UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

CIVIL REGISTRATION AND VITAL STATISTICS (CRVS) CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM

CRVS CAPACITY BUILDING NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT

Draft – Summary Report
December 2021
Introduction

The Civil Registration Systems in Africa are documented to have deficiencies in human capacity due to lack of formalized training in CRVS or specialized degree program in any University to address this gap. Previous work based using the comprehensive Assessment Tools, shows that without specialized training and professional capabilities in place, business processes in CRVS would not progress well and that organization/ institutional performance remains low and inefficient in general. It is on this background that a Needs Assessment of the training requirements of civil registration offices was done. Further the information generated from the assessment will be used to develop curricula for the different levels of officials based on the needs and requirements of their roles and responsibilities.

The main aim of this report is to provide findings of the needs assessment of the training requirements of the Civil Registration and national Statistical offices to increase their operational efficiency and effectiveness in CRVS. This section presents a summary of the findings based on responses from six countries that completed the structured Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in-depth interview (IDI) tool. Information was collected using a structured in depth tool that was sent out to over 40 African countries for the Director Generals to complete with support from national registration offices. A total of 6 completed tools were received from South Africa, Chad, Liberia, DRC, Angola and Burkina Faso.

Assessment Findings

The findings provide insight into three broad themes on the Civil registration and vital statistics system (CRVS) capacity building program in Africa. These include: challenges faced by CRVS offices in Africa, training needs of the CRVS offices and preferred training modalities for CRVS capacity building.

Challenges faced by CRVS offices

A number of challenges were noted from the submission of the different countries. Countries are challenged in digitizing civil registration records and births, deaths and marriage registration processes. Further, there’s insufficient coverage of civil registration services. This is attributed to low spatial coverage of centers and agencies in charge of civil registration in different countries.

Covid pandemic and the associated effects
The Covid-19 pandemic has disrupted and, in some cases, challenged the continuity of civil registration functions overall in Africa. As a result, civil registration offices in some countries were unable to carry on with day-to-day operations due to closure of offices and restrictions on movements during lock down. Logistics and equipment for carrying out specific civil registration functions including death and birth registration remain inadequate. Additionally, the scarcity of financial resources continues to pose serious challenges to the implementation of the national CRVS strategy in some countries. In some African countries, communication difficulties due to poor coverage of internet signal, lack of electricity especially in the rural areas and necessary infrastructure inhibit the smooth operation of civil registration services.

**Inadequate Human Resources and trained staff**

The human capacity challenges faced by CRVS offices in Africa include limited human resource numbers to handle civil registration operations. For example, in some countries, there are no statisticians at the civil registration offices to produce the regularly needed vital statistics. It was also noted that the available staff who carry out civil registration functions have no specialized training in doing so or have been insufficiently trained. Consequently, there is use of different practices, including those which do not comply with the law, across CRVS offices in some countries.

In addition, the capacity of civil registration staff in data analysis, death registration, medical certification of cause of death (MCCoD), mortality coding, and use of the International Classification of diseases (ICD) is limited. Non-payment of civil registration staff was also cited as a reason for current difficulties experienced in civil registration work in some countries, most especially in the country side communities.

It was noted that some of the human capacity challenges experienced by CRVS offices in Africa can be addressed through capacity building. This was reflected in the following responses:

*“In-service trainings, especially tailor made CRVS training combined with mentorship and supportive supervision can improve the current capacity.”*

*“A standard training manual and periodic refresher courses would help to improve the situation.”*

*“We need to empower civil society partners who support CR services in communes, towns, districts and areas far from urban centers where there are no fixed CR services.”*

**CRVS Country Training needs**

Countries were asked about institutional and individual training needs on Civil Registration and Vital Statistic. The responses indicated a presence of diverse training needs.
For instance one of the respondents indicated that "The subject of civil status is not taught in depth at university..." This implies that capacity building efforts to streamlining the operation of the CRVS in Africa should target universities as well. This is especially important because universities provide the initial training on CRVS through some of the academic programmes they offer. To enable in-depth teaching about CRVS, there might be need for specialized courses on CRVS - in form of short courses if not possible as fully fledged academic programmes.

The institutional training needs included training in:

**General Institutional Training**

- Digitization of civil registration records and records management processes.
- The Importance of civil registration and vital statistics on decision making in development actions.
- Medical Certification of Cause of Death (MCCoD), mortality coding and International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11).
- Business process mapping and improvement for CRVS services.
- Data collection, compilation, processing and analysis, and annual publication of vital statistics.
- Operationalization of the holistic approach to the management of the Unique Identifier.
- The development of communication strategies for the civil registration.
- Technicians and civil society partners involved in the national CRVS on: functioning of the CRVS, alignment of CRVS with United Nations recommended standards and report publication.

**Individual training needs**

Regarding specific individual training needs of staff at the different categories on civil registration, training needs for staff at the management level included training in:

1. Assessment, analysis and strategic planning of CRVS System.
2. Civil registration electronic management.
4. For staff heading decentralized offices, the training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary of the training needs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Technical needs</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digitization of civil registration processes, civil registration records and records management processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business process mapping and improvement for CRVS services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data collection, compilation, processing and analysis, and annual publication of vital statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of communication strategies for the civil registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manual and physical archiving of civil registration data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary of the Knowledge gap needs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Importance of civil registration and vital statistics on decision making in development actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Certification of Cause of Death (MCCoD), mortality coding and International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing best practices in CRVS systems in Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal framework that regulates CRVS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of statistics from civil registration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


5. needs pointed out included training in:
6. Manual and electronic civil registration
7. Physical and electronic archiving of civil registration data

There were no specific training needs pointed out for civil registration operational staff. However, countries did indicate the need for mentorship, leadership and governance training. They also noted the need for skills in advocacy and monitoring and evaluation training. Additionally, the need to train staff in understanding the CRVS and managing its Information system, understanding the legal framework within which the CRVS operates and use of statistics from civil registration data were highlighted.

**Preferred Training modalities**

Another theme generated from the information was the training modalities of the CRVS capacity building program preferred by CRVS offices/institutions/departments/units. This section provides proposed information on the duration, mode of delivery, number of proposed staff and whether training would be physical or virtual.

One of the respondents indicated that “*Regular video conferences held with staff of the national offices responsible for the sectors involved in the CRVS system in each country for updates and capacity building.*” This implies that to maximize effectiveness of the capacity building program, it should be sustainable rather than being a one off. One of the suggested ways of ensuring sustainability is by means of periodic video conferences to keep up-to-date civil registration officers of any new developments concerning the CRVS.

These are summarized in Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Country Preferred and suggested training modalities</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Modality</strong></td>
<td><strong>Response(s)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Proposed number of staff for CRVS training</em></td>
<td>Across countries, the proposed number of staff to be trained ranges between 6 and 500 staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode of training¹</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical vs virtual</td>
<td>Physical is preferred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modular vs one off</td>
<td>Modular is preferred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best way to deliver if trainings have to cover most office staff</td>
<td>Some countries suggested that effective training would call for splitting participants into small groups. Most countries also expressed preference for physical trainings.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Some countries suggested that effective training would call for splitting participants into small groups. Most countries also expressed preference for physical trainings.
However, some countries believe *virtual training would be an equally better delivery mode* provided there is proper internet connectivity.

**Duration of the training**

Varies across countries and depends on the duration of time staff can be given off duty stations. The suggested duration ranges from at least 3 days in some countries up to 1 month in others. Duration is 3 days to 1 month maximum.

**Preferred timing of the training**

Some countries are open to training at any time of the year. However, some would prefer training early in the first quarter of the year (that is; last two weeks of January and first two weeks of February 2022).

Other countries would prefer a phased training, with each phase/ module not lasting more than one week.

Other countries would prefer training sessions to be conducted in the morning (between 8:30 and 12:00) and afternoon (between 13:00 and 16:30 hours).

*Some countries were open to the idea of virtual trainings considering the covid-19 surge. However, it was highlighted that, long hours of virtual training would not be an effective method.*

**Staff received Previous training on CRVS**

This section highlights previous training on CRVS received by respondents. Of the six officers who responded to the IDI tool, only four have ever been trained on CRVS. The training was in-country for two of the officers while for the other, it was outside of the country. The trainings were organized by the Africa Programme on Accelerated improvement of civil registration and vital statistics system (APAI-CRVS), World Bank and the Center of Excellence. Additionally, the trainings were virtual according to two of the respondents. For officers who provided information on the content of the training, aspects covered included CRVS business process improvement, international codification of causes of death, CRVS legal review process and training on practical guide for civil status officers.
Appendix 2: Structured Needs Assessment In depth Tool

COMPLETE YOUR COUNTRY

Please tell us about yourself. (Probe for: current role, working experience, duration at place of work).

1. Kindly share with us some of the challenges faced by your office CRVS (Probe for: challenges in general with a focus on information gaps, COVID-19 pandemic, needs in the region or as a continent).

2. Are there some human capacity challenges that are faced with your Office? (Probe how these can be addressed and if these require capacity building).

3. What are some of your training needs of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics system that you would wish to receive as institution/department/unit? (Probe for detailed institutional/government office needs and any general aspects regarding CR)

4. What are the specific individual training needs in CR for the different categories of staff at your institution (Probe for: (1) management level at head office; (2) for those heading decentralized offices, (3) operational staff)

5. Please share with us the proposed number of staff in the different levels in your institution/department that you would wish to be trained in CRVS and the duration staff can be given off the station? (Probe for number of trainings, duration staff that can be given off the station, number of participants, physical versus virtual training).

6. What would be the most preferred mode of training in CRVS for you and the staff at different levels in your institution? (Probe for (1) modular versus one off training, (2) duration for the training, (3) physical versus virtual)

7. In your view what is the most appropriate period or timing would you prefer yourself or staff to have the training once organized. (Probe: preferred timing, for how soon the training is needed, period when team could be fully available).

8. If the trainings, have to cover most of the people in your Office, what will be the best way to deliver such trainings?

9. Please kindly share with us your previous current training on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics system (CRVS). (Probe for: any training attended, date of the most previous
training, venue; In-country or outside the country), type of training (whether virtual or physical) and aspects or content of the training).

10. Is there any other information that you wish to share with the team regarding the CRVS training needs in your country or Africa in general. *(Probe for any other information that we could have missed out in the tool.)*

11. Please can you add any other information that you think is important to consider in a Capacity Building Programme for APAI-CRVS

*Thank you for your participation and time*