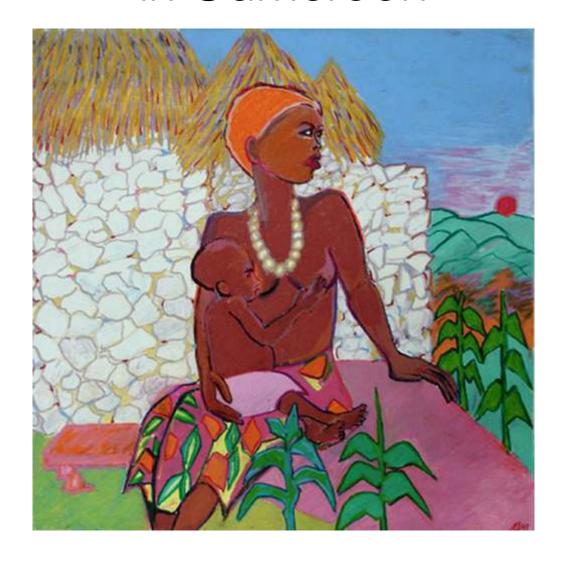# Civil Registration Support in Cameroon

Evaluation of UNICEF-support 2002-2011

Yaoundé | The Hague, December 2011

Table of Contents

2

Preface

UNICEF has advocated the improvement of registration rates across the world with vigour since the first contours of the magnitude of the problem became known. In 1998 the lead theme of the Progress of Nations annual publication was birth registration. The then UN Secretary general Kofi Annan wrote the preface to this seminal publication.

The *Progress of Nations* is a clarion call for children. It asks every nation on earth to examine its progress towards the achievable goals set at the World Summit for Children in 1990 and to undertake an honest appraisal of where it has succeeded and where it is falling behind.

This year's report highlights successes attained and challenges remaining in efforts to register each child at birth, to immunize every child on earth and to help adolescents, particularly girls, as they set out on the path towards adulthood. With its clear league tables, *The Progress of Nations* is an objective scorecard on these issues. Commentaries by leading thinkers and doers stress the need for an approach to development based on child rights, calling on governments to fulfil the promises they made in ratifying the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Progress of Nations reminds us annually that rhetoric about children must be backed up with action. I would commend it to anyone concerned about the status of our most vulnerable citizens.

Kofi A. Annan
Secretary-General
United Nations

Since 1998 UNICEF's support has led to the registration of millions of children. At any time of day one or another UNICEF-supported activity to achieve universal registration coverage will be underway in over 80 countries across the globe. Still one in three newborns will not be registered in a civil register immediately.

In the past 13 years lessons have been learned, good and less good, and approaches that were less successful have been retired to make place for other approaches that promise better results. Learning continues.

This evaluation takes a look at UNICEF-aided activities in Cameroon carried out in good collaboration with the Government of Cameroon and NGOs.

Too many small new citizens of Cameroon still fall through the cracks of the civil registration service. This evaluation is hoped to be a step towards an inclusive service delivery no longer failing a single child.

Drs. Jaap van der Straaten, MBA
CEO
Civil registration centre for development—CRC4D,
The Netherlands

Executive Summary

From its Independence Day in 1960, its first law on the country's paper *Card d'Identité Nationale* in 1964, and its first law on civil registration in 1968, and until 1995, Cameroon may have been among the best performing countries in African identity management. It was among the best according to international statistics but Cameroon's delegates at the 1995 United Nations Statistics Division conference in Rabat reported a lack of resources and a lack of interest from the government and the people alike. Since 1995 Cameroon's numbers have deteriorated. Early into the new century the minister for Local Government and Decentralization took steps for reform. Frank studies were conducted and a $27.5 million reform agenda was drawn up. A new decree in 2011 is introducing some changes to the "ordonnance" of 1981. This will allow the establishment of a Bureau National de l'État Civil, holding a promise of strengthened national management. Special centres (about 2,000) for civil registration will be turned into branch offices of the service's 360 main civil registration centres.

At present the births of less than 6 in 10 children are registered within the legal timeframe. The Committee on the Rights of the Child has called on Cameroon to improve this situation, with special attention for the most vulnerable children. Indeed, children living in rural areas and those born to poor parents are the least likely to be registered. One ministry-supported study puts the proportion of civil registers in good state in the main civil registration centres at less than 1 in 5. I.e., even if a child has been registered the registration record might no longer be retrievable.

While the pace of civil registration reform is painstakingly slow and the ministry thus far has not been successful to attract broad-based international support for the reform program, there is a growing impatience of the public with the situation. This has led to an increase in the circulation of counterfeited identity documents, reported consistently by police officials interviewed and others. The integrity of the country's ID system depends on the reliability of the birth certificate as the important breeder document for any ID system. There is international concern about such developments: the so-called "Rabat process" cooperation between Africa and Europe to reduce illegal immigration from Africa into Europe includes the aim to improve the quality of civil status records and combat documentary fraud.

Since 2009 a new Africa-wide initiative has started which has resulted in a first conference for African Ministers responsible for Civil Registration, held in Addis

Ababa in August 2010. A second conference to be held in August 2012 in South Africa will discuss a medium-term program to rehabilitate civil registration across Africa—many African countries are facing similar civil registration challenges as Cameroon does.

UNICEF, which is supporting birth and civil registration improvement programs in more than 80 countries, has joined the government of Cameroon since 2002 to ameliorate registration service delivery and deal with some of its undesired fall-out. In 2002 UNICEF started to work with NGOs to address the problem that children in primary school cannot sit the *Certificat d'Études Primaires* exam without a birth certificate. UNICEF's support was channeled to the three regions of the *Grand Nord* that combine the country's lowest birth registration rates with the country's lowest primary school attendance rates (especially for girls). Starting in 2008 UNICEF's cooperation program with the government has also included aid to the training of civil registrars and some basic supplies. In addition UNICEF has made birth registration part of its program for children affected by HIV and AIDS.

This Report is the result of the government's and UNICEF's intention to assess whether UNICEF's support measures up to standards and makes a lasting difference. The Report has been requested to inform UNICEF's future collaboration. It has been made possible by the active assistance of the Ministry of Local Government and Decentralization—as well the ministries of Education and Justice, partners of UNICEF (ADAMS, Plan, Fondation Bethlehem, RECAMEF, VSO), as well as many others and UNICEF staff—last, but not least.

The main conclusions of this Report could be phrased in terms of more or less successful government- and UNICEF efforts to improve civil registration service delivery. The main body of the report certainly does that, but ultimately this all serves to inform in a positive way the mission the Government of Cameroon and UNICEF share, i.e. to improve the lives of all children and making sure that the children of Cameroon can reach their full potential. Within the context of this Evaluation Report that mission can simply be summarized as "effectively ensuring that every child will be registered immediately after birth".

This Report suggests that—within the context of government civil registration and identity management policy that will be informed by ten suggested enhancements—UNICEF will give assistance where its own strengths lie, which could be summed up as "bringing state of the art civil registration know-how to Cameroon", by tapping in its broad-based global program and expert networks. For UNICEF this could mean a program of five priorities. See next page for the suggested ten- and five-point agendas for the Government of Cameroon and UNICEF.

Suggestions to Government

1. Re-organize the civil registration service as a de-concentrated government service, with the new Bureau National de l'État Civil having direct control over the main registration centers and "civil registration agents".
2. Integrate the national ID infrastructure (now with DGSN) with civil registration.
3. Improve the interoperability ("work as one organization") of the civil registration service with MINSANTÉ and MINEDUB.
4. Scale up mobile phone use for vital event notification by civil registration agents upon successful trial.
5. Phase out the use of paper (other than for extracts) and digitize the service, with the main civil registration centers brought on-line, and frontline notification agents connected through mobile phone networks.
6. Seek international assistance for development of new comprehensive civil registration and identity management law. Suspend *jugements supplétifs*.
7. Introduce incentives for families through social transfers, and for the registration service through performance-based budget and adequate registrar pay.
8. Update the civil registration reform program. Consider the development of a civil registration policy as an intermediary step. Reduce the cost to $15m from $27.5m. Diversify expert support. Accelerate implementation.
9. Develop a professional civil registrar-training program and encourage the establishment of an association of civil registrars. Rejuvenate the civil registrar corps.
10. Smarten up the civil registration reform case, open up the program for assistance from a broad donor community and effectively raise funds.

Suggestions for UNICEF support in a new cooperation program

1. Assist in updating the civil registration reform agenda (expert input to all ten government points).
2. Support study visits for health and national ID interoperability and application of digitization/mobile phone technology.
3. Continue ongoing collaboration for a quality-enhanced civil registrar training program.
4. Support introduction of incentive systems for parents to comply with civil registration law, to be validated by randomized control trial.
5. Give assistance to writing a new, comprehensive law for a dematerialized and interoperable civil registration and national ID system.

1. Civil registration in Cameroon

1.1 The state of affairs

Impasse and exclusion

In a United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) meeting held in 1995 in Morocco delegates of Cameroon reported that the country's registration rate of births was 90% or more, and the rate of death registration 34%.[i] In the same year a publication of the International Institute for Vital Registration and Statistics reported the birth registration rate at 85% and death registration at 30%.[ii]

In those days Cameroon was reporting better civil registration results than any other country in Africa with the exception of a few northern African countries (Egypt, Algeria, Libya and Tunisia) and a handful of small African island countries. The Cameroonian delegation at the Rabat conference—rather than gloating over the apparent relative excellence of the civil registration service—gave a candid insight in the ills of the service: (1) shortage of funds, (2) lack of interest from the government and the population alike, (3) lack of intergovernmental coordination, and (4) insufficient training of civil registrars.[iii]

Fifteen years later Cameroon is no longer among the best in Africa for its civil registration performance. The available data show that birth registration rates have *fallen* since the Morocco conference was held. From a level of 85%—or even better—in 1995 the birth registration rate dropped to 79% in 2000[iv] and 70%[v] in 2006. Another source puts the rate at 76% in the latter year.[vi] It is also important to understand that these rates need qualification as part of the registrations can have quality defects affecting their validity, while record keeping practices raise serious questions about the quality of the register as an accessible store of civil registration records.[vii]

The country rate is an average of regional rates that vary between 94% in Douala to as low as 36% in Sud-Ouest region.[viii] Our second source puts the lowest rate (41%) in the Extrême Nord region (which also has the largest population of any region), while the Ouest, Littoral, Sud and Centre regions (which include Douala and Yaoundé) would have rates of 90% or above.[ix]

Under-registration not only shows geographical variance. It is more prevalent in rural (58% birth registration) than in urban areas (86%). Mothers with secondary education or more will register their children in 86% of cases, while mothers without any education will only do so 54% of the time. Especially, there is a divide between the poor and the rich: the registration of births by the poorest quintile is 51% while the richest quintile shows a rate of 91%.[x]

What does this level of birth registration imply? In round numbers it means that of 650,000 newborns about 260,000 are not registered within the legal timeframe each year.[xi] For every newborn registered within the set time limit another is registered "hors le délais", and these delayed registrations require a complicated and, for Cameroonian living standards, expensive court procedure, called the "jugement supplétif". [xii]

Cameroon is not alone in using a court procedure for delayed birth registration—many other countries do. However, a judicial procedure applied for a failure of the public to comply with the law in more than 4 out of 10 instances begs the question whether it is the right response of government. If it were driving through a red light we would wonder whether the penalties aren't severe enough to make drivers stop, whether drivers cannot stop, or that they don't see the traffic light. The use of a judicial procedure, in our view, is more appropriate when there is close to full compliance with the law. In Cameroon's case, with the judicial procedure costing between $20 up to $200 per case[xiii] and delayed registration being especially a "sin" of the poor, it appears that a much "lighter" administrative procedure (done by civil registrars themselves as applies to cases during the grace period now) would be more appropriate until the country has solved the problem of the dysfunction of the civil registration system and the lack of compliance of the population—willingly, against their will or because of a lack of awareness— with the law.

For the about 230,000 deaths annually[xiv] no current registration rates are known. In 1995 the rate was reported to be 30%, or 34% (see above). I.e., registered deaths would number about 75,000 a year, but in actual fact their number seems to have come down to 20,000—25,000.[xv] One of the main reasons for the failure to register deaths is financial. The number of marriages registered is about 30,000—35,000 annually.[xvi] The total of registrations— within the legal timeframe or outside of it—of any kind (births—including late and delayed registrations, deaths and marriages) we estimate annually at around 800,000 for the country at the most.[xvii]

Early in the 2000s a reform of the civil registration system was announced (see below). In effect, the reform commenced just a year ago[xviii] (after a few years during which studies were conducted) and therefore the situation may not have improved or, possibly, could have deteriorated more.

A short history of civil registration in Cameroon

Cameroon's civil registration system is the product of European colonial heritage, as it is all across Africa, the Americas and large parts of Asia. It combines strands from the registration practices of the former German, French and English colonial powers who themselves introduced civil registration in 1876 (Germany), 1792 (France—the "Code Napoléon"), and as

far back as in 1538 in England and Wales [xix] In England the instigator of the system, Thomas Cromwell who was a Vicar of King Henri VIII, introduced the nationwide system for the registration of all births, deaths and marriages. He explained why:

"...for the avoiding of sundry strifes and processes and contentions arising from age, lineal descent, title of inheritance, legitimation of bastardy, and for knowledge, whether any person is our subject or no." [xx]

All of the former "mother countries" of Cameroon have since long had systems in place that are complete and, with the introduction of computers and the Internet, have "gone digital"—becoming ever more sophisticated. Their systems support what the UNSD has called "the normal functioning" of their societies, furnishing the source ("breeder") documents for an ever greater collection of identity "papers" (much of it plastic or electronic) of citizens who need to identify themselves day in day out for numerous reasons whether it is in their interaction with government or with the private sector.[xxi]

Most of the African countries and some Asian countries have not been able to achieve civil registration completeness thus far—Cameroon among them. For one, the history of civil registration in Cameroon as a self-assumed rather than externally imposed activity dates from the country's independence, which was only gained in 1960. The first civil registration law in the unified country was enacted in 1968. Then major new legislation on *"l'état civil"* was adopted in 1981, which brought civil registration practice in the former British part of the country into the country fold. The 1981 ordinance was supplemented by a decree in 1987, establishing special civil registration centers in addition to the already existing main centers. This year (2011) a new law has been passed which establishes a central registration office and introduces some other changes to registration law with the aim of reforming civil registration, viz. the creation of secondary centers and the extension of the time frame and grace period for the registration of births.

International law

Cromwell already indicated a legal rationale for civil registration, e.g. for settling disputes between people over property. The twentieth century saw the important development of human rights law. Most eminently the right of every person, every child to be registered at birth, to acquire a name and nationality, and to be recognized as a citizen of the state with rights, is laid down in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948), Article 15: "Everyone has the right to a nationality." In 1966 the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, Article 24, established that: "Every child shall be registered immediately after birth and shall have a name. ... Every child has the right to acquire a nationality." In 1989 the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* formulated that "the child shall be registered immediately after birth and has the right to a name and nationality and to know and be cared for

by his or her parents. The State shall ensure the implementation of these rights in accordance with national law and its obligations under the relevant international instruments in this field, in particular where the child would otherwise be stateless." A year later this was also laid down in the *African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child*: "Every child shall have the right from his birth to a name ... shall be registered immediately after birth ... has the right to acquire a nationality"(Article 6). Cameroon is a signatory to these important international law standards. The Committee on the Rights of the Child—having observed the ongoing weakness of the civil registration system—called on the Government of Cameroon only last year to improve the registration of children, with the emphasis on disadvantaged children whether belonging to certain minorities, living in rural areas or belonging to the refugee population in Cameroon, and suggests to work with UNICEF in doing so.[xxii]

Vital statistics

Cromwell also mentioned that civil registration allows the state to "know" its citizens. Civil registration systems, when they are complete and well-run, play an important role in the generation of vital statistics and demographic data essential for public health policy and the design of other government policy and planning, and helping the optimal allocation of scarce resources. The success of decentralization of government, with much of its advantages, depends in actual effect heavily on local government having the data in order to be able to govern intelligently. Civil registration systems are superior in quality, timeliness and cost-effectiveness to censuses or sample surveys in generating such data. Cameroon's inability thus far to establish a well-functioning civil registration system has resulted in the country having to rely on less reliable demographic data and vital statistics obtained at higher cost, although the real cost is in the misallocation of scarce resources.

National identity cards

In 1964—just four years into independence and before it enacted its first law on civil registration—Cameroon introduced a national "ID" (identity document). The responsibility for the issuance of the ID was given to the national police force, the *Direction Générale de la Sûrété Nationale*. The card is for adults from 18 years and above. In 1995 the national IDs began to be computerized, although they were still paper cards. Replaced by new cards in the early 2000s the old cards remained valid until 30 June 2004. Required for voter registration and to vote in national elections the cards were again replaced in 2011 prior to the presidential elections.[xxiii]

National IDs have become a staple in virtually all countries of the world. At this moment a behemoth project is underway in India to get each of the 1.2 billion people a national ID. China is introducing new cards with biometric features. Pakistan has recently introduced a national ID and its NADRA

organization has won a bid to provide Nigerians with an ID. Another large country, Indonesia, is currently introducing an electronic ID. Most African countries have a national ID or are in the process of introducing or replacing one.

Civil registration systems cannot be seen in isolation from other identity systems used in a country, especially not from national ID systems that have become so important and provide the means of identification most often used in day-to-day life. For the efficient and effective use of resources the coordination of systems is essential. Identification of citizens through birth registration is a reliable and cost-effective method, second to none. When civil registration, national ID and voter registration systems exist in parallel it is important to have interoperability of systems.[xxiv] The birth certificate is the preferred "breeder document" to be used for enrollment in the national ID system. Some countries have dealt with the integration of systems in a sophisticated way. For example, in Malaysia, Peru and Uruguay newborns not only are registered immediately within the civil registration system, but they also obtain a unique identification number and a national ID. In other countries the eligibility age for a national ID is low or lowered (e.g. Thailand which lowered the age for the national ID from 14 to 7 years old). Ideally one organization, whether public or semi-public, is tasked with the responsibility for civil registration and the national ID. This is not the case in Cameroon, which is detrimental to the economics of both systems. The national ID database in Cameroon is still the only computerized resident database.

Fraud

Expensive procedures to obtain birth certificates through a court procedure have led to an underground market for false certificates. The under-funding of the civil registration service goes hand in hand with the underpayment or the absence of payment of registrars, which has resulted in illegal fees levied for registrar pay or local government revenue or both, corrupting the system and its officers and also encouraging a shadowy, secondary circuit.[xxv] This not only breeds illegality and crime. It also affects the credibility of the country's identity management in general and therefore also its travel documents, and by extension its reputation abroad, its credit ratings, its cost of doing business and its success in international affairs whether economic or political. There is international concern about such developments: the cooperation between Africa and Europe to reduce illegal immigration from Africa into Europe includes the aim to improve the quality of civil status records and combat documentary fraud. Europe and Africa have started the so-called "Rabat-process" precisely because the problems in identity management in African countries are spilling over into Europe. [xxvi]

Organizational design

The organization of the civil registration service in Cameroon has some serious constraints. Cameroon's civil registration service has been underfunded and understaffed for most if not all of its history. This is in contrast with the resources channeled to the national ID.

One analytical study (hereafter called "the Study")[xxvii] zeroes in on the relation—or lack of it—between the main civil registration centers and the special centers, while this study and another follow-up study (hereafter called "the Mapping Study")[xxviii] lay bare the many perceived ills of the special centers. Indeed, in the history of the organization of civil registration they were, in 1987, the second major change following the merger of the two different systems that existed before independence. They have not lived up to their calling.

Undoubtedly, the shortcomings of the special centers are manifold, but so are the weaknesses of the principal centers, well documented in both studies too. However, it is the position in this Report that the civil registration service above all has been and has remained weakly structured throughout all these years because of the following main weaknesses in the organization:

o The lack of "a head to the body"—no central management, and hence no central accountability—and

o The "embedding" of civil registration within local government.

Civil registration is in the national interest and in the challenging environment typical to a developing country the service is best structured in a de-concentrated rather than decentralized manner. A good degree of autonomy has proven a feature of a successful operation in Peru, for example.[xxix]

Over the past decade or so the Ministère de l'Administration Territoriale et de la Décentralisation (MINATD) has been supported by an advisory consultancy, *CIVI.POL Conseil*, and as a result studies (the "Study" and the "Mapping Study") of the functioning of the civil registration system have been completed. These studies, which involved the local national statistics bureau (INS), and the demography research institute (IFORD), have been incisive—although not always fully consistent and accurate—in analyzing the state of civil registration. This work has led to remarkably frank and therefore admirable observations. It has also resulted in a proposed $27.5m civil registration reform program divided into five subprograms: (1) data collection, (2) legal reform, (3) training and sensitization, (4) equipping (a greatly expanded number of) civil registration centers, and (5) computerization.[xxx] Sixty percent of the costs of the program have been estimated as needed for sub-program (4). In section 2.2 we will discuss the reform program.

Organizational design and restructuring do not receive as much attention in the reform program as we believe is needed for a substantial step-change in the civil registration's service delivery performance.

Computerization

Computers are still a rare sight within the civil registration service, and civil registration is still paper-based. The storage of paper records and the sharing of duplicates between offices in a resource-poor setting is a daunting challenge that very few developing countries have mastered adequately.

Not all registrations are made the same: no gender, no place of birth, etc.

But, probably more important than anything else the entry of records in a paper-based system is error-prone. As a result registration rates should be viewed with some reservation, as part of the registrations are actually incomplete and not compliant with the law.

Interoperability

As it is important that first registration of births should be free of charge and many people could not afford to pay sizeable fees for registration anyhow, the economics of civil registration require that the civil registration service is organized at lowest possible cost. Registered vital events that, as we showed above, number about 800,000 annually, imply that an average of 1.5 vital event happen per square kilometer per year. An office that is within walking distance (less than 5 kilometer away) would have a service area of 80 km2, i.e. the annual workload of such an office would be 120 vital events per year, equivalent to just one event every two working days. Such an office—6,000 of those would be needed—would clearly be unviable. Indeed, some of those offices, when located in densely populated areas, would have a larger workload, but others, in rural areas, would have workloads less than 120 vital events a year. I.e., many of these "offices" would be all but an office. But having fewer offices would mean greater distances between the population

and the service—it seems a typical "Catch-22" quandary. Is it then impossible for the civil registration office in to perform its tasks at affordable cost and reach the public at the same time? But is it? The key word is "office", and the key question is: Are they needed?

It is for reasons of plain economics that the civil registration service needs to "piggy-back" on other government services. Obvious partners are those government services that already have an outreach across the country: local government, health, education and the police force.

In Cameroon, Art. 31 of the 1981 ordinance established a responsibility for health personnel to declare births. In practice this rarely happens. There are many reasons for this—all surmountable witness successful collaboration between the health sector and the civil registration service across the world. An obstacle for timely registration often mentioned (also in Cameroon) is the cultural name-giving practice. India has solved this by allowing registration without the name. The name can be added within a fifteen-year period.[xxxi] For many problems that may seem intractable solutions have been found. "Appropriate civil registration" is asked for. No country is held to follow any standard model.

As the civil registration service is part of the local government organization and department the service is part of local government rather than interoperable with local government. Judging from the state of the service delivery this has not been an undivided success.

There is some degree of collaboration between the National ID service and the civil registration service, but significant opportunities for cooperation and shared operations, especially in rural areas, remain unused.

In activities to support children being able to sit the "Certificat d'Études Primaires" ("CEP") exam the education sector plays a role. But the pool of schoolteachers present in communities is not yet tapped to improve registration as could be the case.

Legal development

Cameroon has changed its registration law since independence a couple of times—in 1968, 1981, 1987, and of late by the new law of 2011. The conclusion can be drawn that lawmakers, without doubt egged on by stakeholders, cannot be said to have been idle. However, it is not only the frequency of law changes that matters. Important is what the substance of those changes has been. The changes to the law made in 1981/1987 for the creation of special civil registration centers, for example, have not brought the improvement to service delivery as hoped for. The merits of the new branch-offices as provided for in the law of 2011 may prove equally elusive. The extension of the timeframes for late and delayed registration may not make

much difference since it is not the present timeframe that is the most important reason for registration "hors le délais". (According to our estimate it will reduce delayed registration with only 6%, i.e. 94% of the delayed registration problem will still not have been removed).[xxxii] The new law of 2011 is a direct result of the reform agenda. What the new law fails to address in a comprehensive manner are organizational (institutional) reform, and laying the legal foundation for sub-program (5), the digitization of the civil registration system.

Training

Already long ago reported as a need at the Morocco conference held in 1995, the training of civil registrars has only just commenced with a UNICEF-supported series of trainings in the four eastern regions of the country. Apart from this no other training than on-the-job training for civil registrars has been done. With a reported number of 3,700 civil registrars (to be greatly expanded if almost 2,000 new registration centers would be opened), and the UNICEF training having reached less than 10% of them with a first basic training, the need for a substantial, structured training program is evident. There is no national association of registrars that could play an important role in capacity-building efforts and communication.

Awareness

Most adults in Cameroon carry a national ID, notwithstanding the costs and application hurdles involved. The reason is straightforward: people need them. In any study or policy document regarding civil registration that deals with under-registration the call to sensitize the population is a standard ingredient, like salt is to food, not only for Cameroon but more generally. We believe there is serious reason to challenge common wisdom that many people are not aware that they should register their children, or don't know the procedure. We believe that, in fact, people often act in full conscience and in a fully rational way. It should be no surprise that poor people have an inclination to postpone the—*de facto* discretionary—spending of their meagre resources for a birth certificate as long as they can while they weigh the risks and discount the fear of violation of the law or appearance before a court. The costs of birth registration can be substantial, especially for poor people, when they have to travel, make repeat calls to a civil registration center and may sometimes find that the center can not deliver the service they have come for. People may not understand procedures fully, may make mistakes and sometimes take wrong decisions. They may also have warranted fear that registration may have financial consequences for them (taxes).

According to the Civil Registrar General of England and Wales, commenting in the 1940s on a comparable matter, there is a need for "parasitic vitality": the provision of incentives by coupling civil registration to a government

provision (for England and Wales in those days food rations) that sufficiently entices people to register so that they perceive more *individual* benefits than costs in doing so.[xxxiii] A common mistake of governments, UN organizations and NGOs alike is to project their own views of the importance of registration—whether philosophical, ideological or political—onto the population. Sensitization is too much based on and inspired by such ideas and remains ineffective because of the "disconnect" with the targeted people's own perspectives and realities. Rather than spending substantial resources on raising people's awareness and their sensitization it would be more effective to rely on means of finding tangible incentives for people to register their children, or their dead. The association of registration with cash transfers (e.g. the SAGE project in Uganda) or child vouchers (e.g. Mauritius) is a possibility.[xxxiv] People do respond to incentives better than they do to messages that do not respond to their realities.

That people do respond to pecuniary incentives was already known in England around 1700 when the Poor Laws were enacted and the implementation of those laws was made possible by the civil registration system that had already been put in place. This—according one Cambridge history scholar—made no less than the Industrial Revolution possible.[xxxv] Interestingly, a small study—done in Cameroon itself, in the Southwest region, in 1992—showed that the single-strongest factor motivating people to register their children were family allowances employees were receiving (for which they were required to show birth certificates).[xxxvi]

Funding

MINATD and CIVI.POL have estimated that a structural reform of the civil registration system would cost a total of $27.5m. MINATD has admitted that, while international aid has been assumed to pay for $7.5m of the costs of the program, little has been forthcoming thus far. Reportedly an amount of EUR130,000 has been obtained in the form of French aid for the new national office, from a total fund of EUR 1,880,000 for five years for the rehabilitation of civil registration following an agreement between Cameroon and France in 2009.[xxxvii] We believe that possible reasons for a disappointing fundraising are: (1) the international aid community may view the civil registration program as a "French niche", (2) doubts about the viability of the civil registration program. Cameroon relies only for a relatively small part of government spending on official aid, but we have very good reason to state that there is good potential to (1) reduce the cost of the reform, and (2) be much more successful in mobilizing international resources from important donors for an attractive reform program.

1.2   Civil registration reform

The need for reform is clear. Civil registration service delivery has shown to not serve the people and the country as it should. Registration rates have not moved towards completeness. Delayed registration of births, with a peak around the time children need to show a birth certificate in order to sit the CEP exam at age 12-13, results in the need to involve the court in hundreds of thousands of delayed registration cases every year. And numbers do not tell the full story. The paper-based processes and storage challenges imply the inaccessibility of registers (leading to registration duplication and skirting of the rules). Low or no pay of mostly untrained registrars leads to unofficial fees and corruption. Fraud occurs and an underground market for false documents has emerged. It is time that civil registration is lifted out of its present impasse. Measures are suggested to bolster—but also amend where needed—the reform program the government has already embarked on. They are in the areas of (1) organizational design, (2) digitization, (3) legal reform, (4) interoperability, (5) funding, and (6) monitoring and evaluation—and may include the prior development of a civil registration policy.

Organizational design

The first element of the reform process the government has embarked on consists of the Study of the status of the civil registration system. Obviously the Study was aimed to find an explanation for the underperformance (or underutilization) of the registration system. The Mapping Study zeroes in on the national geography of the civil registration service.

The civil registration ordinance of 1981 made opening of "special" registration centers possible (Art. 10.2), which became a reality with the decree of 1987. These centers may have been the first of several attempts since independence to improve service delivery that, disappointingly, remained without much effect. Their failure proves that the outcome of what is assumed an obvious answer to a problem may remain elusive when either the diagnosis of the problem is wrong or the remedy chosen.

There is no doubt that proximity of a civil registration center is a factor that will determine the extent of service use—but it is not the only factor, clearly. The Mapping Study provides interesting information about the number of registration centers. In 2007 the number of main centers was 359, of which 357 were in functioning state. In addition, since 1987 no less than 1,872 special centers (the Study mentions a higher total of 2,185, but a lower total of main centers of 339) had been established, of which less than 8 in 10 were functional in 2007. I.e., the total number of registration centers, including

those non-functional, lies between 2,231 (low estimate) and 2,524 (high estimate). In comparison to a large country like India (which has registration rates somewhat below Cameroon) even the high estimate of the number of registration centers in Cameroon is still low by Indian standards, as the average service area in Cameroon is 187 km2 versus 16 km2 per civil registration center in India.[xxxviii] However, a center also needs patronage, it needs to have customers to serve. How does Cameroon rate vis-à-vis India? An Indian center registers an average of 170 births and deaths per year (if all were registered) as against close to 400 per center in Cameroon. Hence one of the key recommendations of the Mapping Study: to increase the number of centers from 2,129 (indeed, yet another number) to 4,073. This would bring the annual workload down from 400 births and deaths per year to about 220, i.e. still more than India, but much more in line. The average size of the service area in Cameroon would still be about 115 km2 (corresponding with, on average, a maximum distance of 6 kilometer to each center).

But isn't opening an office closer to the people creating another problem, of unviable offices (like has proven to be the case with the special centers)? Indian civil registration centers do perform tasks other than civil registration, which is quite a common phenomenon in other countries (e.g. New Zealand, Pakistan, Peru, Tanzania, Thailand) as well.[xxxix] A caseload of 170 new vital event registrations a year is less than one per workday. In Cameroon, when the new centers are in place, it would be one vital event per workday per centre. The Study has been very candid about the failure of the special centers to deliver what was expected from them. This experience should give pause when another, major increase in the number of centers is proposed. But no such reservation is there in the Study:[xl]

*"La conclusion est sans appel: les ressources disponibles sont quasi-inexistantes malgré des besoins évidents. C'est pourquoi, il sera nécessaire **d'investir massivement dans la construction de nouveaux centres** (..), mais aussi dans la formation des personnels et dans des actions de sensibilisation de la population."*
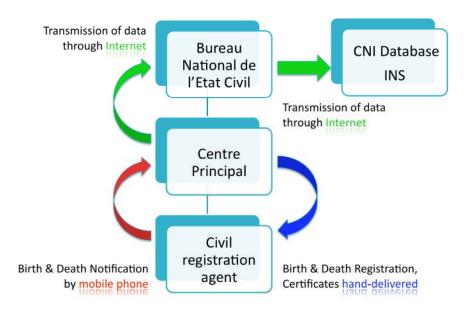
The new law of 2011 introduces "secondary centers" which will replace the special centers (that will no longer officially exist under the new law). They will be "rattaché", i.e. attached (and subordinated), to a main civil registration center. Clearly, this introduces supervision of the secondary centers, turning them into branch-offices. But will ten branch offices when overseen by a main center become more successful than the previous special centers? The new model does not change the fact that the civil registration service will still be embedded within a decentralized government structure, also at these lower levels in the government hierarchy, and the "attachment" will be more on paper than real. A service poor in terms of human and financial resources that doubles its number of offices does not become more effective by changing the label of special offices into secondary offices.

The new law of 2011 finally does create a "Bureau National de l'Etat Civil", which addresses a situation in which in fact the civil registration service had

little or no measure of central management. What the new law does not create is an integrated civil registration service, such that the main civil registration centers are subordinated to the newly created national office. This renders the Bureau National de l'État a paper tiger, likely to be more of an advisory and support office without management "teeth", and—more importantly—without accountability for the country's civil registration service, and its reform for that matter. If changing the inherently weak civil registration organizational structure is "off the table" not much may change. What adds to feelings of doubt is that there is no "rattachement" proposed between the national office and the 360 or so main registration offices. However, the Study presents an organizational chart with explanation that "ticks the right boxes" in our view. It does include provincial (= regional) registration offices, which we believe is creating an unnecessary organizational layer.

It is our view that—in stead of increasing the number of offices—the number of registration offices can and should be brought down, and that—rather than opening branch-offices—the main registration offices would need to work with "civil registration agents" who will have a vital event notification role for which they use a mobile handset, who will communicate with their main registration office through mobile phone and who will visit the main office on a regular (say monthly) basis. They will hand-deliver certificates in turn. See the illustration below. We estimate that this change to the reform program will allow the costs of reform to be reduced to $15m from $27.5m. It is proposed that a close look is given to the organization of civil registration in Peru (RENIEC).[xli]

Organizational Design and Communication Modes
Civil Registration Service in Cameroon

Transmission of data through Internet → Bureau National de l'Etat Civil → CNI Database INS

Transmission of data through Internet

Centre Principal

Civil registration agent

Birth & Death Notification by mobile phone

Birth & Death Registration, Certificates hand-delivered

Digitization

Reform needs to imply that paper-based systems are replaced by digital systems that use the Internet and mobile phone networks for transmission of data. In this regard this Report agrees with the reform agenda. The use of a digitized system and programmed data entry allows entries to be correct or to be rejected instantly. Few government functions benefit so much from "de-materialization" as civil registration. The age of paper is truly over for civil registration. It also is the only way that civil registration can play its corner-stone role in making government efficient and making good governance possible, through e-government and enhanced interoperability. Paper-based systems, because of the difficulty to retrieve, move and share records, also lead to duplicate registrations. Culling demographic data from paper records is cumbersome, error-prone and so time-consuming that the data lose their value. Computerized registration, in contrast, combined with the use of the Internet or the mobile phone network, allows instant sharing of data, verification and feedback loops (control), and the competent use of data for government planning and budgeting. In several countries initiatives have started to use mobile phones for the notification of births and deaths, e.g. in Liberia, Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda, Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands.[xlii] Organizations supporting the governments with this innovation are UNICEF, Crisis Management Initiative, Plan International and the WHO. In parts of India extracts from the civil register can be requested through the Internet.

The civil register of the commune of Maroua I

We agree with the reform agenda as regards to the digitization of the system. The central office and main registration offices need to be computerized and brought on-line. "Civil registration agents"—which we propose to take the role of the "secondary centers" created by the new law of 2011—can communicate through mobile phone networks on a continuous basis and will visit the main office with a regular (e.g. monthly) frequency. National office and main offices need to be staffed with well-paid, professional personnel. They and the agents need to be trained well. Registration software will need to be developed. Cameroon can work with countries in the same situation to reduce software development cost. Management will need to conduct study visits to best practice countries.

Interoperability

Many countries have established interoperability between the civil registration service and the health sector—for the understandable reason that it is the health sector that is involved with births and deaths as vital events, and already makes records of such vital events. An efficient government, working by "e-government principles" will not ask data twice but share first time obtained data across sectors of government. It will tell its citizens: "Tell us once."

UNICEF has conducted a study of countries that have successfully found ways of constituting collaboration between civil registration and health.[xliii] Since the practice is dysfunctional in Cameroon it is important to learn from other countries how to develop a successful interoperability with the health sector. Success depends on arrangements for "seamless" collaboration— organizationally, technically and financially.

The main other candidate for collaboration with civil registration is, naturally, the national ID system. Across the world there are many examples of good practice in this regard (e.g. Malaysia, Pakistan, Peru, Thailand, Uruguay). Only

when the country is serious in integrating the national ID system and civil registration will reform of civil registration be taken seriously. Interoperability in this domain is an important step to gain trust in the reform program. Good practice should be gleaned from other countries—including the lowering of the age of eligibility for the national ID (cf. Thailand, and IDs for newborns: Malaysia, Mozambique, Peru, Uruguay).

As schoolteachers (and schools) are found in most communities across Cameroon, they also can play a role for civil registration outreach. Local government officials can play a role too. Civil registration agents can be recruited among schoolteachers and local government officers.

Head-teacher Maniwachi school, 'Extreme Nord—a candidate civil registration agent

Civil registration can greatly benefit from "parasitic vitality": by coupling it to social protection programs that target the very groups that tend to have the lowest registration rates. It is understood that Cameroon is now looking at the merits of cash transfers, and work is being done with the World Bank, which is the major player in social safety nets. Mauritius, gives a child voucher of just $6.70, while the country's per capita income is seven times that of Cameroon. Registration is complete (>90%).[xliv]

We are convinced that civil registration in a setting like the one of Cameroon will need to "piggy-back" on the outreach of other sectors, and it is important that duplication between departments of government is minimized. Hence our suggestion that cooperation with the health sector, education and national ID is intensified, while possibilities to find incentives for registration

through social protection programs should be harnessed. Cameroon may, again, learn from good practice in other countries.

Legal reform

We are also in agreement with this part of the reform agenda. However, we believe that the current legal reform agenda may not adequately address suggested developments in organizational design, digitization and inter-operability. It is strongly suggested that the judicial procedure for delayed registration is replaced by an administrative procedure (within the jurisdiction of civil registrars themselves) until registration is nearly complete.

We believe that Cameroon should seek assistance, for example from the International Development Law Organization, to conduct a comprehensive review of its civil registration law and regulations, and to redraft registration and identity management law, while also looking at related law, e.g. regarding nationality. New law should bring Cameroon's legal framework up to 21st century standard, as much as its civil registration and identity management system should move toward that same standard. Collaboration with other countries with similar reform agendas is proposed.

Funding

When the reform agenda is bolstered by the measures proposed above it is believed that there is a promising basis for the mobilization of funds to finance the investment cost of the reform program. We believe that it is possible to modernize the civil registration service for $15m rather than $27.5m. By reducing the number of offices and replacing the decentralized structure by a de-concentrated model the national office will have effective control over the main offices, and the main offices over the here proposed civil registration agents. To get a foot in the door of more donor offices it is important to open up the reform project to other donors than the French Cooperation agency, as well as diversify work with independent expert consultants, e.g. in the areas of management and organization consultancy, law reform and computerization. A particular problem at the moment is that the documentation regarding the civil registration reform program is too old to be used for fundraising purposes, and thus needs to be brought up to date.

It is recommended that a new fundraising strategy will be developed when the proposed innovations in the reform agenda have been incorporated.

Monitoring and evaluation

It is recommended that some of the innovations in the reform program, e.g. the use of mobile phone technology or the integration between national ID

or health and civil registration are being introduced in steps, with a first step being given a "randomized control trial" format.[xlv]

Civil registration policy

The above suggestions for changes in the reform agenda and the agenda itself may be laid down in a draft civil registration and identity management policy, which then can be widely discussed among stakeholders in the country (as is currently happening in Kenya). When approved it becomes an important input to law reform and action planning for the implementation of the reform.

1.3   Civil registration of refugees and other vulnerable groups

UNHCR writes: [xlvi]

"Despite the economic crisis and some socio-political tensions due to high unemployment and the rising cost of living, Cameroon remains an attractive destination for many refugees and asylum-seekers from the Central African and Great Lakes region. Even in the East and Adamaoua regions of the country, where security had been fragile, the situation has improved significantly with the deployment of Government forces. On the other hand, the legal framework for the protection of refugees is not fully effective, pending the implementation of a decree creating a Commission for eligibility and appeals. UNHCR works with the Cameroonian authorities to provide international protection and humanitarian assistance to more than 100,000 people of concern, including a total of some 14,000 refugees and asylum-seekers in urban areas and 80,900 Central African refugees in the Adamaoua and East regions. Refugees enjoy the same rights to basic services as the host population in Cameroon."

In The "Langui" camp visited in the l'Extreme Nord region, which is hosting about 2,000 refugees from Chad, no child was unregistered. Cameroon is said to have the "largest refugee camp in the world" for refugees from the Central African Republic and the Great Lakes area who have not been accommodated in camps but live among the local people in a vast area spanning the regions of l'Adamaoua and l'Est. While this scatter of the "population of concern" presents a logistical challenge to UNHCR the advantages of the arrangement outweigh the disadvantages according to the agency. Cameroon is a welcoming country. The percentage of unregistered refugee children from the Central African Republic is reported to be down to about 30% from rates of 90-100% reported some years ago.[xlvii] This means that the group no longer is worse off than the local population. UNHCR is doing a sublime job in the registration of refugees and supports refugees to go through court procedures the costs of which can amount to as much as $200 per case.

Other data show that also in Cameroon children of minorities, street-children and other vulnerable children are more likely to remain unregistered than the average child.[xlviii] This is especially so when under-registration is vast and the civil registration service is not able to cope with the "normal" service levels it is supposed to meet. For *autochtone* (also called *« marginal »*) groups the data show a majority, especially among children, deprived of registration.

Refugee children from Chad in camp Langui near Garoua (Le Nord), in school uniform—all of them registered

The best and most lasting solution to under-registration of vulnerable groups is a well-functioning system that can move to providing the special service required by some in society. When such a situation does not exist a certain measure of service-delivery type of work will remain needed to cater for these groups, for which local voluntary organizations are best suited.[xlix]

2.   UNICEF support

2.1   UNICEF Protection Section[1]

The UNICEF Protection Section's activities have been aligned with and designed to support the civil registration reform. Based on the finding that the

registration of births is a problem especially affecting the "Grand Nord" (regions l'Extrême Nord, le Nord and l'Adamaoua), and affects refugee children, UNICEF's Cooperation Program 2008-2012 with the Government of Cameroon has made birth registration a major priority intervention. The operational result formulated in the program is that "CECs [civil registration centers] will have trained personnel and will be equipped to provide access to birth registration." Support is given to the reform of civil registration, especially through aid given to 30 civil registration centers. With UNICEF support, MINATD has conducted a capacity-strengthening process, especially to reduce the rate of non-registration in the Grand Nord and the East region, through training sessions for civil registration *Officiers* and *Secrétaires* of special centers, and of *Maires* and *Secrétaires* of principal centers, while also involving local actors—*Magistrats, Sous-Préfets* and *chefs traditionnels*. Staff received, upon completion of their training, 25 copies of the 1981 ordinance and registration books with 25 birth certificates each. Training modules have covered: the rights of the child, the procedure of the jugement suppletif, the maintenance of registers and the ordinance of 1981, the 77/410 Decree and the 1987 Decree as training material. The program of one of the trainings is attached (cf. Annex 4). MINATD and the Justice and Health ministries provided trainers. No other civil registration training activity has taken place than this UNICEF-supported training.

Since the launch of this program 283 Officiers and Sécretaires (including some ADAMS and other NGO staff) have been trained in the Grand Nord and l'Est, and 900 registration books have been made available to 67 CECs in the four regions mentioned above. With financial assistance from UNICEF 600 children in l'Extrême Nord obtained birth certificates, while 500 more children of refugees in l'Adamaoua region got birth certificates since 2008. Given the total costs of the training, $71,637, an average amount of $250 per trainee has been spent (cf. also Annex 3)

This evaluation is important to assess whether the training, which was identified as a priority need in the civil registration reform program, has been an effective, tangible support to the ministry's efforts to improve registration service delivery.

2.2   UNICEF Education Section

Since 2002 the Education Ministry and UNICEF have integrated the registration of births in a packet of incentives for access to and completion of quality education, especially directed to girls. Foremost, this concerns the issuance of birth certificates following a jugement suplétif for children enrolled

in school and at risk to not be able to continue in secondary school because they are not allowed to sit the CEP exam. Local NGO ADAMS, later joined by RECAMEF, Fondation Bethlehem, Plan Cameroun and VSO, obtained a total of 7,950 birth certificates for children at risk in the three regions of the Grand Nord, with financial support provided by UNICEF. In addition community leaders were sensitized. Data were collected, and advocacy was conducted among "magistrates" and medical doctors. This helped to bring down substantially the costs of affidavits and to simplify the process. For example, certificates of probable age were obtained for free, legal procedures were made more effective and the costs of affidavits were brought down. Sensitization campaigns were conducted among parents through parent organizations and organizations of student mothers and through village chiefs to explain the need to declare births within the legal time limit.

A total of 8,977 children received their birth certificates through these activities (1,027 through child protection unit activity and 7,950 as a result of activity in the education section). The average cost per birth certificate (delayed registration through court procedure) is $20 (cf. spend details in Annex 3). This number of beneficiary children does not include an indirect positive uptick of registration, which we believe there likely has been as the NGO activities do get noticed also by the population which is not a direct project beneficiary. The reports of the national consultants who conducted fieldwork for this evaluation make us believe that such ripple or "multiplier" effects are real—but they are impossible to quantify.

A detailed analysis of the possible impact of the UNICEF-supported delayed registration program is given in Annex 4.

3.   Evaluation results

3.1   General observations

Overall observations

It was mentioned before that MINATD has not been successful as yet in mobilizing resources for the investment required for civil registration reform, according to the ministry's estimate $27.5m. Funds have been obtained for

studies completed in past years, and an amount EUR130,000 has been mentioned for the Bureau National de l'État Civil.

From 2002 through 2010 the total cost of UNICEF support (not counting internal office and staff costs) has been $347,000.[li] A complete overview of the activities supported by UNICEF's protection and education sections is given in Annex 3.

In comparison to the overall international aid to government, the amount of UNICEF support is not unimportant. However, in any year the amount earmarked for birth registration has not exceeded one percent of UNICEF Cameroon's total budget. From a UNICEF-operational point of view an activity that is that small may not allow the staff attention required to manage with know-how and competence and the learning and constant improvement that should take place.

When looking at *the investment in the delayed registration*, again, the impact UNICEF has exerted may not have been more than a drop in the ocean. Each year in the three regions of the Grand Nord (l'Extrême Nord, Le Nord and l'Adamaoua) where NGOs work with funding from UNICEF, shepherding children through the jugement supplétif, another 110,000 newborns (out of 187,000) will not be registered within the set timeframe and hence will require a court procedure at some point.[lii] UNICEF's help reaches _only one in a hundred_ of these children (Annex 5 puts the percentage at 1.5% of all children in the relevant age bracket, and 3% of all _school-going_ children in the relevant age bracket).

The irony is that—if by some stroke of good luck—the 110,000 children reaching "CEP-age" each year would have been registered in time, an amount of $2.2m would be saved _each year_ (at the "UNICEF-rate" of $20 per delayed registration per child). For these children court procedures would no longer be needed. ADAMS reported initial cost of $24 per case, and RECAMEF $31, costs that they say they have managed to bring down. For children not covered by the UNICEF-supported program jugement supplétif costs may thus be even higher than $20. For the whole country the savings would be $5.2m at the "UNICEF-rate".

In other words: if the civil registration service would achieve universal registration this would generate $26m in savings in five years on jugements supplétifs no longer being needed, enough to give MINATD the amount it says it needs to reform the service ($27.5m). Formulating it differently: if an investment of $27.5 is successful in achieving universal birth registration it will pay itself back in five years time _by the savings achieved from a moratorium of the jugement supplétif alone_.

It should be noted that UNICEF's focus on girl-children in school implies exclusion of at least 3 in 4 children (80% of school-going boys, and the 1 in 2

children not in school). And yet another ethical concern is that NGO-activity to "identify" large numbers of unregistered schoolchildren is without a guarantee that all children will actually get help—in fact not all children do get help which is frustrating to all involved.

It appears that the story is rather different for the impact UNICEF's support to training may have. In two years (2008 and 2009) 283 persons (mostly registrars) were given a basic training at a cost of $250 per registrar. These registrars were from the three regions of the "Grand Nord" (Extreme North, North and Adamaoua) and the East region. We estimate that the total number of registrars in those four regions is about 1,200 (or almost one third of the country total, corresponding also with the share of the regions in the country's population. With this assistance to training UNICEF reached _almost one in four_ of the registrars.

How to measure whether a trained civil registrar is worth more or less than 12-13 children being able to sit the CEP exam? But this is not the complete picture. When 97 out of 100 children who could sit the CEP exam are deprived of support, UNICEF is carrying "the starfish—that beach in the hundreds of thousands _year after year_—back into the sea, one at the time". Three out of 100 is crying out for another approach to the problem, as the present approach is a truly Sisyphean toil, failing too many deserving children.

Even a "cash handout" of $20 as an incentive for timely registration could well be more effective. It apparently is in Mauritius, already mentioned, where a modest child voucher of $6.70 is given to encourage birth registration. The country has registration rates over 90%. As it would channel the funding to the people rather than to the courts and physicians issuing a certificate of probable age, it would also be better for income distribution. This will be further elaborated in 3.3 as the survey results seem to indicate that this may be a promising avenue for substantial improvement of registration rates.

The registrar corps consists for 70% out of staff who should have retired already, or will retire within the next decade at the age of 55. Hence changes in the registrar corps will occur. But still, this is at least a relatively stationary program target of manageable magnitude.[liii]

This year a strategic reorientation is taking place for the approach used for delayed registration. An amount of about $50,000 (included in the total amount of $347,000 mentioned before) has been earmarked for this undertaking, which is equivalent to about 20% of the funds that have been spent before on delayed registration. The objective is to achieve a much greater impact in a sustainable way. The focus is on experimentation in l'Extrême Nord with community mobilization strategies conceived by VSO. The main objective is to bring parents themselves to undertake the activities to avail of birth certificates for their children.

We believe that the decision to rethink the delayed registration support is fully justified. But we have doubts that parents themselves hold the key to timely universal registration (even within the new, longer timeframe for birth registration of 60-90 days). We believe that UNICEF should aim higher and advocate changes in the delayed registration requirements in the law and/or the requirements for CEP. We also recommend a role for schoolteachers in vital event notification (as suggested before under organizational design in section 1.2).

The UNICEF-assisted training, while very well received, has also had some serious shortcomings, which will be detailed below. The decision to provide UNICEF support to training has been made in the context of the civil registration reform program which was supposed to have been in its third year of implementation this year, but which has been rescheduled to the 2010-2015 timeframe. This is an unpredictable context to work in. Training of civil registrars, whose challenging work environment hasn't changed, may make some difference—but by how much?

We believe that the decision to support the civil registration reform program with the underwriting of civil registrar training has been good and fitting with UNICEF's policy to support capacity-building, systems strengthening and structural change. However, training needs to itself be part of a systems approach towards strengthening civil registration. Without accompanying change, training efforts have a reduced impact. UNICEF and MINATD need to agree that training has a logical place and timing within on a multi-track and comprehensive reform program in which all parts are going forward.

Evaluation plan and field surveys

An evaluation plan was developed to look in more detail at the training of registrars and NGO-mediated delayed registration which both received UNICEF-support. Consultants were selected by MINATD to carry out a one-week field assignment in five regions—one for each region. Besides the four regions where UNICEF-support was given (Extreme North, North, Adamaoua and East), also the South-West region was included, as it is another region with low birth registration rates (only 35.5% in 2006 according to the MICS 2006 survey). Because UNICEF did not support birth/civil registration in the South-West region the field study in this region is discussed in attachment 6.

The evaluation plan gives the details of the organization and the design of the evaluation.[liv]

Before their fieldwork the national consultants spent a week with the international consultant in a workshop organized in Yaoundé. During the workshop the evaluation tools and the evaluation plan were developed. The plan was discussed with and approved by a steering committee, and also discussed in a meeting with over twenty representatives from the stakeholder government ministries, the NGO partners, UNICEF staff and consultants.

After the Yaoundé workshop the national consultants, seconded by a UNICEF-officer, spent each one week in the region assigned to them, allocating their time for about one-third to the training evaluation, and the other two-third to the delayed registration support for children in primary school.

After making a courtesy call to the Governor they met with trained and untrained registrars, conducted interviews or group discussions dependent on the number of registrars and administered questionnaires to both groups. Subsequently they moved to the evaluation of the jugement supplétif part of their field mission. The consultants met first with and interviewed staff of the NGOs receiving the assistance from UNICEF to conduct the projects for registration of schoolchildren. Thereafter they met with parents, one group of beneficiary parents and another group of non-beneficiary parents. With both groups group discussions were held, and each of the parents was asked to fill out a questionnaire (with help). The same process was followed with children, beneficiary and non-beneficiary. Finally the consultants met with and interviewed key persons in the jugement supplétif process: community leaders, judiciary, physicians, schoolteachers and midwives. An interview with a representative of DGSN was also held to collect views on the national ID and the interaction between DGSN and the civil registration staff.

Upon their return the consultants drafted their reports, which were reviewed by the international consultant and author of this report. A template for the national consultant reports was used. For each of the five regions a detailed evaluation report was drafted.[lv]

The questionnaires from registrars, parents and children were processed with a web-based tool. The international consultant used the questionnaire results and the main findings of the national consultants for this report. The report for the Sud-Ouest region are summarized in Annex 6.

General field observations

The **general observations in the reports of the national consultants for the four regions (l'Extrême Nord—l'EN, Le Nord—LeN, l'Adamaoua-l'Ad and l'Est)** can be summarized as follows. There has been a cross-fertilization of the training

and delayed registration efforts. As was to be expected where so many actors have to work together, the need for better coordination between and within government, NGOs, and UNICEF is reported. Uncertain continuity of funding reported by the NGOs is another common thread. The poor equipment of registration offices, the payment or registrars but opposite to that also the often unregulated charges imposed on the public by registrars and registration offices, medics and judiciary, the problems in availability of registers, the distance for the public to government offices are all common themes. An ongoing training effort is suggested, simplification of the jugement supplétif and collaboration between DGSN and the CECs. In all four regions it is said that registration rates have improved, part result of training, part result of the delayed registration activity and part caused by the free CNI issuance prior to the presidential elections of October 2011. Training has been appreciated, with the jugement supplétif, the convention on child rights and the refugee registration being rated and recalled best. Positive effects of sensitization of the general public and community leaders are mentioned as well. There are also some fascinating individual observations **(LeN:)** Structural reform is needed with major change in the municipal government and the judiciary. It is questionable whether a (UNICEF) community approach alone would be sufficient. **(L'Ad:)** The same factors that cause low registration rates may equally well explain low school attendance rates and high school dropout especially among girls (there is no gender difference in registration rates though) and even HIV/AIDS levels. **(l'Est:)** The general consensus among the stakeholders (MINAS, MINEDUB, MINJUSTICE, DGSN, UNHCR and Plan) is that there is a lack of coordination. Schoolteachers and MINJUS in particular point out that there are shortcomings in the extent UNICEF and Plan work with and through the government. *The latter is also what we also glean from the regional reports: a token role of management in government departments, this in contrast to their operations staff, i.e. the practitioners.*

3.2   Training of civil registrars

In 2008 and 2009 UNICEF supported the training in the Grand Nord and the East region of a total of 283 persons, mostly civil registrars. In these four regions the national consultants met and interviewed 57 civil registrars, of which 18 participated in the training.

Questionnaires trained registrars (n=18)

Among the trained registrars ("registrars" hereafter) interviewed, the female registrars (4 or 22.2%, n=18) are a little better represented in the sample than among their peers in general (10.2%, n=3,203).[lvi] They are also a little younger on average (49.3) than their peers in general (51.5). But in our sample 8 should have been in retirement (at age 55, nation-wide 4 in10 are older than retirement age, and another 3 out of 10 will reach retirement age in the next decade). The selection of trainees needs to take into account whether the training will still benefit the civil registration service for a long time, and a bias towards younger registrars would be justified. It appears that the trainee selection may have suffered from a bias towards to the selection of senior registrars—this needs to be rectified in any sequel. Registrars in our sample have an average of 12 years of experience as registrar.

No training needs assessment was done prior to the training. If UNICEF continues assistance for training, such an assessment needs to be conducted, as it is a necessary condition for offering an effective training. Some of the registrars claim that they had a say in the development of the training material, but they in fact have not been asked. The information in this survey should be used as part of the training needs assessment for a next training.

Forty (40) percent of registrars says they had requested training, 60% says they have not. While the training was conducted 2 to 3 years ago, 80% says they do have recall of the training modules. The cloud view[lvii] of their response is shown below:

It is the module on the Convention of the Rights of the Child which registrars mention the most, and the jugement supplétif follows immediately after, while the keeping of registration records has slipped most from memory. Asked what they find the most important modules their answers reveal the following:

Convention de 1989 D'etat Civil Droits des
Enfants Jugements Suppletifs Naissances
Refugies

This is important feed-back when we ask ourselves the question what training content would be most relevant for registrars. Civil registrars only learned on the job, from their predecessor if there was one. The jugements supplétif procedure is indeed important to know. Obviously, also, we would want registrars to know that birth registration is a child right mentioned in the Convention of the Rights of the Child. However, first and foremost the response should have been the basics of registration, civil registration law, recordkeeping and the like, i.e. the "nitty-gritty" of day-to-day registrar work. That the jugement supplétif ranks high only goes to show that a procedure which should be the exception rather than the rule, is consuming much too much of a civil registrar's attention and, very likely, their time.

Many of the registrars trained do have a respectable number of years of experience on the job. They know from experience already how to do the routine work. Training for the experienced registrar would have to be more about how to do routine tasks better, or differently. But this also indicates that the training may have to be split in a foundation level training and an advanced level training.

No immediate post-training evaluation was done—this is another serious omission. A few years after the fact, registrars rate the training as appropriate (75%) to very appropriate (25%)—a very satisfactory result, but referring to what was just stated, what is appropriate as training content for registrars when they are asked may not include the down-to-earth or less attractive aspects of their job.

Only somewhat less well they rate the training methods used. None of the trainers as far as we know was a professional, full-time trainer. In future it is important that, very explicitly, training staff are selected not only for their know-how of the content matter but also for their training competence. With some 3,700 registrars in the country (a number that may grow to 6,000 or so when service coverage is improved), turnover of staff and the need not only for foundation level training but also for follow-up training, including training in the use of computers and hand-held devices, the development of a pool of trainers to run a regular training program will be needed.

Asked for topics the registrars would have liked to see, a few of them had suggestions: the registration of deaths and marriages, what to do in case of the loss of a certificate, the general functioning of civil registration centers and the motivation of registrars and the archiving of records, the organization

of a civil registration center and IEC/sensitization. When asked how to improve the training, a common response is to allow more days of training, repeat the training, include (more) discussion ("seminaires").

The response to the question whether the training has contributed to the registrars' work was as shown:

	Response Percent	Response Count
Pas du tout	0.0%	0
un peu	7.7%	1
moyennement	23.1%	3
beaucoup	69.2%	9
	answered question	13
	skipped question	5

This result is also satisfactory, certainly when the time since the training is taken into account (the non-response was rather high though).

When asked to give specifics, the registrars especially mention an increase in productivity (more registration, improved work) and sensitization of parents:

Actes de Naissance Declarations Parents Travail

In line with this, registrars report that they would recommend the training to others—half of them would strongly recommend the training to others. Little if any alternative training facilities are available for registrars, hence just a single registrar mentions civil registration training attended at Mont Febe, Yaoundé, while another mentions training conducted in a town hall.

Registrars mention the following problems in their work:

Analysis of the answers also warrants the addition of the insufficiency of the facilities available (office furnishing, etc.). The lack or late delivery of registers is a problem that is mentioned numerous times. It may show a combination of a lack of resources but also the logistics challenge for moving paper documents used in the traditional registration process. Within a computerized

system the central importance of the register will get its rightful place. The issuance of certificates—in fact copies of the records in the register—then will get its rightful, subordinated place. I.e., this is a fundamental shift.

Virtually every registrar says that she/he needs more training (16 out of 17). Some know other organizations that provide training, with Plan Cameroon being mentioned by many, besides the mentioning of UNICEF, UNFPA, IFORD and the government (all mentioned once). With the exception of IFORD, none of these agencies are actually training organizations—they may just financially support training.

The registrars in majority believe that the training has contributed to an increase in the number of registrations, whether in time or late/delayed.

Questionnaires registrars not yet trained (n=39)

Among the interviewed registrars that have not yet been trained ("untrained registrars" hereafter) the female registrars (3 or 7.7%, n=39) are a little less represented than among their peers in general (10.2%, n=3,203). They are also a little younger on average (44.2) than their peers in general (51.5). In the sample 9 should have been in retirement. Untrained registrars in our sample have an average of 12.6 years of experience as registrar.

Thirty-two (32) percent (somewhat less than trained registrars) says they have asked for training, 68% says they haven't. Most of those who have asked say they suggested MINATD, while three mention CEFAM,[lviii] two the municipality and one Plan Cameroon. 94.6% (35 out of 37) say they need training to perform their job.

When asked in what the untrained registrars would like to be trained the answers are as shown in the cloud view below. While the Rights of the Child still register, all the other topics mentioned have a direct association with the civil registration function, while the Jugement Supplétif is much less prominent (it appears that the delivery of this module has made an imprint in trained registrar memory!).

Another rather similar question was asked and the response gives more or less the same outcome, with a rich response, and bringing up two new topics: laws and informatics.

As mentioned before, this is an important input for what training content would be most relevant for registrars (and this time round trainees could have input in their training program!). Our preference is that the priority should be the basics of registration, civil registration law, recordkeeping and the like, i.e. the "nitty-gritty" of day-to-day work is also seen in this response. Since many of the untrained registrars have years of experience on the job, and know from experience already how to do the routine work, it is important that a detailed training needs assessment is conducted. Training for the experienced registrars should be separated from the training of novices.

When asked to prioritize modules this is the result—much of the responses are about the regular civil registration tasks (the information is detailed and very useful for the design of a new training course).

Actes Decentralisation Droits et Devoirs Enfants Etat Civil
Jugements Suppletifs L'etat Civil
Naissances Parents Registres

The jugement supplétif is now mentioned more often.

There is a clear methodology preference:

Cours Echange Exposes Formation Participative

The untrained registrars provide rich insight in the difficulties in their work, that together with the inputs of the trained registrars should also help shape new training designs:

Some (14) know other organizations that provide training. CEFAM (in Buea), Plan, MINADT, UNICEF, ADAMS and a few other organizations are mentioned.

The registrars in majority believe that the training will contribute to an increase in the number of registrations, whether in time or late/delayed. There is little if any difference with the answers obtained from trained registrars.

Conclusions from the survey among trained and untrained registrars:

- *Conduct any new training provided the training is an element of an operational, comprehensive reform program*

- *Find a local institute which can accommodate a civil registration training program*

- *Start search, select and develop a pool of trainers*

- *Develop a training course for novice civil registrars and one for experienced civil registrars (Foundation training, Advanced training). Include new topics dependent on progress of the civil registration reform program, including the reform itself, computerization. Include the national ID and the DGSN, INS for vital statistics and census*

- *Develop a training manual*

- *Develop a civil registration manual which can be used for training purposes*

- *Focus on the young, female registrars, active registrars—exclude applicants that do not perform registration tasks*

- *Include a strong training Monitoring and Evaluation component: (1) Conduct a training needs assessment before the next training (this survey being one of the inputs), (2) Do properly document trainees and keep a trainee register, and (3) Conduct well-designed exit evaluations*

- *Issue certificates of attendance and start with a training alumni association*

- *Encourage the formation of a Civil Registrar Association in Cameroon.*

Interviews and focus group discussions with registrars

Trained registrars (Note that the training has also included judiciary, sous-préfets, community leaders, medical staff in charge of the probable age assessment (CAA-Certificat d'Age Apparent). (l'EN) Trainees are especially positive about the participative nature of the training, allowing the sharing of experience. They report an increase in registration. They need more training in what to do in case of loss of a certificate, and the production of a "duplicata". Registers obtained were appreciated but are depleted now. **(LeN)** Trainees have good memories of the training, especially the topics jugement supplétif, the child rights convention and the refugee part. All

agree the training has had a positive effect. The registrars are positively aware of Plan's activities. But realities are problematic:

"En ce qui concerne l'archivage, en dehors du bureau d'état civil de la commune de Garoua II qui jusqu'ici tient bien ces archives, la plupart des bureaux d'état civil sont mal tenue. On est dépassé, il faut le dire, on est envahis par les registres. On utilise même le secrétariat du maire pour ranger nos archives. A un moment, par faute de moyens, on utilisait deux registres à la fois, et non seulement c'est cher mais en plus c'est compliqué pour les archives (même si le deuxième devait normalement être remis à la justice)"

While in Garoua-I a computer training was given, there are no computers. Elsewhere, in Ladgo, there are computers provided by local government, which thus appreciates the importance of the rehabilitation of civil registration. But generally, and especially in the CSEC (centres speciaux de l'état civil), the shortcomings are in all respects. Recommendations have not been followed up:

"On avait abordé deux recommandations mais c'est comme si le MINATD était resté sourd à ces problèmes. On avait demandé au MINATD de dire aux chefs de centres de santé d'accélérer les procédures de déclaration, et on avait demandé au docteur de justifier le coût de la déclaration de naissance (4 000 FCFA), on avait dit qu'aucun frais ne devrait être exigé pour ça".

Two new recommendations selected out of this group discussion are (1) to establish a memorandum of understanding ("un cadre de concertation") between MINATD, MINJUSTICE and MINSANTE to facilitate the registration of birth at the registration office, and (2) to provide civil registration with its own housing.

(L'Ad:) Trainees in l'Adamaoua had wanted to see a longer duration of the training, with input obtained from the trainees. But is has been good and it has contributed to an increase in registration rates and awareness among the public. They are aware of ADAMS work. They would like the training to be extended to new areas and done again on a regular basis. They see it as a way the integrity of civil registrars can be advanced. **(l'Est:)** Trainees here also appreciated the training, especially re the jugements supplétifs and refugees (done by UNHCR). But they state, importantly that ***it is hard to apply the acquired know-how in a situation where the most basic supplies in the registration office are not available.*** This situation even leads to the registrars being harassed by parents who are waiting for the documents to be released to them. The registrars put the problem of the proper supplies c.a. at the door of MINATD. They also would like to see a continuous registrar capacity-building effort.

Registrars not yet trained (l'EN:) speak of the problems in their work, the lack of office and storage space, supplies (registers) and pay. They report that

« nos archives sont à la sous préfecture, car dans les CSEC il n'ya pas de locaux, on dépose les archives à la sous préfecture et on ne peut plus les consulter pour une vérification ». They expresss the need for training to do their work better. Trained or untrained, all registrars find (re)training in the jugement supplétif important as they are all dealing with it. **(LeN:)** regret that trained registrars have not shared their learning. **(l'Ad:)** Registrars do very much want to be trained, explicitly mentioning the new law of 2011, child rights and archiving. They report the significant increase in registration and jugements supplétifs in 2010-2011 related to the presidential elections in October 2011 for which usual fees were waived. ***They, interestingly, suggest a minimum educational entry level for registrars. (l'Est:)*** Registrars point out the paucity of training efforts. The problems they see are a shortage of offices, but also the dysfunction of existing offices, which are lacking the most basic of provisions. ***They report the lack of clarity in the reporting line: should the registrar report to the commune or to the sous-préfecture?*** They have a real concern about the archiving of records, citing an example of a registrar who already for years was keeping registers in his house because a per diem had not been paid in as long as five years. Another problem is that hospitals do not follow the rules with regards to their registration role. They report cultural problems among the *Bororos* tribe with civil registration.

Trained vs. not yet trained registrars. The differences between the as yet untrained registrars and the trained registrars is that the former seek advanced training, while the latter formulate as training needs training geared to their day-to-day work. But there is also a training need observed and reported among peripheral stakeholders, medical staff, judiciary, community leaders and the like, which may mean that besides a foundation training for registrars there is the need for another entry-level training for non-registrars.

(LeN:) IT IS NOT ALL BAD NEWS: A SHINING EXAMPLE FROM GAROUA II.

Photo: Bureau d'état civil de la Commune de Garoua II et son Chef de bureau.

The national consultant writes:

"Au regard de la volonté et du sérieux avec lequel ce centre gère l'état civil, il serait judicieux d'associer ce secrétaire d'état civil aux futurs séminaires de renforcement des capacités des OEC/SEC dans le domaine de l'organisation, de l'animation et de la tenue des registres d'état civil dans la région du Nord et même dans les autres régions. Et même, les maires des différentes communes de la région du Nord devraient solliciter l'appui du centre d'état civil de Garoua II pour renforcer les capacités du personnel en charge de l'état civil."

3.3   NGO-supported delayed birth registration

Questionnaires parents (beneficiary parents n=34; non-beneficary parents n=44)

UNICEF's financial support to NGOs in order ot help kids sit their CEP exam has run for almost a decade and has helped thousands of children. Some of the support projects have explicitly included a sensitization element. There is much evidence that beyond helping children get through a delayed

registration, UNICEF's assistance (and similar activities made possible through other means) have raised awareness among the general public in the region about the importance of timely registration.

Still, the always lingering question remains why it is that people don't register their children? This evaluation has asked parents that same question—what are the problems, and the answers are not any different from what we already knew.

Parents were given help to fill out a questionnaire. The resource constraints for this evaluation did not allow to aim for a much larger response, the consequence of which is that caution is warranted with respect to the statistical significance of the questionnaire response, and even more so when making comparisons.

But let's do it nonetheless.

Parents who benefited from the program are less well educated as parents that were not in the program. They are less likely to have a birth certificate than parents who were not in the program (44% versus 61%., and they are more likely to give birth at home. They themselves are just as likely to have a CNI as the other parents—9 in 10 have one. They know less about child rights and fewer of them know that a birth certificate is a child right. But why do they own more mobile phones, TVs, radios and motor cycles than parents not in the program?

Could it be that parents not registering their children is more the result of people's priorities in how they spend their money (relatively much on mobile phones, TV, radio, a motorbike), rather than whether they have the money to register their children? If this is the case, what does it mean? Such parents may also find the education of their children a lower priority than parents who themselves have higher educational levels, which is what all MICS surveys consistently show, not only for Cameroon. They may welcome the help NGOs give to get their children in school registered, something they on their own rate a lower priority. In the broader context of the Grand Nord, is the explanation of very low school attendance rates resulting from these same factors? Tiny as the sample may be—could it be that we see the poverty cycle at work? And could helping children through CEP be one way to break that cycle?

The material obtained from the survey sparks these questions and hypotheses. What is the theory about registration rates in the Grand Nord that is underlying the support NGOs and UNICEF give to delayed registration? Judging from the common call to sensitize the people the theory seems to be that people don't know; they don't know the importance, they don't know the procedures, they don't know they are obliged by law..It seems we need

to probe more to learn why, *in reality,* people do not register their children, before we could be more certain about what to do about it. The theory that it is because people are poor (remedy: help in kind or financially) and ignorant (hence: sensitize) may not hold up, or at least be too simplistic.

If ignorance plays a role we would expect beneficiary parents to know less. It seems indeed they know less—but they know the minimum they need to know. The uses they report for the birth certificate are very concentrated on school and CNI: 81% of their response (48 mentions), while 19% of their response is for only 5 other uses (for work (4 responses), travel (3), to know the family relationship, for elections and "everything"—one mention each). Non-beneficary parents are giving a much more varied, and sometimes even eloquent response. Their response for school and identity accounts for 71% of the uses they mention, while 29% goes to as many as 12 different other uses. One non-beneficiary parent gave this answer: "*Identifier l'enfant, assurer son avenir grace a l'acces facile a certains avantages, permettre a l'enfant de s'integrer dans le milieu scolaire, etc.*". Another responded: "*Inscription a l'ecole, obtention des diplomes, carte nationale d'identite, reussite a un concours administratif, etc.*" And yet another parent said: "*La nationalite, cette piece entre aussi dans la constitution des dossiers des examens et concours.*"

What all these parents have in common is that in their world reasons for a birth certificate such as being a bulwark against child labor, early marriage, under-age recruitment in the army, juvenile justice etc. do not at all figure. There was just one mention of "security" among 119. No mention also of the use of civil registration for vital statistics or demographic data, except once: "*recenser les gens*". I.e., people see in the birth certificate something that benefits them, and much less if at all something that serves the public good.

Asked at what age parents registered their children, 7 in 10 of the beneficiary parents mentioned an age in the 9-14 bracket. Among non-beneficiary parents immediate registration—"a la naissance"—seems to be much more the rule, as applies to themselves.

Interestingly costs seem to be a *relatively* more important issue for non-beneficary parents, and they avoid the extra costs for the jugement supplétif and probable age assesment when they can.

The problems parents mention for registration (see graphs next page) are shown on the next page.

What emerges from these survey results is that a financial incentive for birth registration may well work wonders. It appears from these results that parents who haven't registered their children intend to attach great value to material possessions, and may therefore find it hard to spend any money on their children's registration and will be inclined to postpone registration. But the

high present value they attach to money may make a financial incentive for registration work well. It would be worthwile testing this with a randomized control trial approach. Note that in the small Buea survey (Ndong et al. 1994) the financial incentive in the form of family allowances was shown to be the strongest factor in explaning registration rates.

Parents of beneficiary children (n=34)

Parents non-beneficary children (n=44)

Quels ont ete les problemes pour enregistrer votre enfant?

Focus group discussions with parents

Beneficiary parent focus group discussions have been one of the most interesting and educative parts of the fieldwork. (l'EN:) Parents report the challenge of costs of the jugement supplétif: « Ça coute de l'argent, transport des témoins à prendre en charge, payer les timbres, longue procédure qui prend le temps, la peur de se rendre au tribunal ». One parent said:

« Moi j'ai dépensé 7,000 FCFA sans les frais de déplacement des témoins ; avec les trois (3) témoins, on a dû y aller 5 fois avant d'avoir le certificat de naissance ».

All the steps taking time in the procedure—visiting a doctor, the municipality, the court—are an obstacle. Parents do all have a CNI. According to their stories two SEC have been involved in the providing them with temporary IDs (receipts for the CNI to be issued within three months) prior to the 2011 presidential élection and the costs of FCFA 1,800 were waived at a later stage. **(Le N:)** Among the reasons parents mention for not having registered their children or not having a birth certificate they mention the loss of certificates but also the absence of the fathers. They know about the birth certificate, they have had sensitization, but poverty and the costs are in the way. They know about the need of the birth certificate for the school and they know that the birth certificate is need for the CNI. **(See also pages 47-49 for a complete transcript from one of the national consultant reports).**

(l'Ad :) There is confusion among some parents whether they actually were a beneficiary or not. But the beneficiary parents who are aware know now that the birth certificate is a child right and is important for school. But they know that some parents did not want their children to be included by ADAMS because of cultural reservations that "still young children who can not defend themselves should not be exposed and their identity should remain a secret." **(l'Est:)** In this region beneficiary parents show their gratitude, but they also ask what the follow-up is for children who have been included in a census but have not yet obtained the birth certificate.

Non-beneficiary parents. (l'Ad:) Parents report arbitrary fees levied at CECS:

"Tu vas à la mairie rencontrer le Maire avec une somme d'argent, il t'établit même s'il ne voit pas l'enfant". "C'est comme çà qu'on procède même quand on veut changer l'âge d'un enfant ".

Parents interviewed in Maniwichi, l'Extrême Nord region

Because of all the problems with the delayed registration procedure parents rather resort to counterfeit documents:

"La procédure des jugements supplétifs est longue avec les renvois de tribunaux qui stressent souvent les parents qui désirent suivre cette démarche. Il vaut mieux donner 10 ou 15 milles à un Secrétaire ou Officier d'Etat Civil qui s'exécutent plus rapidement. Nous ne savions pas qu'il s'agissait d'une pratique illégal puisqu'on accepte nos enfants à l'école avec ces actes".

(l'Est:) Among the non-beneficiary parents the *Bororos* are especially ignorant about procedures it is reported, but they did show up for the CNI before the elections.

**Entretien avec des Parents d'enfant
des écoles publique de Bénoué I et II**

La plupart des parents présents ont reconnu l'importance de l'acte de naissance. D'ailleurs, ils ont déjà été sensibilisés sur l'enregistrement de naissance lors des causeries éducatives organisés par le sous préfet en collaboration avec le directeur de l'école publique, les campagnes de sensibilisation de Plan Cameroon/UNICEF. Malgré ces actions de sensibilisation, les enfants non pas toujours d'acte de naissance à cause de la pauvreté, car les parents n'ont pas les moyens financiers pour engager la procédure de jugement supplétif. Le statut de l'enfant (enfant adopté, orphelin) n'est pas à négliger. Le sexe de l'enfant, en effet du point de vue culturel, la jeune fille est faite pour le mariage et donc non nécessaire de lui établir un acte de naissance hors délai. L'incendie/accident est aussi à l'origine du non possession d'acte de naissance. Comme l'a dit un des parents :

"Ma fille est né à l'hôpital ; à sa naissance, j'ai été victime d'un incendie qui a décimé tous mes biens ; par la suite, j'ai perdu mon père et je me suis déplacé pour les obsèques et depuis ce moment, je vis le jour au jour et je n'ai pas les moyens financier pour faire le jugement supplétif"

On note aussi les frais de prise en charge des soins prénataux. Pourquoi les enfants non pas d'acte de naissance ? L'enfant est né à la maison, l'enfant a été adopté et ces parents ignorant de l'importance de l'acte de naissance ne lui en a pas établi un, perte de l'acte de naissance ou alors absence du père pour engager la procédure d'établissement de l'acte de naissance (vu le statut de soumission de la femme qui est épouse et femme au foyer).

Les avantages de l'acte de naissance sont: l'éducation de l'enfant, sert à l'inscription aux examens officiels, établissement de la CNI

Parents d'enfants de l'école publique de Boungel groupe I (PITOA)

Pour les parents d'élèves de l'école publique de Boungel groupe I de Pitoa, l'acte de naissance est :

- Un papier qui permet d'identifier l'état ou la nature de l'être humain et qui l'accompagne toute sa vie, on en a besoin pour tout (par exemple pour les concours)

- Quand tu mets ton enfant au monde, tu réunis tes frères et tes voisins pour trouver un nom. Quand on n'a pas de nom, l'enfant n'a pas d'acte. Une fois qu'il a l'acte, ça veut dire que l'enfant est né et qu'il a un nom.

- Tu viens d'accoucher, si tu ne fais pas l'acte, quelqu'un va te prendre ton enfant et faire l'acte à son nom, il dira que c'est son enfant.

- Le jour ou l'enfant est né, toi le père tu connais ce jour et la maman est sure que tu es le père, alors là on va faire l'acte.

Dans cette ville, il n'y a pas encore eu des campagnes de sensibilisation en rapport avec l'enregistrement des naissances. Toutefois, le responsable des jeunes de l'arrondissement déclare, qu'en 2001-2003 une association, dénommée Jeunesse Solidarité au Sahel a enregistré presque 63 cas d'enfants sans acte de naissance et des Jugements Supplétifs on été faits. En ce moment cet enregistrement hors délais coûtait 9 400 FCFA, hormis les frais de transport pour se rendre à Garoua.

Entretien avec des Parents d'enfant
des écoles publique de Bénoué I et II (cont.)

la suite dissoute. Ces parents reconnaissent que des audiences foraines ont été organisée pour mesure en œuvre la mesure de gratuite de la CNI pris par le Chef de l'Etat. Ils déplorent la manière dont se sont passés ces audiences, car il y a encore des personnes qui n'ont pas pu se faire établir des CNI.

- *"Cette année on a dit que ceux sans CNI pouvaient l'avoir, d'abord en payant, ensuite gratuitement parce que le président l'a décidé. A ce moment, des gens de la brousse sont venus et ont même passé 2 ou 3 Jours à la sous-préfecture pour avoir leur CNI, jusqu'à ce que le délai expire. Il y a eu affluence. Si on dit que les actes sont sont gratuits, des gens vont dormir la pendant une semaine. C'est une question de moyens".*

De l'examen de ces entretiens, il ressort une ignorance des populations pour ce qui est de la procédure d'enregistrement des naissances et coûts y relatifs. Ainsi, pour ces parents, on demande toujours de l'argent, à chaque étape de la procédure. Le montant n'est pas limité à cause de la corruption.

A l'hôpital, pour voir le médecin, il faut déjà un reçu de 600 FCFA. Pour qu'il le signe, s'il tolère c'est 700 FCFA, sinon c'est 1 500 FCFA. A la mairie en plus du timbre communal qui coûte 200 FCFA, les secrétaires demandent entre 1 000 FCFA et 1 500 FCFA pour rendre le service. A la justice, c'est 2 400 FCFA, maintenant, il se situe à 2 600 FCFA. En faisant une sommation des frais exigibles, on pourrait estimer entre 8 000 FCFA et 10 000 FCFA les frais pour établir un acte de naissance par jugement supplétif.

Les raisons qui expliquent la non possession d'acte de naissance par les enfants sont de plusieurs ordres notamment la procédure et les cas d'accident enregistrés, l'irresponsabilité des parents et la pauvreté:
Dans le premier cas, une femme qui fait des visites prénatales et accouche à l'hôpital, une déclaration des naissances est établi puis transmis à la mairie. A la mairie des frais sont demandés, parfois la personne ne dispose pas d'argent et ainsi l'acte de naissance est abandonné dans les services d'état civil.

"Parfois même en suivant la procédure la moins chère, en accouchant à l'hôpital, l'hôpital vous demande d'abord ses frais, puis à la mairie on vous demande 2 000 FCFA. Ces frais pèsent sur vous, vous attendez d'avoir l'argent, puis les délais sont dépassés".

Dans le deuxième cas, c'est plutôt lié aux cas d'accidents, de papiers mouillés, brulés, disparus, etc. Les démarches de reconstitution auprès des mairies se sont soldées par des échecs. *"Quand on va à la mairie demander le duplicata, on vous dit que ce n'est pas possible".*

Dans le deuxième cas, c'est plutôt lié aux cas d'accidents, de papiers mouillés, brulés, disparus, etc. Les démarches de reconstitution auprès des mairies se sont soldées par des échecs. *"Quand on va à la mairie demander le duplicata, on vous dit que ce n'est pas possible".*

Entretien avec des Parents d'enfant
des écoles publique de Bénoué I et II (cont.)

Une autre cause c'est l'irresponsabilité. *"Nous sommes des filles mères, qui accouchons chez des parents, quand tu es enceinte les parents te réfutent, ils ont honte, quand le bébé arrive finalement on retourne dans la famille, ils s'occupent de*

nourrir le bébé mais pour le reste ils nous disent d'aller voir le père. Si vous regardez les enfants avec actes, tous ont des parents alphabètes, leurs deux parents sont vivants. Les enfants sans acte de naissance sont soit orphelins, soit illégitimes, soit pauvres".

La pauvreté des ménages fait que certaines femmes préfèrent accoucher à la maison. Ainsi, les sommes qui auraient dû servir de frais d'accouchement[1] sont plutôt utilisées pour entretenir la femme. Et même lorsqu'une femme accouche à l'hôpital le mari veut payer, elle préfère plutôt qu'on lui achete la viande pour qu'elle récupère.

"Aujourd'hui si je suis enceinte je vais à l'hôpital, j'accouche, on me demande 2000 FCFA pour l'acte de naissance et on ne me donne même pas le savon, je n'ai pas cet argent. A la mairie si tu n'as pas les 2000 FCFA ton carnet reste là. Si l'enfant est grand il faut le jugement supplétif, on te demande l'acte de mariage alors que beaucoup de gens n'ont pas cet acte. Tu retournes, on vous dit de donner, tu n'as pas alors on te dit de retourner et que ce n'est pas prêt. Tout est un problème d'argent".

A la question de savoir comment faire pour que dans le futur nos enfants aient des actes de naissances, les réponses ci-après sont données par les parents :
- Faire une sensibilisation dans tout l'arrondissement quartier par quartier sur l'importance de l'acte de naissance et sur la procédure de sa délivrance ;
- Mettre en place des mesures pour réduire la forte dépendance (vulnérabilité) des femmes vis-à-vis des hommes, notamment l'autonomisation des femmes ;
- Améliorer la situation économique des populations car, c'est la pauvreté qui empêche d'avoir des actes de naissance ;
- Rendre gratuit l'enregistrement des naissances à l'état civil aussi bien hors délai que dans les délais ;
- Renforcer le système d'archivage des registres d'état civil. Les propos ci-après en fait une illustration

"Moi j'ai perdu l'acte de mon enfant, quand je vais à la mairie pour faire un duplicata, on me dit que le registre de 2007 est déjà perdu. Maintenant on me demande de faire un jugement supplétif mais je ne peux pas. Il faut que le jugement supplétif soit gratuit".

Questionnaires beneficiary children (n=47) and non-beneficiary children (n=51)

A great majority of children has heard of the birth certificate (44 in 47; 44 in 51). They know less than their parents what children's rights are (about 60% of them say they know), and about the same proportion knows that having a birth certificate is a child right. Similarly about 60% of children say that in school there has been talk about the importance of birth registration. About 2 in 10 children do not know their own age.

Asked what the birth certificate is for, beneficiary children's response can be represented by the following cloud view:

6eme Aller a L'ecole Carte D'identite CNI Concours
Ecole Examens Scolarite Voyager

For <u>non-beneficiary</u> children, just as is the case for their parents, the response is showing knowledge of more uses of the birth certificate, and—paradoxically—CEP stands out more, while the whole idea of the beneficiary program is to make it possible for beneficiary children to pass CEP!

Aller en 6eme CEP CNI Composer Concours Connaitre son
Age Ecole Etudes Examens Faire
Identification Presenter Travail Voyager

45 out of 47 beneficiary children say they have a birth certificate—while all should have answered positively. Among the non-beneficiary children 38 out of 51 children say they don't have a birth certificate. While in fact some of them say they don't have a birth certificate some may, in reality, do have one. But still, this reads like a high percentage of non-registration: 80%. The identification done by NGOs in schools has not born out that registration rates would be that low.

Focusgroup discussions with children

Children (l'EN:) Children have little understanding what the birth certificate is for and who supplies it. They have heard about child rights. **(LeN:)** Children have seen it or have it, and know the main uses. Majority knows child rights. When children don't have the birth certificate they often tell their father is responsible. **(L'Ad:)** Little understanding in this region as well and most don't know that having a birth certificate is a right. Very little know-how about how a birth certificate is obtained. They know the importance of the birth certificate for schooling but little else. **(l'Est:)** Like their parents, they show gratitude for the birth certificates obtained for them, and they know the use of it for CEP, CNI and the possibility to travel.

Interviews with NGO-representatives

(l'EN:) VSO and Fondation Bethlehem. VSO reports good results with their project to at least register 500 children, for which a budget of 6m FCFA has been given (FCFA 2.5m of which is for sensitization). Especially the cooperation with the judiciary and the physicians is good. However, there are logistical challenges. VSO reports the need for better coordination between NGOs and between NGOs and UNICEF, as well as the need for continuation of financial assistance. Fondation Bethlehem is reported to do the same as VSO, and achieved 650 BCs of which 349 in 2010. They also need continued financial support. The government should take care of a better provision of the civil registration centers, e.g. computers, registers (registration books), their own space, storage space for archives, training and payment of registrars. **(LeN:) Plan** The Plan representative was not informed of the evaluation. They are doing a project, but birth certificates had not been distributed as yet: "Ces actes ne sont pas encore distribués, car ils sont dans l'attente de l'UNICEF pour la stratégie à mettre en œuvre à cet effet." **RECAMEF** has received some support from UNICEF, e.g. for some office furniture. But they are not receiving assistance any longer. What they do now is funded by their own small revenues, with birth certificates obtained through jugement supplétif varying from as low as 5 to as high as 30 per year. They report that jugement supplétif costs have come down from FCFA 15 000 in 2010 to FCFA 9 000 FCFA (including photo) in 2011. The main factor has been the reduction of the CAA from F CFA 4 000 to FCFA 1 000. RECAMEF says it is essential that the costs come down, that the jugement supplétif procedure is simplified, the delivery costs in hospital also are reduced and that training should be given also to medical staff, nurses and the judiciary. The schools should be free of costs as well as is how it officially is supposed to be. **(l'Ad:)** Since 2002 **ADAMS** with help from UNICEF has brought together and worked with community chiefs, medics and the town hall staff. Community chiefs act as witnesses. 16,250 birth certificates (5,500 of which within the time limit) were

obtained. Another 500 refugee children were registered. But since 2010 funding has stopped as has the delayed registration drive. Costs of registration ADAMS report are FCFA 11,500 CAA, consisting of FCFA 1,600 for enrolment at the court, FCFA 1,500, stamps FCFA 2,000 and 1,000 as fee to establish the birth certificate. FCFA is needed for RECAMEF costs (e.g. transport costs) and for sensitization of the public. RECAMEF understands that what they do is not scalable, but they want continuation with UNICEF and more coercive action by MINADT and DGSN. A former staff now working in l'Est region mentions problems (delays) in UNICEF transfers of money. **(l'Est:) UNHCR.** UNHCR contributed to the training held in Meiganga, Bertoua and Garoua, viz. the rights of the child and the convention of the rights of refugees. UNICEF gave funding for the registration of 500 refugee children. UNHCR reports that registration offices do actually impose a fee on birth certificates. **(l'Est:) Plan.** Plan reports that the CNI campaign for the 2011 presidential election has been used in Bertoua to piggyback and get delayed registration done as well. They are still 128 short of their target of 500 birth certificates, which are partly with the municipalities and part with the court. Plan says their funding falls short to cover the large distances they have to bridge in their working area (over 600 km to some places).

Community leader interviews

Community leaders (l'EN:) are aware of the activities going on to establish jugements supplétifs, but they believe parents are showing a lack of interest**. (LeN:)** The Iman has registered all his children and says he often tells the people. He cites a case important to the Muslim community in Cameroon.

"*A cause de non possession de l'acte de naissance, un de ces fidèles de moins de 50 ans a eu des problèmes lorsqu'il voyageait à la Mecque pour le pèlerinage. Il a été obligé d'envisager la procédure de jugement supplétif. Cette démarche n'a pas été facile pour lui car il était né dans un village de Maroua, et il fallait déplacer des témoins depuis Maroua. Cette situation a permis aux fidèles réticents de voir que sans acte de naissance vous n'êtes pas un citoyen.*"

This shows why it is so important that in future the local civil registers are all connected and part of a digital national civil registration system. While baptisms occur in the mosque no register is kept. The religious leaders would like to see that all costs of registration be waived. **(l'Ad:)** While their own kids are registered they haven't given it much thought to sensitize the people but will do in future. **(l'Est:)** They have all properly taken care of the registration of their own children and express the wish they could have a CEC in their own villages.

Judiciary interviews

Judiciary (LeN:). For the free CNI the judiciary has delivered more than 5,000 jugements supplétifs in 2011. ***"For children younger than 14 years old the jugement supplétif can be quite quick; only for the 15 year-old and above the procedure is long because an investigation needs to be opened."*** Several common problems are reported, e.g. the relationship to the father, but also a name giving practice among Muslims ("not giving a name before the 9th day"). Jugements supplétifs should be free the respondents here say. They also propose an amendment to Art. 22 of the 1981 Ordinance regulating the case of loss of a birth certificate. **(l'Est:)** The court employees interviewed were listed as trainees but they could not attend the training. They say parents and medical staff are most to blame for the delayed registration, the latter for not forwarding the birth declarations to the CEC.

Doctors and midwives

Doctors and midwives. (l'EN:) A physician reports that he is establishing proof of age by examining the child's teeth—pro bono. He points out that the birth registration procedure needs to take place while the mother is in hospital, because after departure the registration will be ignored. An example is reported of an hospital having included the cost of the "attestation de naissance" in the hospital delivery fee—which is also misunderstood as the total cost is seen as the cost of the birth certificate. Cultural practice is noted as one of the reasons for delayed registration. **(LeN:)** Medical staff at the training reported that the training was catering to the OEC/SEC, while for them and the judiciary it was more like a briefing. The MD respondent says that in 27 years he has never asked to be paid for the age certificate. MINSANTE, while having established a form for the CAA has not made a form for the cost of the assessment. They also reported:

"En effet, Il y a des enfants qui ratent trois fois la sixième maintenant on leur dit de refaire leur acte en changeant l'âge."

(LeN:) Midwives report that: *"Et si la femme ne payait pas, notre hiérarchie nous avait dit que l'enfant n'avait pas droit à la déclaration."* This shows the need for awareness raising, but also the need for simplification of procedures in the interaction of health and civil registration. **(L'Ad:)** Medical staff point out that mothers don't often have (or bring) identity papers, fathers are not engaged with the births of their children, while cultural/religious practices discourage hospital delivery. They also report that there is no training for them. Worse still, they are reporting, "there is NOT any collaboration program between the registration and the health centers". Many age certificates and

jugements supplétifs have been done because of the free CNI. **(l'Est:)** Midwives tell they have not been trained. Out of four hospitals only the regional hospital of Bertoua respects the procedure to forward birth declarations to the CEC. They do so every Friday, but even so in this favorable case over the months of May through September out of 644 hospital deliveries only 292 birth declarations were made. *The Bororos tribe is said to not name children before at least a month from birth.* Many parents don't act on the birth declarations they keep at home to only years later find they'll have to do a jugement supplétif.

Schoolteacher interviews

Schoolteachers. (l'EN:) The schoolteacher of the Maniwachi school mentioned the VSO project. He believes the procedure is longwinded and documents get lost along the way. He reports that the project has had some effect on reducing child marriage. But there are many deficiencies in the birth certificates, such as leaving out the gender, etc. **(LeN:)** Here the partner NGO is Plan. There is confusion among people whether it is the community or Plan doing the work. The jugement supplétif is important for girl children to stay in school longer and reduce child marriage. **(L'Ad:)** Schoolteachers are weary of UNICEF pulling out:

"*A notre avis, l'UNICEF ne devrait verser l'enfant avec l'eau de bain*". "*Il faut continuer dans ce sens car ici, les populations ne sont pas encore suffisamment sensibilisés sur l'utilité de ce document pour l'enfant et pour sa scolarisation en particulier*". "*ADAM'S fait un travail remarquable même comme parfois ils ont un problème de ressources humaines pour accompagner leurs action.*"

(l'Est:) Schoolteachers here report a communication breakdown with Plan as a result of which they don't know what will happen next with the list of unregistered schoolchildren. There is urgency because exam time is within days.

La Direction Nationale Sûreté Nationale (DGSN). (l'EN:) A certified copy of the birth certificate is one of the requirements for the Carte Nationale d'Identité. Another is a proof of nationality obtained from the court upon showing the birth certificate. At the time (before the 9 October 2011 presidential elections), if an applicant could not show a birth certificate, an "attestation" provided by the Sous-Préfet could replace that, after consultation with the traditional chiefs, who would be able to attest to the date and place of birth of the applicant. This attestation was free of charge, or available at the cost of the stamp only.

DGSN finds many cases of fraud, including of those who have gone through a jugement supplétif to try and become a national of Cameroon. This leads to the annulment of the birth certificate. While the law of 1990 puts a penalty on not having a CNI, or carrying one, many people don't comply. Controls meet with strong resistance because of which they are not done as often as they should. There are promotion campaigns held, e.g. before the last election, because with the CNI the electoral card can be obtained. NGOs don't support those campaigns. It would be good to have a better collaboration with the civil registration service as DGSN now has only access to the register when doing an investigation. As a CNI can be obtained anywhere in the country—irrespective place of birth—access to information from the civil register would be very helpful

(LeN:)

"En vue de sécuriser l'identité du Camerounais, le service d'identification a été confié à une entreprise privée. Cette entreprise s'occupe uniquement de la partie technique, le reste c'est la police (depuis la collecte des documents jusqu'à l'identification). Le poste d'identification existe dans presque toutes les unités de police de la région. La loi a prévue les pièces à fournir pour obtenir une CNI. Il existe deux procédures selon que l'on possède un acte de naissance ou non. Ainsi, pour des personnes disposant d'un acte de naissance, les pièces ci-après sont demandées:

- e Une copie d'acte de naissance;

- e Un certificat de nationalité (délivré par la justice);

- e Une pièce justificative de la profession;

- e Une photocopie de l'acte de mariage pour les personnes mariées.

Pour des personnes qui ne possèdent pas d'acte de naissance, elles doivent fournir:

- Une attestation d'état civil délivrée par le sous-préfet, à base deux témoins qui l'ont ont vu naitre: le chef traditionnel du lieu de naissance et le maire de là où on est né;

- Une photo.

La base de la CNI, c'est l'état civil. Mais dans certaines régions, l'état civil ne fonctionne pas bien. Parfois à cause de l'ignorance. Les chefs de villages qui sont établis comme OEC délivrent des actes de naissance à n'importe qui, même à des personnes tchadiennes par example.

Actuellement, la police n'a pas de rapport avec le service d'état, sauf pour les cas d'acte de naissance suspects qui requiert la vérification de leur authenticité auprès des OEC. Dans ces cas, on leur fait une réquisition pour vérification.

Il faut sécuriser l'état civil pour aboutir à une vraie sécurisation des services d'identification. Il faut un fichier central. Comme les CNI sont basées sur l'état civil, tant que ce n'est pas sécurisé les CNI ne le seront pas non plus tout à fait malgré tous nos efforts."

(l'Ad:) DGSN reports they come across a lot of people with double identities. They agree that the civil registration service and DGSN need to work better together. An interesting statement about an advantage of a computer record of an identity was given:

"Le système d'identification qu'utilise la police s'adosse sur l'unicité des empreintes digitales. "Même en modifiant nom, âge, nationalité ou n'importe quoi, la machine retrace votre filiation à partir de vos empreintes digitale."

(l'Est:) DGSN would welcome a closer integration of the work of the CEC with DGSN, although it is a decision that needs to be made in Yaoundé. There seems to be a practice among people to resort to the informal circuit for replacement certificates when they lose the certificate or when they want to change certain entries (date or place of birth, name), not realizing that DGSN has their data. When they are found out it affects their eligibility for a CNI because of the double identity they have created for themselves. Training of civil registrars needs to include the practice of counterfeiting identity documents. The birth certificate fails to allow entry of the nationality of the parents. This is a problem for children of aliens born in Cameroon.

4.   A Ten-Point Agenda for Government

UNICEF's ongoing assistance to improve birth registration in Cameroon is most effective and sustained if it strengthens the activity of the Government of Cameroon and supports the aspirations of the people of Cameroon.

One of UNICEF's strengths is that the organization works in more than 190 countries and territories, and because of that can foster the dissemination of and cross-fertilization of lessons learned and best practices.

UNICEF's role is to be an advocate of children's rights and to assist governments to implement evidence-based strategies to enhance child rights. This includes when appropriate helping governments to introduce and develop approaches that work and suggest improvementss in government approaches when possible.

This Report suggests ten priority issues for government action, to the implementation of which UNICEF could extend assistance.

1   Re-organize the civil registration service as a **de-concentrated government service**, with the new Bureau National de l'État Civil having direct control over the main registration centers and "civil registration agents".

2   Integrate the **national ID** infrastructure (DGSN) with civil registration and include like-activities in the civil registration service (examples *inter alia* India, New Zealand, Uruguay, Pakistan, Peru).

3   Improve the **interoperability ("work as if it were one organization") with MINSANTÉ** (examples *inter alia* The Gambia, Uruguay, Namibia, India-New Delhi. health facilities, frontline health workers,) and **MINEDUB** (school teachers).

4   Scale up **mobile phone use** for vital event notification by civil registration agents (examples *inter alia* Uganda, Kenya, Pacific Islands) upon conducting successful trial.

5   Phase out paper and **digitize** the service, with the main civil registration centers brought on-line, and frontline notification agents connected through mobile phone networks (example *inter alia* Uganda).

6   Seek international assistance for development of **new comprehensive civil registration and identity management law.** Suspend jugements supplétifs.

7 Introduce **incentives** for families through social transfers, and for the registration service through performance-based budget and adequate registrar pay (examples *inter alia* Uganda, India).

8 **Update the civil registration reform program.** Consider the development of a civil registration policy as an intermediary step (example Kenya). Reduce the cost to $15m from $27.5m. Diversify expert support. **Accelerate implementation.**

9 Develop a **professional civil registrar-training program** and encourage the establishment of an association of civil registrars. Rejuvenate the civil registrar corps.

10 Smarten up the civil registration reform case, open up the program for assistance from a broad donor community and **effectively raise funds.**

5.   A Five-Point Agenda for UNICEF

When the Government of Cameroon is agreeable to inform its policies by the above suggestions then this Report sees good ground for UNICEF as the government's partner to go forward with a new cooperation program encompassing the following suggested activities.

1 Assist in updating the civil registration reform agenda (expert input to all ten government points)

2 Support study visits for health and national ID interoperability and application of digitization/mobile phone technology

3 Continue ongoing assistance to a quality-enhanced civil registrar training program

4 Support introduction of incentive systems for the Cameroonian people's propensity to comply with civil registration law, to be validated by randomized control trial

5 Give assistance to writing a new, comprehensive law for a dematerialized and interoperable civil registration and national ID system

ANNEX 1—Acronyms

CEC	Centre de l'État Civil (Civil Registration Center)
CEFAM	Centre de Formation pour Administration Municipale
CEP	Certificat d'Études Primaires
CFA (FCFA)	Currency of the Central African Federation
CM1	Cours Moyen 1 (French elementary schoolgrade)
CM2	Cours Moyen 2 (ditto)
CNI	Carte d'Identité Nationale
CSEC	Centre Special de l'État Civil (Special Civil Registration Center)
DGSN	Directorate Generale de la Sûrété Nationale
Grand Nord	The three regions of the northeast of Cameroon: l'Extrême Nord, l'Adamaoua and l'Est
ID	Identity document
IEC	Information, education and communication
IFORD	Institut de Formation et de Récherches Démographiques
IIVRS	International Institute for Vital registration and Statistics
MINATD	Ministère de l'Administration Territoire et de la Centralisation
MINEDUB	Ministère de l'Éducation de Base
MINJUSTICE	Ministère de la Justice
MINSANTE	Ministère de la Santé
NADRA	National Database and Registration Authority (of Pakistan)
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OEC	Officier de l'État Civil
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
RECAMEF	Réseau Camerounais des Mères d'Elèves pour la Scolarisation des Filles
RENIEC	Registro Nacional de Identificación y Estado Civil (of Peru)
SAGE	Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (Cash transfer program Uganda)
SEC	Secrétaire de l'État Civil
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for refugees
VSO	Voluntary Services Overseas (U.K.)

ANNEX 2—Informants

<u>Mo 3 Oct 11</u>
UNICEF	-Julie Bergeron
	-Antoinette Ekam Abogo
	-Claire Soppo
	-Monsieur Kingne, Social Protection
	-Eric Fouapon, Child Protection
	-Lucille Terré, Intern Child Protection
	-Bianca Soua, Intern Child Protection
MINATD	-Kaldaoussa Faissam, Administrateur Civil Principal
	-Bella Nga Feliab
	-Donkep Nee Leudjeu Tchounga Chimene
	-Dimbele Boui Eugene
	-Mboutwono Yacoubi
MINATD/CIVIPOL	-Emmanual Etolo, Chef de Mission Adjoint
National consultants	-Ouedrago Habibou (IFORD)
	-Leundo Aubin Armand (MINEPAT)
	-Awoh Innocentia Ankungha PhD
	-Mveing Seraphin
	-Kamgho Tezanou Bruno Magloire (INS)

<u>Tu 4 Oct 11</u>
Plan	-Ngende Mbile Nathalia
UNICEF	-Dr. Mayer Magdalena, OVC
	-Vijitha Eyango, Head Education Section
	-Ora Nusu Clemens Hope, Representative
	-Zakari Adams, Deputy Representative
INS	-Paul Roger Libité

<u>Th 6 Oct 11</u>
DGSN	-H.R.H. Chief Manghe John Lakem, Sous Directeur de la Police Scientifique et de l'Identification

<u>Fr 7 Oct 11</u>
IFORD	-Gervais Beninguisse, PhD, Coordinateur de la Recherche

<u>Tu 11 Oct 11</u>
<u>Reunion sur le projet d'évaluation des formations a l'état civil</u>

-Outside attendants 16 from MINATD, UNHCR, CRS, Plan, MINAS, MINJUS, SCOFI, MINEDUB

We 12 Oct 11

UNHCR, Garoua	-Jean Jaques Ebene, Head of Field Office (Langui)
Red Cross, Garoua	-Faustin Tsimi, Chef de Projet Opération Id'Assistance aux Refugées Tchadiens (Langui)
	-Aziza Ibrahima, Community Services (Langui)
	-Dr. Douba Epee Emmanuel, Health Coordinator (Langui)
RECAMEF	-Hamoa Sadia Bintou

Th 13 Oct 11

VSO, Maroua	-Mohamadou Oumarou, Programme Manager Education
	-Gaye Gustave, Programme Development Officer
	-Georgette O'Nell, project leader
MINATD, l'Extreme Nord	-Ngong Justin Dieudonné, Prefet du Département du Diamare

Fr 14 Oct 11

MINATD l'Extreme Nord	-Joseph Beti Assomo, Gouverneur

Mo 16 Oct 11

UNHCR	-Catherine Hamon Sharpe, Deputy Representative
MINSANTE	-Dr. Moluh Seidou, Sous-Directeur de la Santé de Réproduction

Tu 17 Oct 11

Coopération Francaise	-Marion Séjourné, Attaché de Coopération
CIVIPOL	-Arnaud Blanchard, Project manager
MINEDUB	-Bihima Philomene, Point Focal SCOFI
German Embassy	-Annette Coly, Chef de la Coopération
UNFPA	-Alain Sibenaler, Representative

We 18 Oct 11

MINJUS	-Ngatcha Isaie
UNDP	-Zephirin Emini, Ass. UN Res. Coordinator
UNDP	-Simon-Pierre Manitelamio, Elections Project
African Development Bank	-Judes Bissakono

Tu 6 Dec 11

European Union	-Jeanne-Pierre Bou, Premier Conseiller

We 7 Dec 11

MINATD	-Essomba Pierre, Secrétaire Général

ANNEX 3—Overview of UNICEF-supported activity 2002-2011.

ANNEX 4—Example of a Civil Registrar Training Program

ANNEX 5—Who needs a jugement supplétif?

The new law of 2011, article 33, requires a court procedure for births not declared within the first six months. This was three months in the ordinance of 1981. The new law requires birth registration within 60 days. This was 30 days. UNSD distinguishes between late registration and delayed registration:

5. Provision for late and delayed registration

391.   A late registration is a registration of a vital event after the legally specified time period but within the grace period. As indicated above, the grace period is usually considered to be one year following the vital event.

392.   Delayed registration is the registration of a vital event after the grace period has expired. Even in the best of civil registration systems, it is likely that delayed registrations will occur. Depending on the extent of the delay, these registrations may result in omissions from the tabulated vital statistics if they are made after the file of records for a particular year has been subjected to final processing.

The grace period is 6 months (was 3 months). Outside of the grace period registration becomes "delayed registration" and a court procedure, the jugement supplétif, is needed.

From a small study the following information is known. In the Buea subdivision in the South West region, 1,569 births occurred in the 1992, 966 (61.5%) of which were registered within the year, and of these 80% were registered within the first month, i.e. in accordance with the ordinance of 1981. Registration within the legal timeframe is free of charge.

The table below shows the registrations recorded at the registration center. The number of children registered before their first birthday, 889, is not too different from the 966 (62%) out of 1,569 registered (the two numbers do not have to be the same, but they should not be too different either—the difference is in the timing of measurement of one and the other). The table also shows the "bump" at ages 11-13 (when schoolchildren need a birth certificate for the school-leaving exam, the Certificat dÉtudes Primaires, or "CEP").

Table 2 Distribution of ages (in years) as recorded in the Buea council at the time of registration (n = 1716). (Ages are rounded up to the nearest whole figure)

Age at time of registration	Number of births registered
1	889
2	36
3	25
4	38
5	23
6	43
7	37
8	29
9	18
10	33
11	44
12	70
13	77
14	33
15	36
16	31
17	41
18	43
19	31
20	34
21	23
22	11
23+	68

When we assume a stable population then the information in the table above can also be presented as follows:

Table A

Age	Registration rate
1 month	41.5
By turning 1	51.9
By turning 6 (entry primary school)	53.2
Average from 6 through 13	68.0
By turning 14 (CEP age)	79.5
By turning 18 (national ID age)	87.7

Data from MICS3 (2006) and from MINATD publications for the three regions in which UNICEF supported the jugement suppletif procedure are shown in the table below. The birth registration rates are estimates obtained by applying the ratio for the MICS country numbers: the country average birth registration rate for the 0-11 months old (59.9%) divided by the 0-59 months old rate (70%), i.e. 0.856. Also the gross birth rate for the country (33/1,000) is applied on regional population numbers.

Table B

Region	Population	Birth registration rate MICS3 0-59 months	Birth registration rate 0-11 months	Number of births annually	Registered within one month
L'Extrême Nord	3,101,188	63.0	53.9	102,463	44,264
Le Nord	1,685,877	55.3	47.3	55,701	21,110
L'Adama-oua	887,236	58.4	50.0	29,314	11,725
Grand Nord	5,674,301	60.0	51.4	187,478	77,099

VSO, in a report of a project in the l'Extrême Nord region supported by UNICEF, provided birth registration rates by school-grade and gender for 9 schools, one of which was in the urban area of Maroua, the regional capital. The mix of rural versus urban schools may not be fully representative for the Grand Nord region.

Table C

		F	M	T	F-	M-	T-	Registration Rate
Sub-Total	SL	654	607	1261	376	282	658	48%
	CP	485	530	1015	261	232	493	51%
	CE1	457	499	956	256	237	493	48%
	CE2	438	450	888	239	183	422	52%
	CM1	447	376	823	239	162	401	51%
	CM2	397	380	777	224	155	379	51%
		2878	2842	5720	1595	1251	2846	50%
Farde (Maroua)		519	562	1081	63	75	138	87%
Total		3397	3404	6801	1658	1326	2984	56%
					51%	61%		

What is unexpected is that there seems to be no improvement of the registration rate in the l'Extrême Nord region while children are in primary school. In the Buea sample we deduced from the age of people registered that a significant improvement takes place: from 53% to 79% during primary school years, with the most pronounced improvement in the 11 to 13 years of age bracket.

The net primary school attendance rate in l'Extrême Nord, 49% (2006, MICS3) is the lowest of the country, for which the rate is 80%. The gender gap is also much more significant: boys 56% (Cameroon 82%) versus girls 42% (Cameroon 77%). The attendance rates in the two other regions are somewhat higher, with—remarkably— a better rate for girls than for boys in l'Adamaoua. For the Grand Nord as a whole we estimate the attendance rate at 52%.

UNICEF-supported delayed registration is directed towards children in school. In the Grand Nord this implies that UNICEF's support does not reach about half of children—who might be considered equally deserving as schoolchildren, if not more.

VSO has reported that their support to delayed registration—in agreement with UNICEF—is focused on children in CM1 and CM2, and that girls should make up 80% of the beneficiaries. Because not every deserving child can be helped choices have

to be made. CM1 and CM2 grade children are closest to the CEP exam. Helping children in lower grades could have the effect of helping children who drop out before the CEP exam. Favoring girls goes some way in trying to prevent girls, who are already present in lower numbers in schools according to MICS data (but interestingly not in the 9 schools!), from not being allowed to sit the CEP exam and move to secondary school.

The average birth registration rate found in the VSO sample for children in primary school in the l'Extrême Nord region, 56%, is only a little higher than the rate for 0-11 months olds we estimated (table B, 53.9%). On the basis of the Buea sample we would have expected a more substantial improvement from age one to age 14. It is possible that such improvements do not take place among the children from the rural parts of the l'Extrême Nord region, and perhaps also the larger area of the Grand Nord.

So what is the impact of UNICEF's support to delayed registration?

1. From the UNICEF data we have obtained we know that, over the period 2002-2010 a total of 8,977 birth certificates have been obtained for an amount of $172,514, corresponding with $20 per birth certificate and jugement supplétif. Another $46,027 has been spent but no numbers of certificates or jugements supplétifs were given. At the cost of $20 per case another 2,395 birth certificates may have been obtained, and the total then would have been 11,372.

2. Over the period 2002-2010 it is estimated that each year a cohort of about 3.3% of 5.8m children in the Grand Nord reached "CEP-age", or 190,000 children, and over the whole period 1.7m. Of these 1.7m children 56% may have had a birth certificate already, and 44%, or 758,000 would not have had a birth certificate. UNICEF's assistance for a jugement supplétif for 11,372 children translates to ***1.5% of the total of children—in and out of school—reaching "CEP-age" in 2002-2010***. But this is based on the assumption that children out of school would have had the same registration rate as children in school, which is a "charitable" assumption. *1.5% is therefore a high estimate.*

3. Of the 1.7m children who reached "CEP-age", 48% was not in school. UNICEF's target group therefore was 52% of 1.7m or 884,000 children, of which 56% may have had a birth certificate already (here the 56%—in fact an average for schoolchildren and children out of school—may be too low an estimate), i.e. the number of children without a birth certificate and in school reaching "CEP-age" during the 2002-2010 period would have been 389,000. UNICEF's assistance for a jugement supplétif for 11,372 children translates to ***2.9% of the total of children— in school—reaching "CEP-age" in 2002-2010***. But this is based on the assumption that children in school would have had the same registration rate as children out of school, which is a "conservative" assumption. *2.9% is therefore a low estimate.*

ANNEX 6—A summary of findings in the South-West region

The South-West region was included in the survey as it is also a region with a low birth registration rate. It is not a region included in UNICEF's program area. When the current cooperation program for 2008-2012 was conceived the MICS 2006 results were not yet known.

Table A

Basic civil registration data by region

Region	Centres Principaux		Centres Speciaux		Population (2008) 1)	Superficie (en km2)	Birth registration rate - Analytic Study 2)	Birth registration rate - MICS 2006 3)
	Existing	Functional	Existing	Functional				
Adamaoua	22	22	100	81	887,236	63,691	60	58.4
Centre	67	67	455	407	2,950,269	68,926	90	69.5
Est	33	33	149	88	797,522	109,011	88	56.3
Extreme-Nord	48	48	252	158	3,101,188	34,246	41	63.0
Littoral	34	34	157	118	2,304,780	20,239	90	91.3
Nord	21	21	87	41	1,685,877	65,576	52	55.3
Ouest	42	41	295	291	1,737,149	17,812	96	85.9
Nord-Ouest	34	33	116	92	1,812,127	13,872	85	71.3
Sud	30	30	167	146	555,425	47,110	93	74.1
Sud-Ouest	28	28	94	32	1,292,115	24,571	64	35.5
TOTAL	359	357	1872	1454	17,123,688	465,054	76	70.1

Source: MINATD, CIVI.POL Conseil, Cartographie de l'Etat Civil, Yaounde, (undated); MINATD, Groupe Agence Francaise de Developpement, CIVI.POL Conseil and IFORD, Analytic Study of the Civil Status System in Cameroon and Feasibility of Priority Intervention Program, Yaounde, August 2007 (Seminar on the Presentation of Results and Proposals, Document 1: Analytic Report and Proposals)

1) Extrapolations from the 2005 Census, by BUCREP
2) Reported in the "Analytic Study etc.", undated, but probably pertaining to the situation around 2006-2007. The overall registration rate is only slightly different from the MICS-2006 rate of 70%. The "Analytic Study etc." survey was done in the town of Meigange in Adamaoua, for example, thus may not be fully representative of the region.
3) MICS 2000

There is also little reason to expect the South-West region to be at the very bottom of the registration ladder. In statistics for 2007 published in a government source ("The Study") it has better registration numbers than the regions of the Grand Nord. But the provenance of the government data is somewhat of a riddle: the MICS was done in 2006, and the same institutions that implement the MICS (INS, IFORD) were involved in the Study. Could it be that the government data for 2007 are provisional MICS data?

The South-West region, in many respects, is almost as developed as the Littoral (Douala) and Centre (Yaoundé) regions. Its men and women have a substantially better education than the national average, which normally goes along with better birth registration. The population is also substantially richer, another reason why registration would normally be better than the national average. People in the South-West region are connected to the electricity grid only second to the Littoral region (Douala). The region has a top score in terms of mobile phone possession, TV-possession and watches owned.

The South-West's registration rate is also out of whack with the rates in the bordering regions of West and North-West.

In the above table there is one possible clue about the possibility that there might be an issue with civil registration in the South-West region: nowhere is such a high percentage of special registration offices not functioning as in the South-West region (only 34% is functioning versus 78% on average in the country). And, even if all offices would be functioning, the number of offices per capita is relatively low: in the region the average office (functioning or not) serves 10,600 people, while the country average is 7,700. But this should also been in relation to the regions' population density, which with 53/km2 is about 50% higher than the 37/km2 for the country.

However, even this piece of information is contradicted in the Mapping Study:

Table B

Tableau 1 : Taux de fonctionnalité des centres spéciaux d'état civil par région

Région	Centres fonctionnels	Centres non fonctionnels	Taux de fonctionnalité
Adamaoua	81	19	76,5%
Centre	408	47	88,5%
Est	88	62	29,5%
Extrême-Nord	156	82	47,4%
Littoral	118	35	70,3%
Nord	66	20	69,7%
Nord-Ouest	95	19	80,0%
Ouest	265	4	98,5%
Sud	161	10	93,8%
Sud-Ouest	32	9	71,9%
Ensemble	1470	307	79,1%

According to this table the number of special centers in the South-West would be much smaller and the proportion of non-functioning special centers would be not as extreme as seen before.

With the data in the Study and the Mapping Study being so often inconsistent and contradicting it is hard to establish what is true. Looking at still another table from the Mapping study we deduce that the South-West region may indeed be below the country average for birth registration rates, and close to the number s for the Grand Nord:

Given the population numbers shown in Table A and a crude birth rate of 33/1,000 the vital events registered in Table C imply indeed a lower registration rate in the South-West (48% of births) as compared to 60% for the country. This is based on the assumption that the registration shown in Table C does not include delayed registration as the text regarding Table C in the Mapping Study seems to indicate.

A Mayor in the South-West region gave this as a reason for low registration levels: "Most areas in the South west region are made up of farmers and traders who are not well informed about civil status registration. They wait until the child grows up and has to go to school. And when things get to this level, they do not even want to go the court and get things properly done." But ignorance is in fact not what MICS

Table C

Tableau 21: Nombre d'actes délivrés en 2008

Régions	Centres principaux			Centres spéciaux		
	Naissances	Mariages	Décès	Naissances	Mariages	Décès
Adamaoua	11.432	709	644	5.258	318	202
Centre	21.321	3.126	2.969	18.872	4.343	2.030
Est	8.273	689	587	4.939	649	520
Extrême-Nord	29.051	1.331	942	25.961	1.613	1.542
Littoral	18.869	2.936	2.191	19.760	2.692	1.386
Nord	26.097	924	1.025	12.939	396	135
Nord-Ouest	36.004	1.978	1.197	18.210	392	339
Ouest	18.621	2.019	1.286	36.657	3.957	1.973
Sud	3.284	715	562	4.750	1.175	664
Sud-Ouest	16.599	1.468	1.060	4.206	357	284
Ensemble	189.551	15.895	12.463	152.552	15.892	9.075

2006 shows would be a likely factor. According to this survey, for households in the South-West region the cost and distance to a civil registration center account for 71% of all reasons for non-registration, against only 49% nationwide. I.e., that it would be "more a problem of ignorance than of unwillingness" is highly unlikely. The national consultant's report mentions that it would be difficult to move around in the South-West region. The absence of mayors is mentioned as an obstacle. And another report indicates a general aversion of people in the South-West when asked by police to show identity documents.

In fact, looking at all indicators, it seems that in fact it might be more a matter of unwillingness than anything else.

It was found in one commune that the mayor handpicked three civil registrars and made them take the oath. Since they haven't been trained they make things up while going along. And control of what they are doing seems to be non-existing.

Interviews with medical staff indicate a general lack of ignorance about procedures, such as the provision of birth declarations to civil registration centers, or certificates of apparent age. Name–giving practices are mentioned as a complicating factor. Schools vary between those having virtually no registered children to those having virtually only registered children. The judiciary reported a huge rise in jugements supplétifs because of the run-up to the 2011 elections and the issuance of the new national ID. The police force reports that counterfeit documents have become a staple in the region. One theory is that a government official in the 1990s made matters so difficult that people out of anger started the production of fake documents, a practice which hasn't gone away ever since. The South-West region borders Nigeria and the region houses many foreigners. This may complicate matters for civil registrars. In general there is a great lack of know-how among all involved in the registration process and training is a serious need, as is documentation for registrars and others involved in the registration process as well as the population about the birth registration and delayed registration procedure. Stamping out documentary fraud in this region may especially be hard.

ANNEX 7—References

[i] Unpublished UNSD statistics.

[ii] Cf. International Institute for Vital Registration and Statistics (1995), Appendix B (not page numbered),
http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/CRVS/IIVRS%20papers/IIVRS_paper63.pdf

[iii] Cf.
http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/meetings/wshops/1995_Rabat_CRVS/list_of_documents.htm

[iv] Cf. Ministère de l'Economie et des Finances et al. (2002) (MICS 2000). MICS birth registration rates measure registration rates for the 0-59 months old. UNSD rates measure the number of children registered as proportion of the number of births during the year. The MICS numbers for the 0-11 months old are in fact better comparable to the UNSD rates. The MICS 0-11 months rate for 2002 is 77.4%; the 0-59 months rate is 79.1%.

[v] Cf. République du Cameroun et al.(2008) (MICS 2006). The 0-11 months rate is 59.9% while the 0-59 months rate is 70.1.

[vi] Cf. Republique du Cameroun et al. (2007-1), p. 22. If these rates would be abtained from the MICS survey done a year earlier then it should be pointed out that not only the total rates differ, but also there are differences in regional rates. This source does not specify the definition of the rates or the way they were obtained (unlike the MICS-publications).

[vii] Cf. République du Cameroun et al. (2009-2011), p. 65: less than 1 in 5 registers in main civil registration centers are in a good state.

[viii] Ibid (2008)

[ix] Ibid (2007-1)

[x] Ibid (2008)

[xi] Cameroon's population is estimated at 19.7m by 1st July 2011, and the crude birth rate is 33.04 per 1,000 according to CIA's World Fact Book (cf. https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/cm.html). The number of births is thus 651,000 annually. MICS 2006 data show that 59.9% of these birts will be registered in the first year, i.e. 390,000, and 260,000 will not have been registered. 4 in 10 actually underestimates the number of registrations outside of the legal time limit, which is not a year but 1 month (grace period 3 months). In the first months even fewer births will be registered than 60% of the total.

[xii] From Ndong et al. (1994) we know that for every two registrations within the legal time limit there are three other registrations outside the time limit (80% of 889=771; 711/1716=40%; 40-60%: 2:3). See also Annex 4. Most people may do get registered at some point (there is virtually universal knowledge that a birth certificate is needed for a *Carte d'Identite Nationale* at 18 years of age), but the evidence for this is limited. There is also a rise in rates with age within the MICS data, although that information is limited to the first five years. We have taken a bit more conservative stand and estimate 1 registration outside of the legal limit for 1 within the legal limit.

[xiii] $20 is the cost calculated for the late/delayed registrations (see the definition in Annex 4) done with UNICEF support over the 2002-2010 period. $200 was quoted by UNHCR as the amount of a case supported by UNHCR.

[xiv] Based on CIA World Fact Book numbers for Cameroon, population 19.7m, death rate 11.83/1,000.

[xv] Cf. République du Cameroun (2009-2011), p. 67

[xvi] Ibid.

[xvii] As follows: 390,000 birth registrations within the legal timeframe, same number late/delayed (at most) plus the death and marriage registrations—50,000 to 60,000 in total.

[xviii] Interview information CIVI.POL.

[xix] In England and Wales registration was the responsibility of the Anglican state church, until in 1837 it became a direct government responsibility. Cf. for the history of civil registration in England and Wales, Simon Szreter (2007)

xx *Ibid* (2007), p. 73.

xxi Cf. United Nations (2008) for "normal functioning" and Mercer, J. (2009) for "breeder" documents.

xxii Cf. United Nations (2010-1).

xxiii Cf. IRBC (2011)

xxiv Interoperability is a property referring to the ability of diverse systems and organizations to work together (inter-operate).

xxv Cf. République du Cameroun (2007), p. 29 for survey results about fraud.

xxvi Cf. http://www.dialogueuroafricainmd.net/web/the-rabat-process

xxvii The "Study": République du Cameroun (2007-1)

xxviii The 'Mapping Study": République du Cameroun (2009-2011)

xxix Cf. IADB (2009), pp. 32-34

xxx Cf. République du Cameroun (2007-2)

xxxi Cf. http://www.unescap.org/stat/vital-stat/vs-Mar11/session7-India.pdf

xxxii The MICS 2006 (cf. République du Cameroun (2008)) data show that 59.9% of children 0-11 months is registered. We have two sources that tell something about what happens before children turn 1 year. MICS 2006 (Cf. Ministère de l''Économie et des Finances et al. (2002)) shows that the rate for the under 6 months old is 71.7% while that for 6-11 months is 77.4%. I.e., on average the rate increases with about 1 percent point per month of age. Ndong et al. (1994) states that in their survey 80% of registration in the first year take place within the first month after birth. This also indicates one percent point increase per month. Thus, with the legal time limit extended from 1 to 2 months the improvement would only be one percent point – from 80% of 59.9%=48% to 48%+1%=49%. The registration rate within the grace period (extended from 3 to 6 months) may mean and improvement of registration within the grace period (late registration requiring "only" an administrative procedure) may be increased 50 to 53%. I.e., in the latter case, and reduction of the delayed registration workload from 50 to 47%, i.e. a 6% relative decrease.

xxxiii Cf. Agar, 2005.

xxxiv For SAGE cash transfer project information: UNICEF Uganda (which is involved in the civil registration of beneficiaries). For Mauritius: United Nations (2010-2), p. 42. Mauritius, with a per capita income seven times Cameroon, gives a child voucher of the relatively modest amount of $6.70.

xxxv Cf. Simon Szreter (2007)

xxxvi Cf. Ndong et al. (1994)

xxxvii Cf. La Cimade (2009)

xxxviii Cf. note 30.

xxxix The Registration Department of the Government of Andhra Pradesh (one of the states in India) performs the functions of registration of deeds, valuation of immovable property, collection of revenue (stamp duty and registration fee), preservation of copies of documents, issuance of certified copies of documents, issue of encumbrance certificates and registration of societies, firms, marriages etc. The department has 387 Sub Registrar's Offices (SRO) in 23 districts of Andhra Pradesh. The gross revenue earned by the department is Rs.12 billion ($230m)

xl Cf. République du Cameroun (2009-2011), p. 77

xli Cf. Note 28.

xlii In Liberia the Crisis Management Initiative from Finland did a pilot. In Kenya two pilots are underway—one involving Plan Kenya and another WHO Move—It. In Uganda and Vanuatu UNICEF is involved. The Solomon Islands is done by the civil registration service from New Zealand.

xliii Cf. UNICEF (2010-1). One good practice country in Africa is The Gambia, while another country not included in the study, Namibia, is doing good work in this area as well.

xliv Cf. Note 33.

xlv A Randomized Evaluation is a type of Impact Evaluation that uses random assignment to allocate resources, run programs, or apply policies as part of the study design. Like all *impact evaluations*, the main purpose of randomized evaluations is to determine whether a program

has an impact, and more specifically, to quantify *how large* that impact is. Impact evaluations measure program effectiveness typically by comparing outcomes of those (individuals, communities, schools, etc) who received the program against those who did not. There are many methods of doing this. But randomized evaluations are generally considered the most rigorous and, all else equal, produce the most accurate (i.e. unbiased) results.

[xlvi] Cf. UNHCR (2011)

[xlvii] UNHCR Cameroon management information

[xlviii] Cf. Arsac (2009) and République du Cameroun (2007-3)

[xlix] This evaluation has not covered the program activities of UNICEF focusing on orphans and vulnerable children ("OVCs"), however, the intention is that this evaluation will also inform program approaches for this UNICEF unit.

[l] UNICEF's protection section also supported some late registration work conducted in the same fashion as discussed here for the Education section.

[li] This does not include a reportedly relatively small amount spent on birth registration by UNICEF's section for OVCs.

[lii] In 2010 UNICEF entered into a contract with Plan Cameroun to establish 1,000 certificates in the regions of le Nord and l'Est. While thus some of the delayed registration support has been in the l'Est region we have ignored that, and assumed all established birth certifcates have been in the Grand Nord. Our estimate of the impact in the Grand Nord is thus in fact overstated as a few hundred of birth certifcates were in fact established in the l'Est region.

[liii] The registrar function can be an unpaid, honorary role, for senior citizens, for example former civil servants, as it is in Singapore. But such arrangements seem more appropriate when the job is not as challenging as is the case in Cameroon, the country is as rich as Singapore is and senior citizens can do voluntary work because of the financial situation they are in.

[liv] Cf. CRC4D (2011)

[lv] Cf. Awoh, Innocentia Ankungha (2011), Keundo, Aubin Armand (2011), Kamgho Tezanou, Bruno Magloire (2011), Mveing, Seraphin (2011) and Ouedraogo, Habibou (2011)

[lvi] Comparisons with country data throughout the registrar evaluation section are obtained from République du Cameroun (2009-2011)

[lvii] A cloud view is a tool for text analysis. For the same reason as a bar chart is used to explain numbers in an "eye wink", a cloud view, by showing a word used many times in big font and a word used only a few times in small font, allows to get an immediate idea of which words are used most in narrative response, and which are used less or least. Used for questionnaires it is the tool used to quickly analyze open questions.

[lviii] CEFAM is the training institute for government based in Buea.

SOURCES

Agar, John, **Identity cards in Britain: past experience and policy implications,** Cambridge, November, 2005.

Arsac, Maguelone, **Rapport Fin de Mission**, Yaoundé, 2009

Awoh, Innocentia Ankungha, **Civil Registration Support in Cameroon. An Evaluation of UNICEF-supported Interventions in the South-West region,** Yaoundé, November 2011

Cimade, La, **Les Accords Rélatifs a la Gestion Concertée des Flux Migratoires et au Codéveloppement**, Paris, October 2009

Civil Registration Centre for Development (CRC4D), **UNICEF Civil Registration Support. Evaluation Plan**, Yaoundé, October 2011.

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRBC), **National Documentation Package Cameroon**, April 2011

Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), **Democratic Governance, Citizenship, and Legal Identity, Linking Theoretical Discussion and Operational Reality,** Washington, May 2009

Kamgho Tezanou, Bruno Magloire, **Appui a l'État Civil au Cameroun. Une Evaluation des interventions appuyées par l'UNICEF au Nord,** Yaoundé, Novembre 2011

Kelodjoue, Samuel, **Comparative analysis of deaths registered in the civil registration of Cameroon: The case of the mayoralties of Yaoundé (1986-1993)**, IIVRS Technical Papers, Bethesda, Maryland, October 1995

Keundo, Aubin Armand, **Appui a l'État Civil au Cameroun. Une Evaluation des interventions appuyées par l'UNICEF dans l'Est,** Yaoundé, Novembre 2011

Mercer, John, Breeder documents. The key to identity, *Keesing Journal of Documents & Identity*, issue 29, 2009, pp. 14-17

Ministère de l'Administration de la Territoire et Decentralisation et al., **Enregistrement des faits d'Etat Civil et Statistiques de l'Etat Civil au Cameroun**, Yaoundé2010 (Presentation at the Conference for African Ministers responsible for Civil Registration, held 2010 in Addis Ababa)

Ministère de l'Économie et des Finances et al**., Enquête a l'Indicateurs Multiples (MICS) au Cameroun 2000, Rapport principal**, Yaoundé, May 2002

Mveing, Seraphin, **Appui a l'État Civil au Cameroun. Une Evaluation des interventions appuyées par l'UNICEF dans l'Adamaoua,** Yaoundé, Novembre 2011

Ndong, Isaiah, et al., An evaluation of vital registers as sources of data for infant mortality in Cameroon, *International Journal of Epidemiology* 1994; 23: 536-539.

Ouedraogo, Habibou, **Appui a l'État Civil au Cameroun. Une Evaluation des interventions appuyées par l'UNICEF dans l'Extrême Nord,** Yaoundé, Novembre 2011

République du Cameroun et al., **Analytic study of the civil status system in Cameroon and feasibility of priority intervention programme, Seminar on the presentation of results and proposals, Document 1, Analytic Report and Proposals**, Yaoundé, December 2007-1

—, **Etude Diagnostique du Systême de l'Etat Civil au Cameroun et Faisabilité d'un Programme d'Intervention Prioritaire, Rapport Final Phase 5, Progamme d'Intervention Prioritaire**, Yaoundé, December 2007-2

—, **Rapport Mission Conjointe de Réévaluation de la Situation des Réfugiés Centrafricains au Cameroun**, Yaoundé, December 2007-3

—, **Cartographie de l'Etat Civil, Rapport Final**, Yaoundé (undated; approx. 2009-2011)

—, **Enquête par Grappes a Indicateurs Multiples (MICS) 2006, Rapport principal**, Yaoundé, Mai, 2008.

Simon Szreter, The Right of Registration: Development, Identity Registration, and Social Security—A Historical Perspective, **World Development**, Vol. 35, No. 1, pp. 67–86, 2007

UNDP and UNHCR, **Identification des Initiatives et Projets des Agences du SNU a l'Est,** Yaoundé, December 2009

UNHCR, **UNHCR Country operations profile 2011**: http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/page?page=4a03e1926&submit=GO

UNICEF Cameroon, **Annual work plan 2008**, Yaoundé, January 2008

—, **Plan d'Action du Programme de Pays entre le Gouvernement de la République du Cameroun et le Fonds des Nations Unies pour l' Enfance (UNICEF) 2008-2012**, Yaoundé, December 2007

—, **Programme de Cooperation 2008-2012 Gouvernement Du Cameroun et UNICEF, Plan de travail annuel 2009, Programme Protection Spéciale**, Yaoundé, January 2009

—, **UNICEF Good practices in integrating birth registration into health systems (2000-2009), Case studies: Bangladesh, Brazil, The Gambia and Delhi, India,** New York, January 2010-1

—, **Programme de Coopération Governement du Cameroun—UNICEF 2008-2012, Revue a Mi Parcours, Secteur Protection de l'Enfant,** Yaoundé, July 2010-2

United Nations, Department of Economic Affairs, Statistics Division, **Handbook on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems, Preparation of a Legal Framework**, Studies in Methods, Series F., No.71, New York, 1998

—, Committee on the Rights of the Child, **Examen des rapports présentés par les États parties en application de l'article 44 de la Convention**, Geneva, 2010-1.

—, Department of Economic Affairs, Statistics Division, **Status of Civil registration and Vital Statistics in the SADC Region,** technical report, New York, 2010-2.

Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO) Cameroon, **Rapport final de la mise en oeuvre des Activités du Projet de Sensibilisation et d'Enregistrement des Elèves à l'Etat Civil dans des Ecoles Appuyées par UNICEF et VSO dans 'Extrême Nord du Cameroun**, Yaoundé, 2011

END