

# CRVS as an essential element of child protection in RMI

## REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS



- RMI launched their first Child Protection Baseline Report in 2013, with support from UNICEF, to serve as a marker for measuring progress in child protection.
- The report and subsequent launch workshop identified a number of areas where civil registration was critical for supporting child protection in RMI such as:
  - The need for birth registration regardless of the parents' marital status and the recognition of children's citizenship rights
  - The mandatory investigation of a death of a child.



### CRVS in RMI

Registration of births and deaths in RMI is undertaken through the national Civil Registry Office which sits under the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The system is fairly centralized and requires families to come to the office either in Majuro or on Kwajalein to complete the registration. Although registration is compulsory by law, registration is still incomplete. Duplicate records are also an issue, as searching for previously issued certificates is difficult and it is not uncommon for people to simply ask for a new registration when a formal certificate is needed.

Additionally, multiple programs within the Ministry of Health record births and deaths. These include data collected through the two major hospitals on Majuro and Kwajalein, and both outer island health programs. Monthly reporting from the outer islands is frequently done by CB radio call.

### CRVS and Child Protection

The Child Protection Baseline report reviews how effectively the legal framework, formal social service structures, and the community and family environment protects children and provides recommendations going forward.

A key output of child protection is that an effective and efficient birth registration system is in place and children's citizenship rights are recognized. Some recommendations to strengthen civil registration in RMI were to:

- Seek Cabinet approval to revise the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act to specify the requirement of a mandatory investigation into the death of a child. An alternative would be to include this into the Child Abuse and Neglect Act.
- Undertake further research into the long-term impact of current registration requirements on the child's best interests, especially in cases of higher incidence of non-registration, such as where parents are not married and where children are born out of wedlock. Ensure enforcement of birth registration regulations and provide assistance to register where required.

In conjunction with the report launch, BAG partners facilitated a workshop to

**Map the processes for reporting births & deaths**

and identify priority issues based on the findings from the comprehensive CRVS assessment.



**Next steps for RMI include:**

- Formalizing a national CRVS improvement action plan
- Linking the HIS reporting to the Ministry of Internal Affairs
- Data analysis and report writing.



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