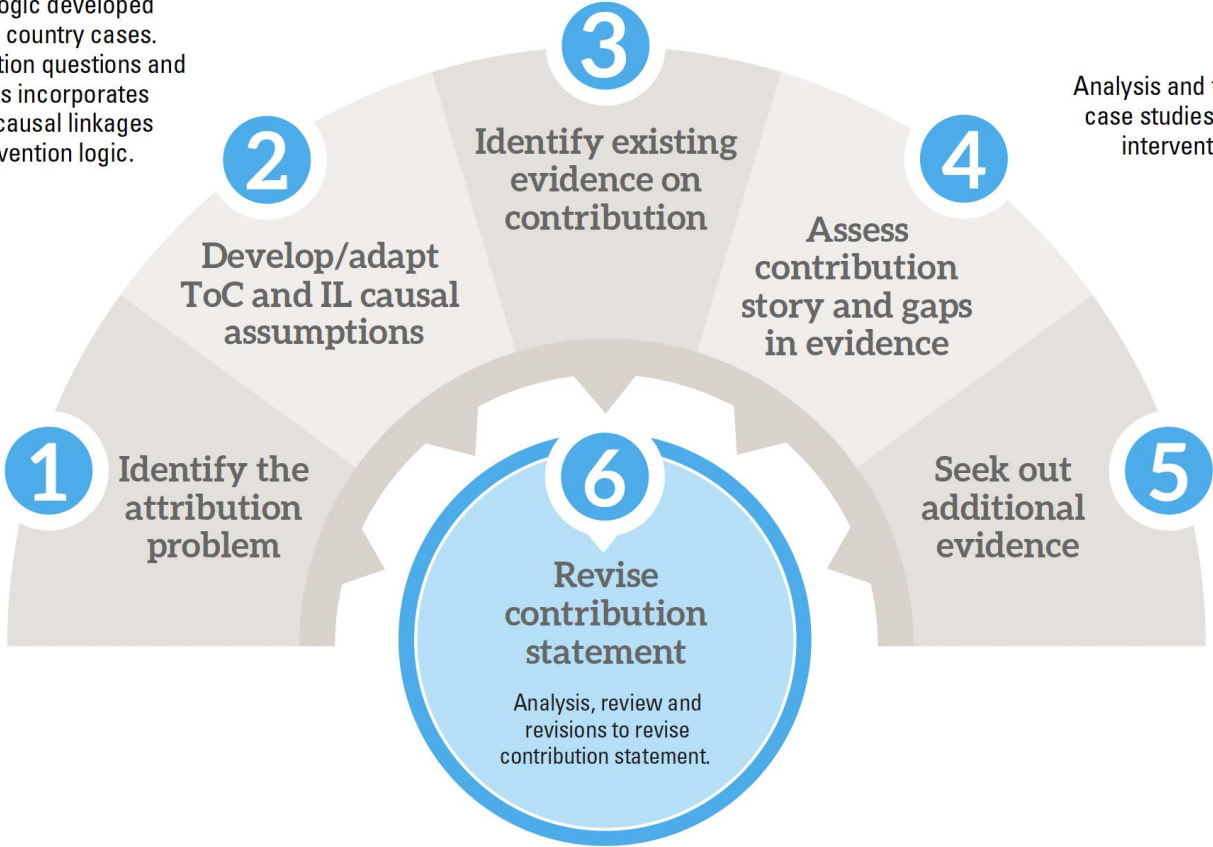
Case studies developed based on available documentation from UNICEF and partners, following case study outline. Profiled country results in changes in birth registration rates over time

Intervention logic developed for global and country cases. Focus on evaluation questions and sub-questions incorporates validation of causal linkages in the intervention logic.

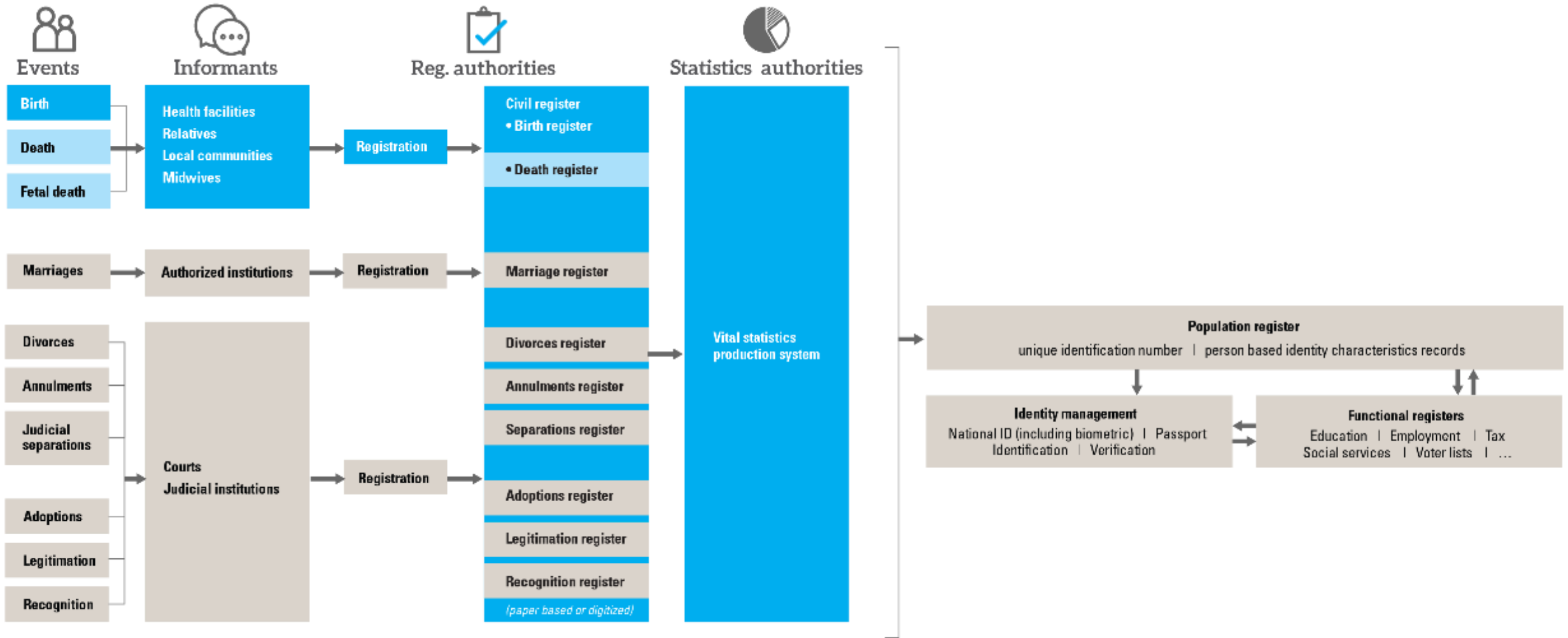
Analysis and finalization of case studies. Revision of intervention logic.

Has UNICEF made unique and identifiable contributions to national systems and, in turn, increased rates of birth registration?

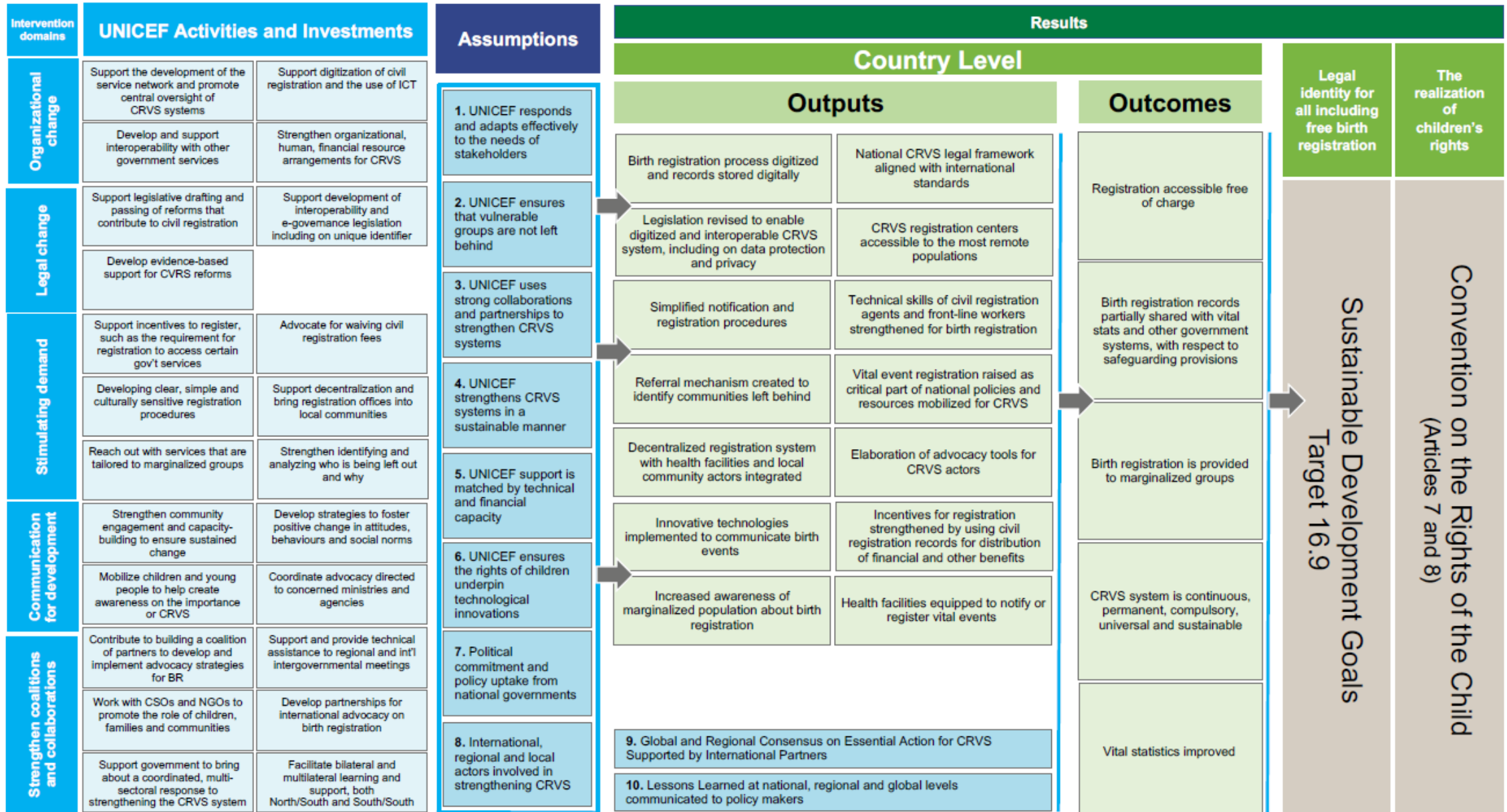
Added data through KIs with UNICEF and partners, online survey to complement.



# UNICEF Support to CRVS Systems



# UNICEF Intervention Logic for Birth Registration and CRVS Systems Strengthening

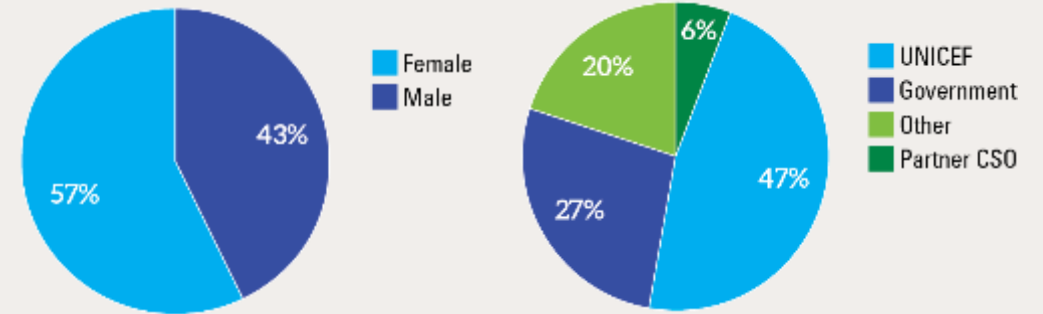


Changing Paradigm: Increasing Emphasis on Holistic Support to Intersectoral linkages of National CRVS and identity management systems

# Data Collected and Used

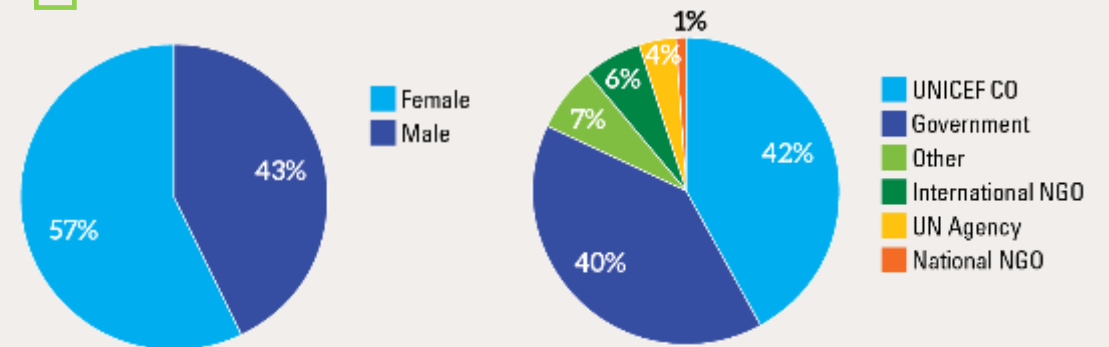
Country	Region	Case studies	Key Informants
Bangladesh	ROSA	✓	✓
Botswana	ESAR	✓	✓
Brazil	LACR	✓	✓
Guinea	WCAR	✓	✓
Indonesia	EAPR	✓	✓
Mali	WCAR	✓	✓
Morocco	MENA	✓	✓
Mozambique	ESAR	✓	✓
Myanmar	EAPR	—	—
Nepal	ROSA	✓	✓
Tajikistan	ECAR	✓	✓

## Key informants (105)



## Online survey

- ✓ Sample 176, response 88 (50%)
- ✓ 28 countries



# Findings

# Relevance

1. To what extent does UNICEF respond and adapt to the needs of stakeholders and include strategies to ensure that vulnerable/excluded groups are not left behind? In cases where UNICEF does adapt, how was that done? What were facilitators? Barriers?

## FINDING #1:

UNICEF interventions have been **broadly aligned with national CRVS priorities.**

## FINDING #2:

Where government CRVS strengthening priorities have been **broader than efforts to address birth registration rates**, UNICEF does not appear to have **prioritized support** to such interventions.

## FINDING #3:

UNICEF has adequately responded to **special circumstances** (COVID-19 pandemic, natural disasters and conflict) **adapting its strategies.**

# Effectiveness

2. To what extent and how has UNICEF's support strengthened CRVS systems, institutions, and capacities? Has it done so in a manner that will be/has been sustained over time?

## FINDING #4:

UNICEF demonstrated **leadership** in supporting governments to reinforce the enabling environment for CRVS, although there are important challenges to make sustainable the increases in capacity to deliver CRVS services.

## FINDING #5:

UNICEF has increasingly reinforced **interoperability** between CRVS, health services, social services and **identity management**.

## FINDING #6:

UNICEF has **missed out some opportunities to leverage large CRVS investments** undertaken by government and development partners.

## FINDING #7:

National **stakeholders perceive UNICEF contribution as essential** for birth registration while UNICEF introduced strategies to transfer of programme **ownership**.

3. How did UNICEF interventions at country level contribute to those results? How did internal and external factors influence – positively or negatively – the achievement of results?

### **FINDING #8:**

UNICEF supported governments to **reform policy and legal frameworks in line with international standards** as a foundation for robust CRVS systems.

### **FINDING #9:**

UNICEF supported governments to **improve supply and demand of birth registration services**, despite some bottlenecks limiting the achievements.

### **FINDING #10:**

UNICEF supported birth registration strategies, with **limited support given to other vital events**.

### **FINDING #11:**

**Regional CRVS initiatives supported by UNICEF** have had a major positive effect in **generating political commitment**.

*Effectiveness continued*

4. To what extent do national programmes supported by UNICEF achieve results (outcomes) for children of different backgrounds and abilities, especially those considered particularly vulnerable?

**FINDING #12:**

UNICEF developed **tailored strategies** implemented with local partners **to identify and refer vulnerable children** for registration.

**FINDING #13:**

The **use of bottleneck analyses** by UNICEF has enabled the identification of gaps and generated political commitment.

**FINDING #14:**

While recognizing that birth registration better protects vulnerable children, UNICEF has **not taken a systematic approach to birth registration as an enabler in the realization of children's rights.**

# Coherence

5. How well does UNICEF use collaborations and partnerships to strengthen CRVS systems?

## FINDING #15:

UNICEF **leveraged cooperation** with partners and has promoted public-private partnerships **to increase impact of interventions**, with exception of some countries.

# Innovation

6. How does UNICEF use its mandate and resources to ensure that the rights of children underpin technological advances and policy innovation in the areas of CRVS and legal identity?

## FINDING #16:

UNICEF **fostered innovation**, including the use of innovative technology, for reporting of birth and other vital events **to expand registration services in hard-to-reach areas**.

## FINDING #17:

**Challenges around the operating context and design of innovative initiatives** have limited their ability to achieve results and be sustained over time.

# Recommendations

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## Recommendation 1

UNICEF activities around CRVS systems strengthening should be established as an **integrated and intersectoral** component in countries requiring large-scale interventions. Systems-strengthening policies, technical products, and interventions in general, should be based on a **sustainable business model, including funding**.



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## Recommendation 2

UNICEF should promote the systematic and periodic assessment of birth registration **bottlenecks and barriers** by relevant national authorities, especially **in countries with high levels of birth registration**. UNICEF should also advocate with, and support national authorities to, prioritize actions to overcome those barriers. This measure should help address in a more permanent and systemic manner the protracted marginalization of certain categories of children.



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### Recommendation 3

UNICEF should leverage and promote the central role that birth registration, CRVS and legal identity systems hold in public administration systems, to advance toward universal birth registration. This implies engaging in the establishment of **digitized and interoperable** central repositories, with adequate **data protection safeguards and aligned with other administrative government systems.**



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### Recommendation 4

UNICEF should systematically share experiences from country offices that created or adapted digital platforms to expand registration services to hard-to-reach communities and promote the use of such **knowledge to inform replication in different contexts.** UNICEF should promote and assist the standardization of digital platforms and interoperability with existing digital health systems, including birth and death registration (and its causes), as well as **other vital events.**



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## Recommendation 5

In countries where birth registration is readily and freely available, UNICEF should critically examine the **comparative effectiveness of strategies** to expand registration and assess particularly incentive schemes that may serve as an indirect means to increase birth registration.



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## Recommendation 6

UNICEF should develop and engage in joint assistance projects to CRVS strengthening with **UN Legal Identity Agenda** partners and should actively discourage siloed approaches. Given the **multiyear and complex nature of programming for CRVS improvement**, cooperation should also be sought with international development partners, including aid partners, civil society and the private sector for sustained investment.



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## Recommendation 7

UNICEF **guidance to country offices** should be updated to reflect the changing contexts of CRVS systems strengthening within public administration, and to integrate a more **holistic approach** to CRVS strengthening in coordination with United Nations and non-United Nations **development partners**.

A young child with dark hair, wearing a pink and green striped shirt under denim overalls, is smiling and clapping their hands. The background is a bright blue wall with a white shelf holding various items. The overall lighting is warm and blue-toned.

# Thank you!

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