Vital Strategies | Bloomberg Philanthropies | DATA FOR HEALTH INITIATIVE

Colombia

PARTNERS

- Ministry of Health and Social Protection (Ministerio de Salud y Protección Social)
- National Administrative Department of Statistics (Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística)
- National Health Institute (Instituto Nacional de Salud)
- National Agency for Road Safety (Agencia Nacional de Seguridad Vial)

THE CONTEXT

Through the adoption of new strategies and technologies, Colombia has created one of the most complete civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) systems in Latin America. Vital Strategies' Data Impact Program has been working with our partners in Colombia since 2017 to expand the use of those data to enhance public health policymaking.

THE APPROACH

Vital Strategies' Data Impact Program partners with governments to use data to improve public health by prioritizing health issues and identifying populations in need, allocating financial and human resources, enacting laws and regulations, and establishing programs and services. The program provides technical assistance in three categories:

Processes

Strengthening procedures, policies and systems for evidence use

Products

Producing analytic insights and compelling reporting of health data

People

Developing and reinforcing human capacity

Main Achievement 1

Using data to improve road safety: A multisectoral National Advisory Committee on the Analysis of Road Safety Data—organized with support from the Vital Strategies' Data Impact Program and Bloomberg Philanthropies Initiative for Global Road Safety (BIGRS)—established best practices for using road safety data at a national level.

The committee integrated disparate data sources to produce the first national report on road traffic injuries in December 2020, enabling the national government to estimate the number of serious motor vehicle injuries throughout the country for the first time. This process also improved the completeness of data on deaths due to motor vehicle crashes, allowing government stakeholders to register up to five times more deaths than previously detected from this cause.

The National Agency for Road Safety used the report to establish a process for reporting data on road vehicle crashes, injuries and deaths. The report received extensive press coverage.

This work built on the previous collaboration between Data Impact, the Ministry of Health and Social Protection and the Ministry of Transport, which led to a 2019 Technical Regulation mandating protective helmets for use on motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles and other two-wheelers.

Main Achievement 2

Improving access to vital statistics: The National Administrative Department of Statistics produced the country's first vital statistics report with assistance from Vital's Data Impact and CRVS Systems Improvement Programs. This interactive digital report used national and international quality standards to analyze birth and death data from 1998 to 2019, as well as disaggregated data on the country's recognized ethnic groups from 2012 to 2019.

The report has improved access to vital statistics for decision-making and resource allocation. It will serve as a model for the statistics department in producing other data reports and has strengthened capacity among department staff for producing other specialized analyses and reports on topics such as maternal mortality. The report has been presented to stakeholders including the Intersectoral Vital Statistics Committee, subnational government entities, and universities.

Main Achievement 3

Monitoring lead poisoning:
Conservative estimates suggest that $25 million in diagnosis and treatment of children with elevated lead levels could be saved through a change in regulation for lead in household paint. The Data Impact Program supported a cost analysis of diagnosis and treatment for lead exposure, comparing the current state to the recommendation of regulating the lead content of household paints to meet the international target of less than 90 parts per million. The Ministry of Environment has committed to add this topic to the agenda of the National Commission on Environmental Health.

Ongoing Work

Institutionalizing an analytic process to prioritize and assess policy interventions

The National Health Institute (INS) is working to institutionalize the Data to Policy training program within the institute's policy analysis arm, the Observatory. The program provides tools for assessing the economic and health impact of policy options. A virtual component will also be housed on the INS training platform. Observatory analysts will follow the Data to Policy protocol in developing policy analyses and reports.

Increasing accessibility of vital statistics data for decision-making

The National Administrative Department of Statistics will implement tools to streamline and automate the process for updating vital statistics in future years. In addition, a dashboard of key vital statistics indicators will be developed to strengthen their presentation and facilitate monitoring by decision-makers for action.

The CRVS and Data Impact teams are also collaborating with the statistics department to support analysis of the quality of cause-of-death data. This analysis will examine the concordance between death certificate and medical record information on the cause of death. The results will be used to guide efforts to strengthen cause-of-death data.

Establishing an intersectoral environmental health information system

Vital's Data Impact Program will support a collaboration between Colombia's Ministry of Health and the Intersectoral Committee on Environmental Health to integrate and present selected environmental health data to guide policy.

Data from various institutional sources will be presented in a series of reports, starting with air quality. The report will facilitate monitoring of indicator trends and policy action.

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About Data For Health

The Data for Health Initiative is a global effort supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies with additional support from and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. It provides technical assistance and grants to governments in low- and middle-income countries worldwide to improve public health data systems including civil registration and vital statistics systems; cancer registries; and data-driven policymaking and decision-making processes. Vital Strategies serves as an implementing partner.