# INVESTMENT CASE FOR BIRTH REGISTRATION IN KENYA

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HARAMBEE

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Within this publication, reference is made to the Communication for Behavioural Impact (COMBI) approach developed by Dr. Everold Hosein. This method was created at New York University in 1994 and adopted by the World Health Organization in 2000.

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**Disclaimer**
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS


FOREWORD ..... 5

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS ..... 6

1. OVERVIEW OF THE INVESTMENT CASE ..... 9
   - Executive Summary 8
   - How to use this Document? 10

2. INTRODUCTION TO BIRTH REGISTRATION ..... 11
   - What is Birth Registration? 12
   - Birth Registration in Kenya 12

3. WHY INVEST IN BIRTH REGISTRATION? ..... 13
   - Why Invest in Birth Registration? 14
   - Unlocking the potential of women and girls 14
   - Alignment with effective identity management and e-government services 14
   - Monitoring progress against the Sustainable Development Goals 15
   - Evidence-based programming and policy development 15

4. CURRENT STATE OF BIRTH REGISTRATION IN KENYA ..... 16
   - Improving CRVS in Kenya: Achievements 18
   - Strategic Focus 18

5. INVESTMENT STRATEGY ..... 18
   - An Integrated Approach to Birth Registration 19
   - Investment Opportunity #1: Process and Technology 21
   - Investment Opportunity #2: Change Management 29
   - Investment Opportunity #3: Behavioural Change Impact 36
   - Investment Opportunity #4: Governance, Legal, and Regulatory Framework 40
   - Investment Opportunity #5: Monitoring and Evaluation 43

6. FINANCIALS AND STAKEHOLDERS TO ENGAGE ..... 45

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS ..... 48
   - Achieving Universal Birth Registration in Kenya is Attainable 49

# FOREWORD

Birth registration is a right in of itself, laid out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. But that little piece of paper opens the door to a whole host of other rights as well. “Registering a birth is a critical first step in ensuring the rights of a child. Registration means proof – not only of identity, but of existence. A birth certificate is confirmation of a child’s nationality, place of birth, parentage and age. In many countries it is seen as the key identity document, outweighing any other – a birth certificate is often needed to apply for a passport, driving license or national identity card, as the child becomes an adult,” states Plan’s Count Every Child report. Having a birth certificate is also a crucial tool for protecting children – especially girls – against exploitation. “Proof of age is critical in successfully prosecuting perpetrators of crimes against children such as child trafficking, sexual offences, early recruitment into the armed forces, child marriage and child labour.”

Globally, an estimated 1 billion people cannot officially prove their identity and 47% of those without a birth certificate are children. (World Bank, 2018)

For people to count, they must first be counted. This is the role of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) systems which record the details of major life events, such as births and deaths. Plan International Kenya has been working towards universal birth registration in Kenya since 2005. Our work is rooted in our initial “Count Every Child” campaign where we partnered with the Government of Kenya to conduct birth registration campaigns in communities across the country. Since then, our work has evolved towards more holistic programming to tackle demand, supply and legislative barriers to achieving universal coverage.

As an organization dedicated to advancing children’s rights and the equality for girls, we have been building powerful partnerships with the Government, donors, local implementing partners, communities and girls and boys themselves to bring about change. We acknowledge the strong efforts carried out by Civil Registration Services to improve national birth registration rates through more efficient service delivery and coordination amongst partners. We also share our appreciation for the Government of Canada who has provided funding through Global Affairs Canada to support a five-year initiative titled “Tulinde Tusome: Creating Safe and Protective Spaces for Improved Learning in Kwale and Kilifi Counties, Kenya”. Through this initiative, Plan International Kenya has worked in collaboration with Civil Registration Services and local partners to implement comprehensive programming to improve birth registration and certification rates in Kwale and Kilifi Counties. The programming approaches and lessons within this publication have been derived from this project and are complemented by our global experience on birth registration.

Our goal with this publication is to share insights and lessons with our allies and critical stakeholders striving to improve birth registration in Kenya. Through our joint commitment, and in partnership with Civil Registration Services, we can contribute to universal birth registration in Kenya.

**Kate Maina-Vorley**
Country Director, Plan International Kenya

# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| **ABN** | Acknowledgment of Birth Notification |
| **AC** | Assistant Chief |
| **BRN** | Birth Registration Number |
| **CHV** | Community Health Volunteers |
| **COMBI** | Communication for Behavioural Impact |
| **CRC** | Convention on the Rights of the Child |
| **CRS** | Civil Registration Department |
| **CRS** | Civil Registration Services |
| **CRVS** | Civil Registration and Vital Statistics |
| **CRVSS** | Civil Registration and Vital Statistics System |
| **DCRO** | District Civil Registration Office |
| **DBR** | Digital Birth Registration |
| **DHIS2** | District Health Information System 2 |
| **GDP** | Gross Domestic Product |
| **ICT** | Information Communication and Technology |
| **INGO** | International Non-Government Organization |
| **KDHS** | Kenya Demographic Health Survey |
| **KVSR** | Kenya Vital Statistics Report |
| **MCH** | Maternal and Child Health |
| **MOE** | Ministry of Education |
| **MOH** | Ministry of Health |
| **MOI** | Ministry of Interior |
| **PHO** | Public Health Officer |
| **SDG** | Sustainable Development Goal |
| **UBR** | Universal Birth Registration |
| **UNFPA** | United Nations Population Fund |
| **UNHRC** | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |
| **UNICEF** | United Nations Children's Fund |
| **VE** | Village Elder |

# 1. OVERVIEW OF THE INVESTMENT CASE

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Kenya, the birth registration rate has seen an increase from 67.8% in 2014 to 73.4% in 2018[1]. This increase can largely be attributed to an increase in the number of women delivering in health facilities where the birth registration process is automatically initiated by healthcare and administrative professionals. However, in rural areas which are often hard to reach and distances to health facilities are long, knowledge on birth registration remains low with only 39% of births registered at the community level[2].

This investment case has been developed as a practical guide to support partners working on birth registration in Kenya, outlining activities that will contribute to achieving universal birth registration within the country. The recommendations made in the document are based on Plan International Kenya's experience supporting the Government of Kenya, through the Civil Registration Services (CRS) department, with birth registration and certification activities. Since 2015, Plan International Kenya has worked closely with CRS on the implementation of a project titled "Tulinde Tusome: Creating Safe and Protective Spaces for Improved Learning in Kwale and Kilifi Counties, Kenya" funded by the Government of Canada. This project included an explicit outcome on improving integrated and gender responsive Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) systems and processes for efficient birth registration of girls and boys. Birth registration activities were designed in alignment with CRS' specific objectives, structured in human-centred design principles and research at the community level, and implemented to address demand, supply and legislative barriers to improve registration and certification rates in Kwale and Kilifi.

The programming approaches and practical lessons from this project have been complemented by Plan International's global experience in birth registration since 2005. Through Plan International's Count Every Child initiative, Plan has helped register 40 million children and influenced laws in 10 countries so 153 million more children can enjoy the right to a birth certificate. Additionally, Plan International raises awareness in communities about the importance of ensuring children's births are registered and supports the training of people involved in the process. To implement such work, Plan International works with governments, UN agencies, communities, and the private sector to improve civil registration services using appropriate processes and technology. Plan International recognizes the importance of working with the responsible government department and key stakeholders, and within Kenya, collaboration with CRS is critical; whereby we believe that in order to achieve universal birth registration in Kenya:

1. CRS needs support from various partners, working in different parts of the country, to share the workload.
2. Activities implemented by supporting partners need to be streamlined and well documented to ensure consistency in the delivery of birth registration services across the country.

1. Kenya Vital Statistics Report (KVSR) 2018. https://www.knbs.or.ke/download/vital-statistics/
2. Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (KDHS) 2014. https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/fr308/fr308.pdf

This publication aims to demonstrate to partners, the continued viability of both manual and digital registration models, implemented using existing administrative and community structures can achieve universal birth registration. These interventions are part of an integrated approach to strengthen birth registration, including the following five key components. These five key components complement each other, demonstrating their close interdependency on one another:

- **Process and Technology Improvements:** Making birth registration services effective, efficient and more accessible through process improvement and the use of technology.
- **Change Management:** Building the capacity and engagement of individuals across all levels of administration to respond to changes to provide effective and efficient birth registration services.
- **Governance, Legal and Regulatory Framework:** Advocating for a supportive, rights-based, and gender-responsive legal and regulatory framework.
- **Behavioural Change Impact:** Creating and sustaining demand for birth registration through an integrated marketing and communications campaign.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Continuously improving a model that is scalable and sustainable through rigorous monitoring, evaluation and learning.

An integrated approach to birth registration, as outlined above, is critical to achieving success. Within this document, experience implementing each of the five components is outlined inclusive of the challenges and recommendations. This document is intended as a practical learning tool for key stakeholders and partners working within birth registration, contributing to knowledge on best practices relevant within Kenya and promoting transparency in successes and challenges.

Pulling all five components into a financial analysis, the document makes the case that an investment is both financially feasible and brings about high returns through value gained in championing birth registration as a fundamental child right and unlocking the potential of women and girls, through improving their ability to claim to rights to education, health, protection, and livelihoods. Investment in birth registration also enables governments to produce data for effective identity management and e-government services, tracking Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and leveraging civil registration and vital statistics to inform programming and policy development. With these critical gains at stake, not investing in birth registration is not an option.

# HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT?

This publication aims to share practical approaches and demonstrate the continued viability of both manual and digital registration models, implemented using existing administrative and community structures achieve universal birth registration. Understanding that each partner and their operating contexts within Kenya are unique, partners are to use their best judgement on how to tailor and apply the lessons within this document to their role, capacity and objectives.

| User of this document | Value of this document |
|---|---|
| National and County Governments | To demonstrate the value of investing in birth registration to achieve national priorities; outlining clear programming strategies to raise funds and request support from partners to conduct activities as outlined in the investment case. |
| Civil Registration Services (CRS) | As input into the development of the next CRVS strategy period, as well as for financial requests to the Ministry of Finance and partners. It can also be used to develop opportunities for partnership within all levels of CRS, to lead the delivery of birth registration services. |
| Development Partners and Foundations | To demonstrate the value of investing in birth registration to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and promote children's rights and gender equality. It provides clear programming strategies that can be integrated into a theory of change and results framework to assess performance and quality. |
| Civil Society Organizations | To guide the implementation of effective birth registration programmes grounded in learnings and guidance; and are carried out in partnership with CRS. |

# 2. INTRODUCTION TO BIRTH REGISTRATION

# WHAT IS BIRTH REGISTRATION?

Birth registration is a process to recognize a child's existence through recording their birth in the civil register by the authorised government authority. It is a fundamental right of all children, no matter who they are or where they are from.

Birth registration helps children to secure their legal identity, family relationships, nationality and gives them access to public services such as school enrolment, and private services such as health insurance or opening a bank account. After a child is born, the details of the birth, including the child's parents or guardians are captured and officially recorded into the government's civil registry. The civil registry keeps a permanent record of all births and deaths occurring in Kenya. This data helps to inform the Government of Kenya on its current population and is used to make social and economic decisions for the development of the country.

When a child's birth is notified, a formal record of the birth should be issued to the informant in the form of an Acknowledgement of Birth Notification (ABN). The ABN is used to register the birth in the Civil Registration Vital Statistics System (CRVSS), a digital birth registration system managed by the CRS. The ABN is used to apply for a *Birth Certificate*. A birth certificate is the first proof of legal identity for a child and is recognized by law, both nationally and internationally.

## BIRTH REGISTRATION IN KENYA

> *"The State shall register every birth and death that occurs in Kenya"*
> *Births and Deaths Registration Act, Cap.149*

CRS operates under the Births and Deaths Registration Act Cap 149 law of Kenya. This Act of Parliament was enacted on 9th June 1928, to provide for the notification and registration of births and deaths and other matters incidental thereon and has undergone few amendments since then. In 1989, civil registration was elevated to a fully-fledged department in the office of the President and by 1990, registration services were fully decentralized to all districts. In 2005, the Civil Registration Department (CRD) was moved to the Ministry of Immigration and Registration of Persons, and in 2013, the department was moved again to the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government where it resides to date.

Withing Kenya, birth registration is FREE, COMPULSORY, and MANDATORY. Birth registration must happen immediately after birth occurs, within the first six months after birth. However, provisions exist that cater for late registration, which represents those registrations that happen after six months of birth.

# 3. WHY INVEST IN BIRTH REGISTRATION?

## BIRTH REGISTRATION IS EVERY CHILD'S RIGHT

> *"Every child shall be registered immediately after birth."*
> *African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child*

Birth registration is a fundamental right of all children, no matter who they are or where they are from. When children have their births registered it means they have documented evidence often required to secure recognition of their legal identity, family relationships, nationality, and ensuing rights, such as inheritance. Unregistered children often find it more difficult to access healthcare and education, and are more vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation, trafficking, early marriage, child labour, and forced enrolment into the armed forces. When these children grow up, their lack of legal identity can continue to have serious and detrimental effects on their lives as it becomes more difficult to obtain an identity card, job in the formal sector, inherit property, purchase a sim-card, vote, or obtain a passport.

## UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

Globally, women and girls are undervalued, undermined, and underestimated. The Government of Kenya has recognized the importance of investing in women and girls within Vision 2030 through special provisions for gender, youth and vulnerable groups. Investment in gender-responsive CRVS systems and activities and ensuring that women and girls are registered and issued birth certificates, plays a critical role in their ability to claim their rights and exercise their agency.

1. Civil registration provides access to primary, secondary, and tertiary education; and within Kenya is necessary to undertake exams to transition between education levels.
2. Legal identity provides girls and women with protection and justice against child marriage, trafficking, exploitation, child labour, and other acts of gender-based violence.
3. Access to identification and resultant financial services could have huge impacts on the economic productivity and wellbeing of women, as well as that of the wider economy.
4. Access to identification enables women to actively exercise their right to vote and promotes increased political engagement.
5. Legal identity enables women (and girls) to rightfully claim inheritance and property.
6. Sex disaggregated data provides evidence for informed decision-making and policy development to benefit women and girls.

## ALIGNMENT WITH EFFECTIVE IDENTITY MANAGEMENT AND E-GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Robust civil registration systems, and the data they generate, are increasingly recognized as the necessary foundation on which to build effective identity management systems and e-government services. When civil registration systems and identity management systems are effectively linked, they form "the foundation of all sectors and pillars of the economy and contribute to the SDGs to end poverty and ensure prosperity for all"[3]. The integrity and completeness of the foundational identity system and functional registers, such as the voter registry, are strengthened when they are built on timely, secure, and accurate birth and death

4 Implementing the 2030 Agenda 2017 Update. World Bank Group. http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/491561500316509118/FINAL-web-2030AgendaUpdate-20170713.pdf

data provided by the civil registry. Through the provision of a unique identifier from birth, government service delivery is made easier and more effective, contributing to their ability to provide integrated and digital services to citizens, such as Huduma Kenya.

## MONITORING PROGRESS AGAINST THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Kenya has developed an institutional framework for implementing and monitoring the SDGs which is coordinated by the Ministry of Devolution and Planning. The roadmap for implementing the SDGs focuses on seven broad areas inclusive of mapping stakeholders and establishing partnerships, advocacy and sensitization, domestication/localization, mainstreaming and accelerating implementation, resource mobilization, capacity building, and tracking and reporting on progress[4].

A total of 67 out of 230 indicators (29%) of the SDGs require civil registration data, several which are directly related to birth registration. SDG 16.9 calls for "identity for all, including birth registration". To report on this, Kenya needs to be able to account for the proportion of children under 5 years whose births have been registered with a civil authority, by age (and sex; as required for all SDG indicators, where relevant). Complete CRVS systems can also provide reliable population level estimates, which are often needed in the denominator for measuring progress (e.g., indicators that measure "per capita" or "per 1,000 populations" or that require "live births" in the denominator).

## EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAMMING AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Birth registration data is a critical source of data for the Government of Kenya that can significantly contribute to:

1. The formulation of successful and evidence-based policies across multiple sectors that can lead to effective planning and cost saving (e.g. accurately forecasting the number of vaccinations needed across the country).
2. Providing a continuous source of population data that complements and triangulates the national census by providing total population numbers, disaggregated by age, sex, and other factors.
3. Providing a thorough picture of individual circumstances, such as whether individuals are married, divorced, or have children. This information is essential for a robust and efficient national taxation system and has huge impacts on tax revenues which can be adjusted to take into account personal circumstances including number of dependents.

5 Ministry of Devolution and Planning (2017). Implementation of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development in Kenya. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/15689Kenya.pdf

# 4. CURRENT STATE OF BIRTH REGISTRATION IN KENYA

# IMPROVING CRVS IN KENYA: ACHIEVEMENTS

CRS under the current 2018-2023 Strategic Plan, has a renewed understanding of its role and commits to not only be a provider of birth and death registration services but to also establish these services as the foundation of national population data for national planning, promotion of the rule of law and security, and the advancement of a civilized society. CRS has achieved key milestones in the past intending to improve the CRVS landscape in Kenya, including:

- The rollout of the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics System (CRVSS); a system designed to digitize all historical and continuous civil registration data, making digital records available to CRS field offices and overcoming challenges associated with the current paper-based system.
- Implementation of a Maternal Child Health (MCH) Strategy; a strategy designed to attain Kenya's targets for SDG 3 by 2030.
- Improvement of Information Communication and Technology (ICT) infrastructure in field offices.
- Awareness and sensitization of birth registration to create demand amongst communities.

## STRATEGIC FOCUS

The CRS 2018-2023 Strategic Plan shall be realized by executing the following thirteen strategies: 1) Scale up the roll-out of the MCH strategy to all MCH facilities; 2) Expand the pool of civil registration agents, 3) Transform all the operations of CRS to be executed on a fully digital platform; 4) Improve strategic partnerships with stakeholders and partners; 5) Increase awareness of civil registration services, data, and vital statistics; 6) Build the capacity of civil registrations agents and staff in data capture and processing; 7) Improve the management of civil registration information/data; 8) Undertake intensive campaign to mop-up all late registrations; 9) Strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of the civil registration process at all levels within the department; 10) Digitize manual records and automate processes; 11) Enhance institutional and human resources capacity; 12) Strengthen implementation of service delivery charter; and 13) Ensure adequate financial resources are available to meet the capital and operational expenditures of CRS.

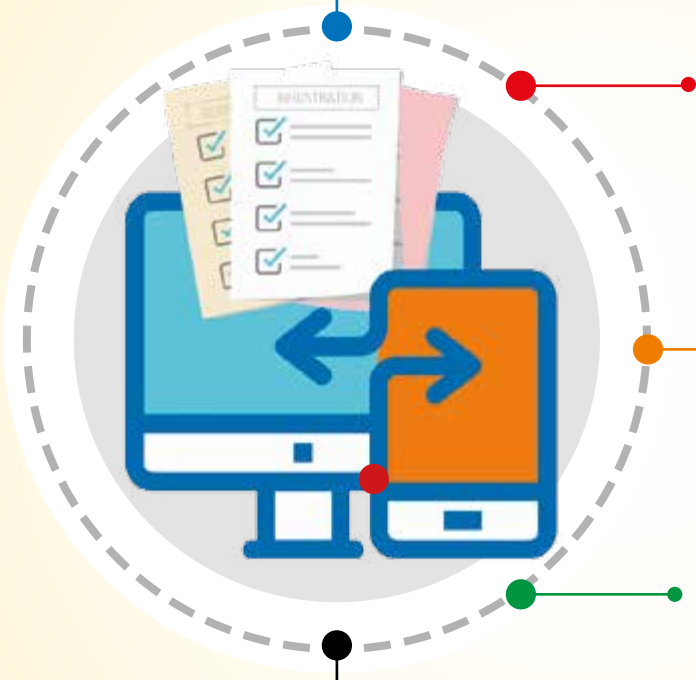
Throughout the five years, the strategic plan will focus on ten key result areas namely: 1) Good Governance and Development, 2) Universal Registration of Vital Events, 3) Efficient Service Delivery, 4) Modern ICT Systems, 5) Supportive Legal and Policy Framework, 6) Improved Physical Infrastructure, 7) Effective Performance Management and M&E, 8) Competent Human Resources, 9) Sufficient Budgetary Resources, and 10) Public Participation, Effective Stakeholder Engagement and Coordination. CRS will continue to recognize invaluable contributions from various stakeholders.

# 5. INVESTMENT STRATEGY

# AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO BIRTH REGISTRATION

An integrated approach to birth registration is critical to achieving success. The five components of the comprehensive model described below provides a framework for government and partners to invest in coordinated activities in order to simultaneously address the demand and supply barriers of birth registration. The interventions address opportunities to leverage existing community structures, government administration and infrastructure, and the power of modern digital technologies to improve registration and certification rates in Kenya.

## COMPONENTS OF THE INTEGRATED BIRTH REGISTRATION APPROACH



**Process and Technology Improvements:** Making birth registration services effective, efficient and more accessible through process improvement and the use of technology.

**Change Management:** Building the capacity and engagement of individuals across all levels of administration to respond to changes to provide effective and efficient birth registration services.

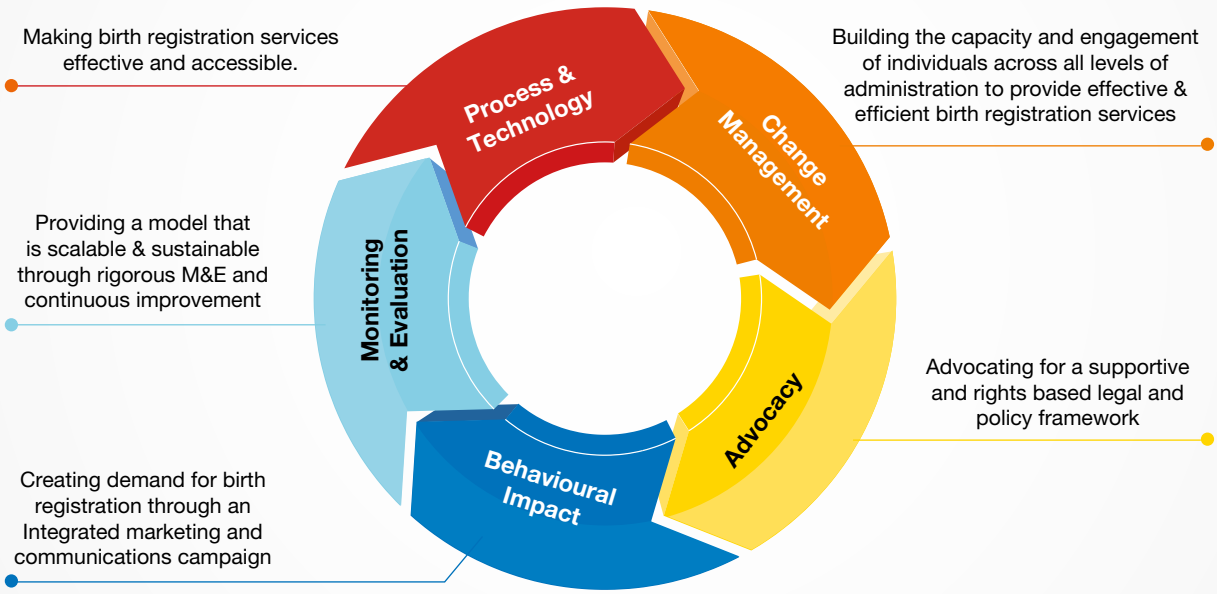
**Governance, Legal and Regulatory Framework:** Advocating for a supportive, rights-based, and gender-responsive legal and regulatory framework.

**Behavioural Change Impact:** Creating and sustaining demand for birth registration through an integrated marketing and communications campaign.

**Monitoring and Evaluation:** Continuously improving a model that is scalable and sustainable through rigorous monitoring, evaluation and learning.

# INTEGRATED BIRTH REGISTRATION MODEL

*Technology alone cannot increase birth registration rates. An integrated approach is required to ensure that birth registration systems are developed in a scalable and sustainable way.*




In the following five chapters, each intervention will be further elaborated as an investment opportunity. These opportunities are interlinked and are recommended to be implemented in tandem. As such, a coordinated approach is required whereby partners and implementers can efficiently collaborate under the coordinated leadership of CRS to sustainably scale efforts that lead to increased birth registration and certification rates. The following chapters are intended as practical learning tools for key stakeholders and partners working within birth registration, contributing to knowledge on best practices relevant within Kenya and promoting transparency in successes and challenges.

# INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY #1: PROCESS AND TECHNOLOGY

This chapter elaborates on the challenges, possible solutions, and investment recommendations around process and technology improvements that can make birth registration services effective and more accessible, subsequently increasing birth registration rates.

## CHALLENGES IN THE CURRENT BIRTH REGISTRATION PROCESS

Working with CRS, Plan International Kenya analyzed of the civil registration landscape and processes, resulting in the production of a Technical Assessment Report in 2015. The key challenges that the current birth registration process include:

i. **Process Complexity:** Notification, registration, and certification processes for births that occur at home are complex and often not understood by people that engage with it.
ii. **Time and Effort:** The process is costly and time-consuming for informants,[5] especially due to the distance required to travel to registration offices and how multiple visits to various locations may be required to complete the full process.
iii. **Application Requirements:** Supporting document requirements act as a barrier to completing the process for people who do not have them at the point of certification.
iv. **Gender Inequality:** Misconceptions around requirements to include the fathers name and information on birth registration forms has resulted in some mothers being wrongfully denied access to registering the birth of their child. This misconception has most significantly impacted single/teen mothers from registering their children.
v. **Cost:** The payment to apply for a birth certificate is a barrier; even the smallest of fees disincentivize parents and guardians. Indirect costs of travel and lost wages present further economic barriers.
vi. **Lack of Standardization:** There is no standardized process across the country. Different investments to support improvements in the birth registration process from different partners in different locations leads to inconsistency in services and confusion around the recommended process.

## PILOTED SOLUTIONS

Working closely with CRS at the national, county and sub-county level (in Kwale and Kilifi), two models for community-based birth notification were designed to improve birth registration rates for births that occur at home. The focus of these models is to take birth registration services closer to where they occur.

5 Informants are those responsible for notifying the presence of a birth. This can include parents and caregivers of the child, as well as Community Health Volunteers or Village Elders acting as an informant on behalf of the parents and caregivers.

**Manual Community-Based Model:** This model uses existing community-level actors (namely Chiefs, Assistant Chiefs, Community Health Volunteers (CHVs) and Village Elders (VEs)) to complete birth application forms in the community and facilitate the notification of home births with the relevant registration office. This is an improvement to the existing process, whereby parents and caregivers are expected to register births directly with the relevant registration office.

**Experience within Tulinde Tusome:** Over a 12-month period, when community leaders were properly trained and held accountable, they contributed to an increased birth registration rate of 80% - 194% depending on the intervention location.

**Digital Community-Based Model:** This model has Assistant Chiefs (or other relevant actors such as CHVs) use a mobile application to digitally notify births (and deaths) at the community level. The digital application is sent for validation at the sub-county registration office, where the Registrar reviews the application against supporting documents and registers the birth. The parent / caregiver (or a nominated community member with a phone) then receives an SMS confirming the child has been registered, is provided with the Birth Registration Number (BRN) and is instructed to collect the certificate at their convenience.

**Experience within Tulinde Tusome:** A mobile application called "Usajili" was designed, developed, and tested in partnership with CRS; structured to be compatible with the national CRVSS. This application and all associated documentation have been handed over to CRS and can be leveraged for learning.

## WHICH MODEL TO INVEST IN?

Process and technology improvements aim to make birth registration services effective, efficient, and more accessible. When exploring which model to invest in, consider the following:

**Manual Community-Based Model:** This is a low-cost investment that leverages existing community actors to increase birth registration rates. Efforts are required to train, support and monitor the performance of the actors involved in the process, but over time, the model should sustain itself as it is based on existing community structures and processes. Investing in this model also requires working in partnership with organizations that have a strong presence at the community level and are trusted players within the local society.

**Digital Community-Based Model:** The investment required depends on whether an existing tool or application will be used (e.g. Usajili or the Huduma Namba system); or another existing digital tool such as open-source offerings that can be configured to the local context (e.g. OpenCRVS - www.opencrvs.org); or whether an entirely new tool will be developed. Further recommendations on any digital investment are made below.

Before deciding which model to invest in, there is a need to understand the local context and what existing efforts have been put in place and are planned by CRS to improve birth registration rates. This guarantees that there is no duplication of effort. In case of a limited budget, focusing on the manual process is recommended, ensuring that it is implemented effectively and sustains itself over time.

## PROCESS A: MANUAL COMMUNITY-BASED MODEL

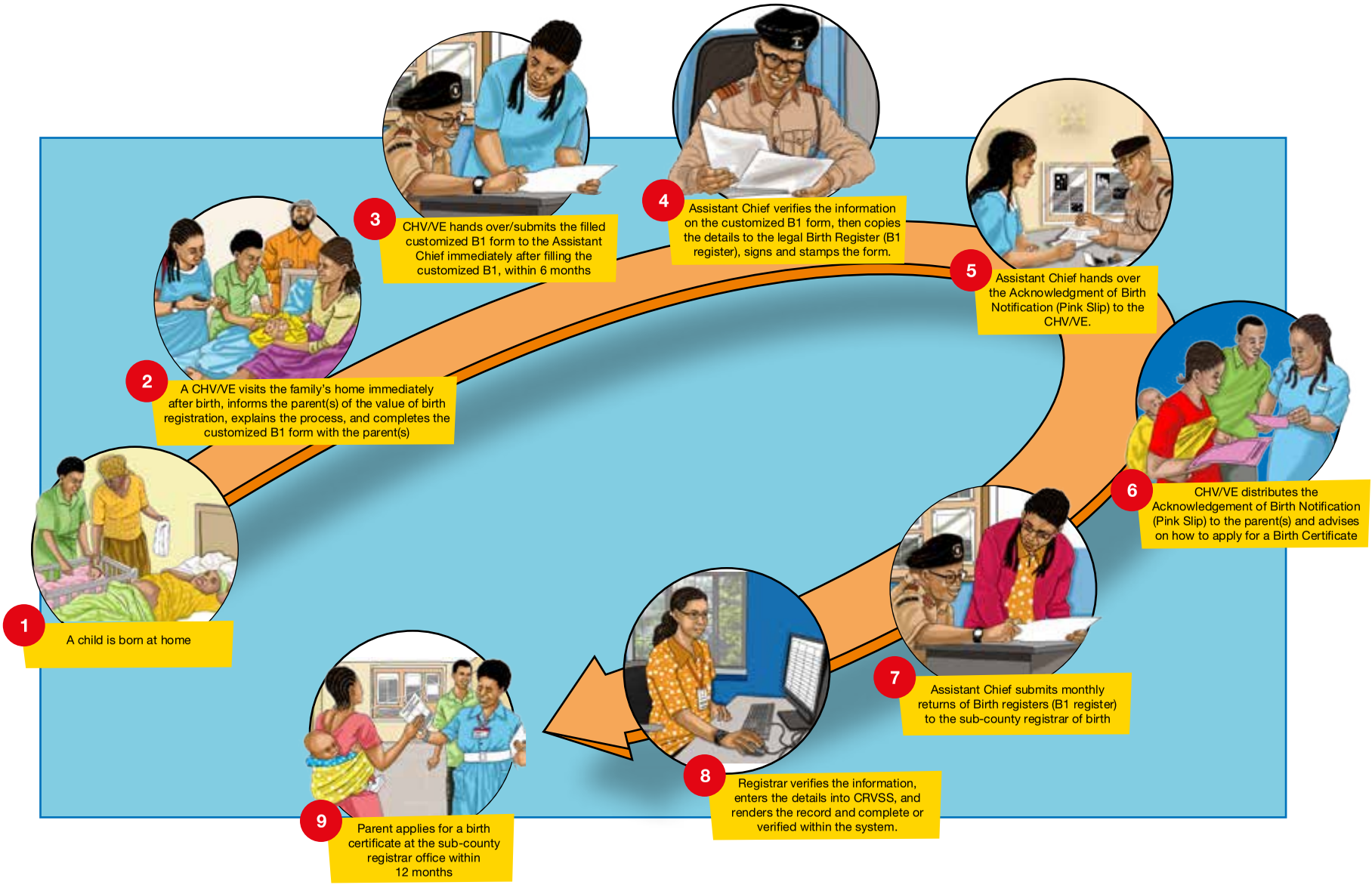
In Kenya, most registered births occur in health facilities and this has been an increasing trend. However, community births still account for 39%[6], this number could be higher in rural areas where distances to health facilities are very long. To ensure that birth registration is accessible for every child born in Kenya, birth registration is offered at the community level through existing community structures. By introducing CHVs and VEs as the first contact point for home birth events, it becomes possible for parents and caregivers to notify a birth and receive a BNR for free and without leaving their village/home. An in-depth explanation of all the steps in this process can be found in the 'Handbook for Manual Birth Registration in Communities in Kenya'[7].

> "Registering a birth is a critical first step in ensuring the rights of a child. Registration means proof – not only of identity, but of existence. A birth certificate is confirmation of a child's nationality, place of birth, parentage and age. In many countries it is seen as the key identity document, outweighing any other – a birth certificate is often needed to apply for a passport, driving license or national identity card, as the child becomes an adult."
>
> *- Plan's Count Every Child report*

6 Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (KDHS) 2014. https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/fr308/fr308.pdf

7 Please contact Plan International Kenya for a copy or accesss at: www.plan-international.org/kenya

# MANUAL COMMUNITY-BASED MODEL



## BENEFITS OF INVESTING IN THE MANUAL COMMUNITY-BASED MODEL

**Accessibility:**

- Parents and caregivers save transportation costs and travel time since they do not need to go to the sub-location for the Assistant Chief to notify the birth. This also supports those families that are adhering to various cultural practices of remaining in their homes / village.
- Parents and caregivers can stay in their community and interact with the CHV and VE who is from within their own community and thus someone they know and trust. CHVs and VEs already interact with parents and caregivers during community and health indicator monitoring at the household level, for example, under the existing Ministry of Health structure for CHVs.

**Efficiency:**

- Notification will occur immediately after birth because CHVs and VEs are aware of when and where a birth event is expected and has occurred.
- Parents and caregivers will be notified of the birth certification process and all requirements before they travel to apply and collect their certificate, helping to prevent multiple visits.
- Locally led and community owned, this model has the potential to increase buy-in and participation in the process.
- The process can be used for early registration (with six months of birth) and leveraged for late registration (after six months of birth).
- CRS officials will be able to monitor performance based on applications received from communities. Low performing areas can receive targeted training and support.

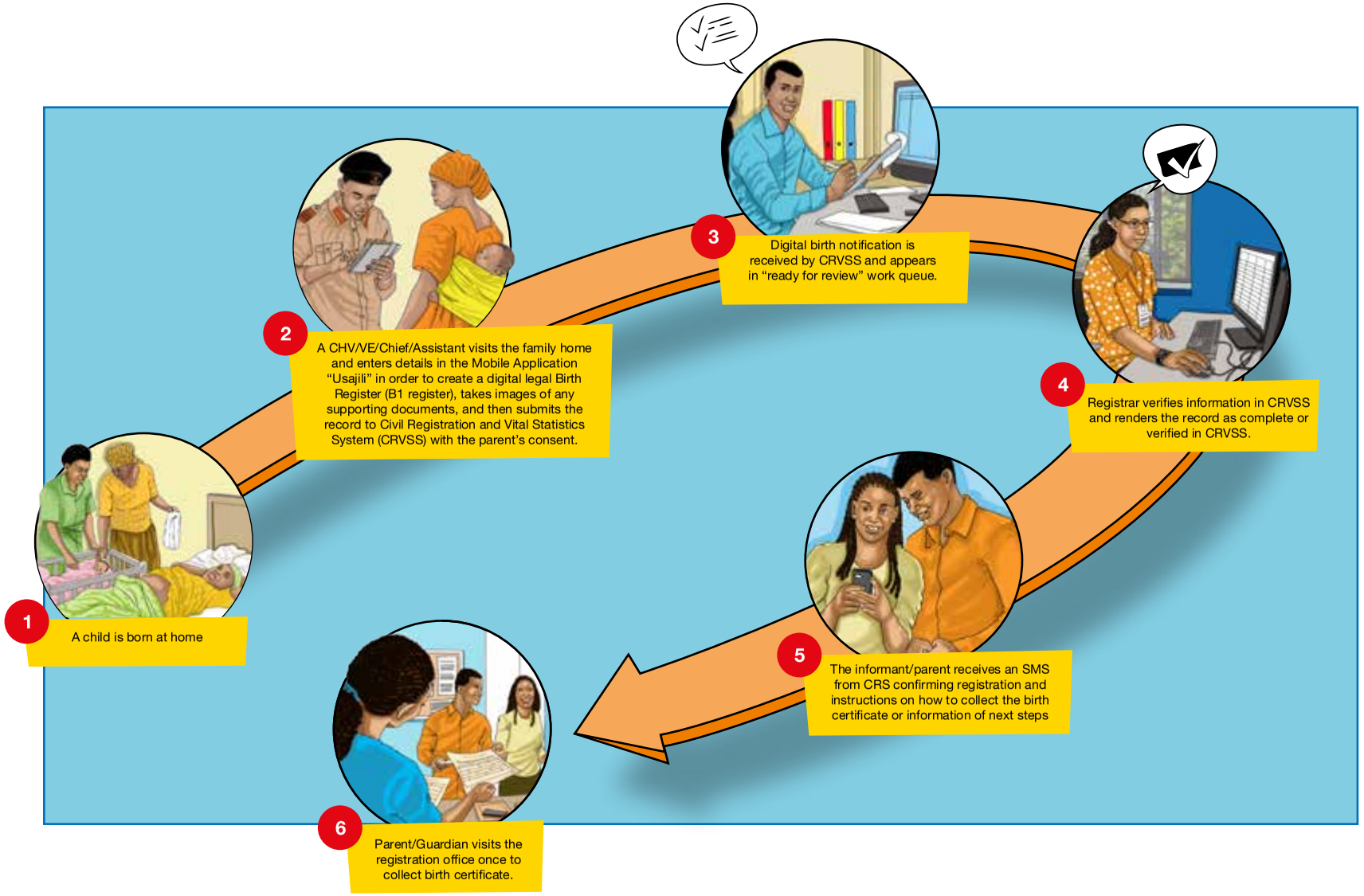
### CHALLENGES TO MONITOR WITH MANUAL COMMUNITY-BASED MODEL

The manual process above goes a long way in ensuring that all children born at home have their births notified. However, a manual process alone has the potential to introduce a bottleneck where registration is dependent on the Assistant Chief's timely submission of notifications to the CRS registrar at the sub-County/County offices. Additionally, proactive notification by community actors may increase the risk of duplicate registrations. As there are many registration agents overseen by a single registrar, it is difficult to adequately train and oversee accurate, timely, and complete notifications. Through careful planning and coordination with CRS these challenges can be mitigated, however are important to consider during implementation.

## PROCESS B: DIGITAL COMMUNITY-BASED MODEL

A digital birth (and death) notification system brings easy-to-use services to the registration agents and supports the delivery of community and health facility-based birth (and death) registration services, making registration easy for applicants and service providers. It allows service managers to monitor performance and continuously improve services. It has the capacity to integrate with health systems to reduce the time and effort of health professionals to notify births (and deaths) as well as use existing solutions such as District Health Information System 2 (DHIS2). When the last mile digital solution is integrated with CRVSS it will support the generation of real-time continuous population data views, supporting quick and easy-decision making by governments, contributing to accurate resource planning and identifying vulnerable populations. Civil registration data can help identify areas experiencing high infant mortality rates, child marriage, and the occurrence of deaths due to gender-based violence.

# DIGITAL COMMUNITY-BASED MODEL



## RECOMMENDATIONS WHEN INVESTING IN A DIGITAL SYSTEM

1. **Establish an Enterprise Architecture**: To enable CRS to align its IT strategy and infrastructure to most effectively achieve its current and future objectives. This approach will guide the systematic analysis of the various user needs, map business processes, design transformative digital solutions, and implement them in order to achieve its business goals. The CRVS Digitisation Guidebook (www.crvs-dgb.org) includes examples from Kenya, developed with CRS.

2. **Design with the User:** For a system to work, its users need to want to and enjoy using it. By working with end-users to understand their problems, working environment, and capacity, and designing the system to respond to these needs, you can ensure that the system works for them and thus will be used effectively.

3. **Use Open Standards to Facilitate Interoperability:** To realize the potential of civil registration as a strong foundation for government service delivery (through the unique identification of the population), CRS needs to communicate easily with other government systems (e.g. national population register and national ID systems). This can only happen if the system is designed with open standards that make it easy to integrate with other systems.

4. **Work Collaboratively with Government Identification Programmes:** Aim to strengthen various aspects of CRVS and national ID systems as this will reduce the cost of administration and technical support and overall cost of ownership for a digital solution.

5. **Design for Poor Connectivity:** While the use of mobile technologies is rapidly expanding and has an advantage as they are always with the user, realities on the ground include issues with low connectivity. It is critical to design a solution that works in these conditions. To do this effectively, work with a team of technical experts such as researchers, engineers, and service designers who understand the local operating context.

6. **Lobby for a Supportive Legal and Regulatory Framework for Digital Solutions:** CRVS systems are critical government infrastructure that hold sensitive personal data for citizens. Embed security by design by ensuring compliance with the law and follow international best practices. Aim for alignment of the various laws in place that govern the use of digital technologies as well as human rights.

7. **Manage the Change:** Every individual involved or affected by the introduction of new digital technology needs to understand WHAT is happening, WHY, and WHEN. These communications need to be tailored to each individual group for them to feel understood and included in the change – *what is in it for them?* Without this effort, the introduction of any digital system will fail. Always include a sufficient budget for these activities.

8. **Invest in Training and Capacity Building:** People need to understand and be confident in the functionality of the system if they are going to use it. Understand the capacity of those who will use the system, their context, and what their immediate and ongoing training needs are. Use the training-of-trainers model to train key process stakeholders where appropriate. These individuals can then train other actors within the process during the existing meetings they have with them, this will maximize the effectiveness of the training and create a sense of ownership at a lower budget.

9. **Use System Data to Make Smart Decisions:** Digital systems can capture valuable data, but you need to plan ahead to make the best use of it. What information is going to help you understand what is working and what is not working to make continuous improvements? Ask yourselves these questions and consider the inclusion of performance management dashboards in the digital system. These can be used to provide real-time, disaggregated views of data that can track key performance indicators and progress against national CRVS, development and SDG targets for improved accountability and transparency. Make this data available to all CRVS stakeholders and ensure that other stakeholders understand the value of civil registration data for their outcomes (e.g. understanding infant mortality rates for better health outcomes).

## RECOMMENDATIONS WHEN INVESTING IN PROCESS IMPROVEMENT (BOTH MANUAL AND DIGITAL)

Before you invest and start implementing these processes, first align with CRS as the responsible government department. It is also important to reflect upon your role and capacity as a partner working with CRS and determine where you can best add value, and where it is it more strategic to coordinate with other partners and stakeholders with different capacity and experience.

1. **Use Existing Resources:** Local and administrative actors (including parents and caregivers, CHVs, VEs, Assistant Chiefs, and Chiefs) involved in birth registration processes already move between service points (for birth notification) and registration offices (for birth registration and certification). Leverage the existing movement of these actors between places to make the process easier and less expensive. When designing and communicating the process with actors, leverage their existing meetings and interactions to ensure maximum exposure to training and key messages, at a lower cost. This could include existing interactions with mothers and fathers during ante-natal, post-natal and immunization clinics; or with VEs and CHVs during regular village barazas and one-on-one interactions with parents and caregivers. Use them to champion the service, translate messaging into relevant local dialogue, and identify unregistered children and caregivers who should engage in the service.

2. **Training and Capacity Building:** Use the training-of-trainers model to train key process stakeholders. These individuals can then train other actors within the process during existing meetings they have with them (e.g. VEs can be trained at regular meetings at sub-location and CHVs during monthly meetings with the Public Health Officer). This will maximize the effectiveness of the training and create a sense of ownership at a lower cost. If there are actors in the defined processes who are not available/unable to take part, identify alternative actors who may have the capacity to notify a birth and include them in the process. It is important to note that changes to the process need to be approved by CRS. For the manual process, trainers can use the “Handbook for Community Led Birth Registration in Kenya”.

3. **Focus on Continuous Improvement:** Conduct refresher trainings and reflection meetings to continuously improve service provision and engagement. Tackle practical issues within the refresher and reflection sessions, seeking observations and real experiences from the stakeholders, and triangulating with available evidence and data (e.g. number of notifications submitted within the last month). Ensure this feedback is shared with decision-makers to course-correct and improve processes and services.

# INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY #2: CHANGE MANAGEMENT

*"Change is not 'warm and fuzzy'. It requires a structured and intentional approach by using the right tools and processes so that the desired business results are realised."*

*Nyawera Kibuka, Founding Director and CEO, Cedar Africa Group and PROSCI Change Management Professional*

This chapter elaborates on the challenges, solutions, and investment recommendations for change management; building the capacity and engagement of process actors across all levels of administration to provide effective and efficient birth registration services. Change management is the management of transformative activities within an organization in such a way as to ensure that the changes that occur are fully accepted, adopted, and integrated into the daily routine. When introducing any change to birth registration processes, it is critical that this is effectively communicated to all those involved in a manner which resonates with every individual who the change affects; this is inclusive of CRS, administrative structures (such as Chiefs and Assistant Chiefs), supportive government departments and ministries (such as the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education), and community leaders and structures (such as CHVs and VEs).

## CHALLENGES TO BE RESOLVED

Some of the existing challenges in building the capacity and engagement of individuals across all levels of administration to provide effective and efficient birth registration services are:

1. **Understanding of Legal Frameworks:** Lack of knowledge and understanding of the Births and Deaths Registration Act (Cap.149) and what process changes are feasible within the purview of the legislation.

2. **Inconsistency:** Lack of consistency in processes across the country. Partners often introduce temporary improvement measures and process changes, and their support may run out before the changes have been accepted. This is often because such support is pegged on partners' project frameworks or donor support, rather than CRS strategic plans.

3. **Motivation and Incentives:** Lack of incentive for some of the players in birth registration as the process change is not formalized in their job description or in any form of performance management. If partners have introduced incentives for process changes then this also risks normal business being deprioritized or actions discontinuing when those incentives

are withdrawn.

4. **Competing Priorities:** Assistant Chiefs carry out a range of administrative tasks on behalf of the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of the National Government, particularly security matters. As such, notifying births and deaths may not be regarded as a priority area, and can be difficult to proactively engage in process changes in the service.

5. **Resources:** Lack of sufficient resources to fully scale the current digital CRVSS system across the country, in all CRS offices, and the associated change management processes associated with this.

6. **Coordination:** Lack of strong support for inter-ministerial, intra-ministerial and partner's coordination for implementation of CRVS activities (e.g. Technical Working Groups).

## PILOTED SOLUTION

An effective change management approach is crucial to facilitate the acceptance and use of any changes to birth registration systems and processes and should be done in alignment with wider CRVS strengthening activities. Clear and targeted communications through a variety of different channels should be used to explain what changes are happening, when, and how they will affect each stakeholder. It is impossible to over-communicate change.

As a solution, it is recommended to start the design and development of your change management approach by filling in the Change Management Approach Template (Refer to page 26) for a variety of birth registration stakeholders who are:

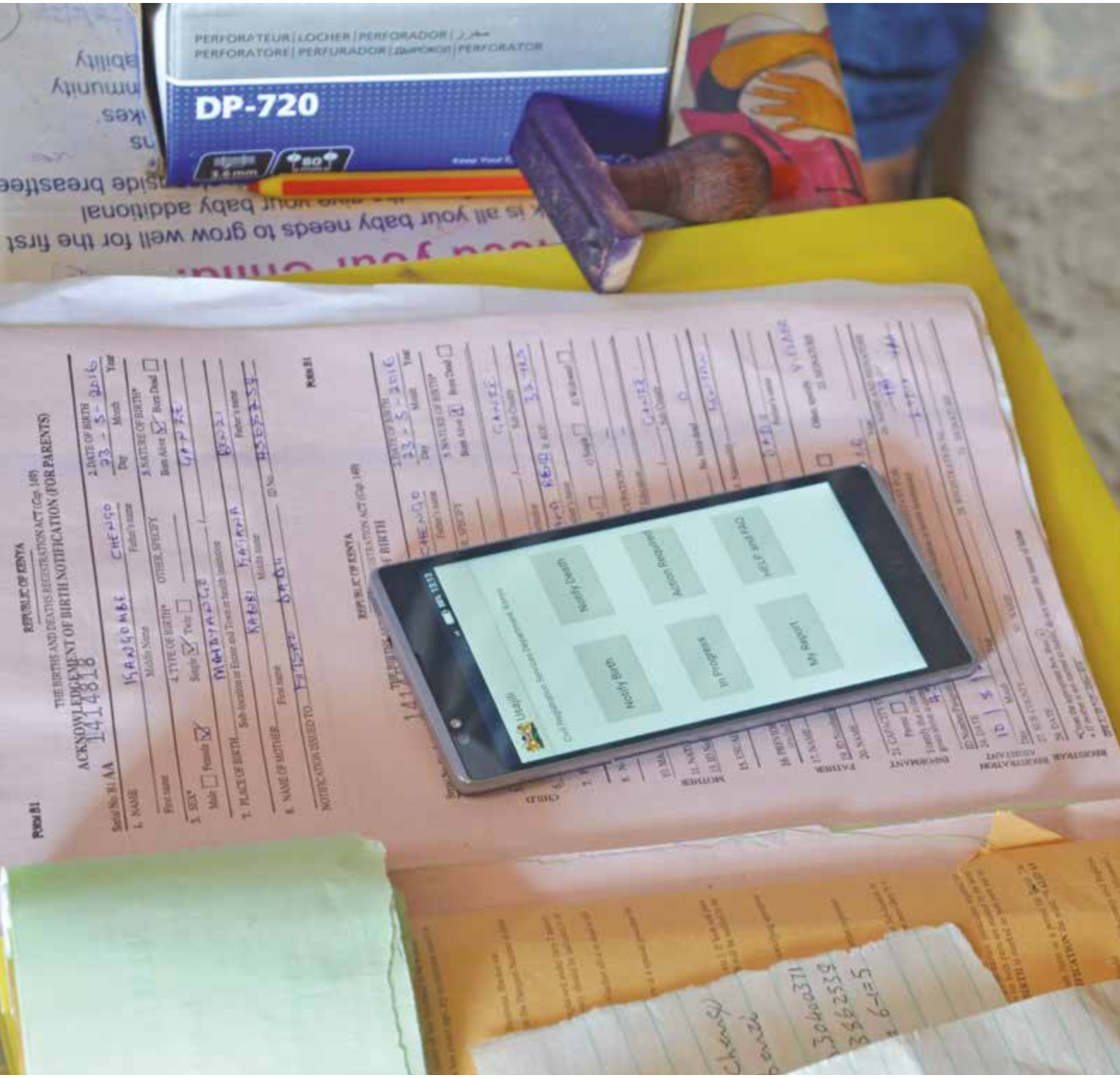
- Responsible for the rollout of the service
- Operate as line managers to those conducting the activities
- Operate as an actor in the process itself

Ideally, and as per one of the key recommendations of this investment case, all change management messages used for birth registration in Kenya should be coordinated and streamlined and agreed upon with CRS in advance. This will minimize the occurrence of contradicting messages that lead to inconsistent delivery of birth registration services. The messages crafted in the communication plan should be guided by the following factors:

- Be positive – get people excited about the change that is coming
- Explain exactly what the change is
- Explain how the change will benefit each individual
- Be targeted to specific audiences – think though what each actor needs to know to execute and support the change

In every project, there is a need to factor in a change curve that describes the four stages most people go through as they adjust to change. In general, these are, status quo, disruption, exploration, and rebuilding. For each actor in the change management communication plan, it is important that you identify all expected challenges and develop mitigation plans for them; this will help manage resistance to change and drive towards rebuilding and commitment to the change.

You can find more on change management in the Implementation Planning section of the CRVS Digitisation Guidebook at www.crvs-dgb.org *(Chapter 3: Define the Change Management Approach & Plan)*. The following Change Management template also provides a framework of key questions and stakeholders to consider in implementing birth registration process changes. It has been pre-populated with examples of how to change from a manual paper-based process to a digitized process.



# CHANGE MANAGEMENT TEMPLATE

| **ACTORS** (People who are subject to change management) | | **WHAT DO THEY NEED TO KNOW?** What is the change? How will the change affect them? What are the benefits of the change? When will the change happen? What training will they get? How can they feedback for corrective action? | **WHY DO THEY NEED TO BE INFORMED?** | **HOW WILL THEY BE INFORMED AND WHAT COMMUNICATION METHOD(S) WILL BE USED?** How does this actor operate (e.g. do they have access to email?) Do these actors attend meetings where information could be shared? How do these actors communicate with one another? | **FREQUENCY OF COMMUNICATION** How frequently will change messages be disseminated (for each communication method)? How far in advance of implementation will communications begin? | **WHY IS THIS APPROACH APPROPRIATE FOR THE SPECIFIC ACTOR?** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Top National stakeholders | CRS Headquarters (HQ) | An overview of the new process of registration | They are the ultimate custodian of the new processes | Internal communication by the lead | Elaborately at the beginning. On need basis as project progresses | The lead at HQ has interacted with the team |
| Line managers supervising the service implementers | District (Sub-County) Civil Registrar Officers (DCROs) | An overview of the new process of registration | DCROs need to understand the entire process of registration using a mobile device. They will oversee the new processes at an operational level | During training | One off and standby developer | Training has clear objectives and should ensure they understand |
| | | The new way data will be sent to the DCRO for processing | There is a change in the approach that needs to be understood for DCROs to deliver on their mandate | During training | One off and standby developer | Training has clear objectives and should ensure they understand |
| | | How to troubleshoot the application | Requests could be made by Assistant Chiefs and problems could occur | During training and the service contract | Daily during training. On need basis upon roll out | During training, a developer has to be there to build skills and confidence. Upon rollout, a new problem could arise, and the developer is not on site. |

| ACTORS (People who are subject to change management) | | WHAT DO THEY NEED TO KNOW? What is the change? How will the change affect them? What are the benefits of the change? When will the change happen? What training will they get? How can they feedback for corrective action? | WHY DO THEY NEED TO BE INFORMED? | HOW WILL THEY BE INFORMED AND WHAT COMMUNICATION METHOD(S) WILL BE USED? How does this actor operate (e.g. do they have access to email?) Do these actors attend meetings where information could be shared? How do these actors communicate with one another? | FREQUENCY OF COMMUNICATION How frequently will change messages be disseminated (for each communication method)? How far in advance of implementation will communications begin? | WHY IS THIS APPROACH APPROPRIATE FOR THE SPECIFIC ACTOR? |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Service implementers | Chief/Assistant Chief (AC) | The new way of data entry | They are the only ones who will do data entry | During training and support agreement | One major training, standby support and monthly follow up meetings | Systematic support with reduced intensity over time will promote confidence |
| | | How to operate the device | Being a new device for such an important function, ACs must be able to operate the device with comfort | During training, they get a chance to explore the device for a full day. A tutorial is also provided. | Intensive during the training. Monthly follow up meetings. | Systematic support with reduced intensity over time will guarantee the growth of confidence |
| | | Ownership of the device | ACs must understand the terms and conditions for the devices, including ownership | During the initial training, an explanation is provided, and an agreement signed | One off | Needs to be clear from the onset |
| | | Maintenance of the device | Knowledge and proper use and care of the device will determine the quality of service and longevity | A tutorial regarding the device provided during the training | Elaborate during the training. Monthly follow up meetings. | Before beginning to use, the ACs need substantial information. After which followup will be sufficient. |
| | | Replacement or fixing of the device | Devices will break down or be lost at some point. An arrangement for replacement and fixing should be in place. | An explanation during the initial training, including contact details for follow up. DCRO to be the custodian of this information. | Elaborate during training and follow up on need basis | At the initial stage, they need to understand. When it breaks, they will probably have forgotten and could ask the DCROs. |

| ACTORS (People who are subject to change management) | | WHAT DO THEY NEED TO KNOW? What is the change? How will the change affect them? What are the benefits of the change? When will the change happen? What training will they get? How can they feedback for corrective action? | WHY DO THEY NEED TO BE INFORMED? | HOW WILL THEY BE INFORMED AND WHAT COMMUNICATION METHOD(S) WILL BE USED? How does this actor operate (e.g. do they have access to email?) Do these actors attend meetings where information could be shared? How do these actors communicate with one another? | FREQUENCY OF COMMUNICATION How frequently will change messages be disseminated (for each communication method)? How far in advance of implementation will communications begin? | WHY IS THIS APPROACH APPROPRIATE FOR THE SPECIFIC ACTOR? |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Use of data bundle | How data bundle will be replenished | An explanation during the initial training, including contact details for follow up. DCRO to be the custodian of this information. | Elaborate during training and follow up on need basis | At the initial stage, they need to understand. When the need arises, they could ask the DCROs. |
| | Data Clerks | New role in data processing | All changes to data processes need to be understood in a positive light. (e.g. reduced manual workload needs to be understood) | Intensively during the training. If clerks are not attending training, then DCROs should explain to them after they are trained. | Elaborate during training and onsite follow up for a month before hand over. Thereafter it would be on standby and need basis | Systematic support with reduced intensity over time will guarantee the growth of confidence |
| Stakeholders who operate in the process itself | Informant/ Parents and Caregivers | How they will report births and change in the recording processes | Though they do this with the current processes, the use of a mobile device will be new. They need to be sensitized so they understand. | Once the ACs are trained, they can be asked to organize barazas to communicate with residents. | Elaborately in a baraza and subsequently when the AC engages the community | The AC is the most appropriate person to engage with the community members. |
| | | How notifications will be received | By providing mobile phones, parents and informants will be receiving SMS notifications.This needs to be clear from the onset. | During the baraza organized by the ACs. | Elaborately in a baraza and subsequently when the AC engages the community | The AC is the most appropriate person to engage with the community members. |

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INVESTING IN CHANGE MANAGEMENT

1. **Engagement with CRS:** Before you invest and start implementing suggested activities on change management, always first align with CRS as the responsible department/ duty bearer. CRS takes a leading role in setting clear and consistent key messaging and procedural guidelines for communication across the country. All partners are then recommended to align with these messaging guidelines.

2. **Plan your Resources:** Consider dedicated human and financial resources to drive change management efforts and ensure accountability and responsibility.

3. **Identify a "Birth Registration Sponsor":** Identify change sponsors from executive management who will provide authority, lead the commitment, and manage resistance to change across their organizations (e.g. send circulars and memos requiring support from their department towards birth registration using existing structures and resources).

4. **Identify "Change Champions":** Change Champions are individuals at all levels across the organization who are charged with spreading "good news" about the upcoming change, responding to queries, and gathering feedback. These individuals are part of the teams that will be affected by the change and thus are able to relate to those affected and respond more effectively than those initiating the change.

5. **Be Structured and Proactive:** Build credibility in the project/effort by formulating a structured change management communications plan. By informing affected parties early in the process, you will avoid "fire-fighting" when the change is implemented.

6. **Keep People at the Centre:** People are the key to success - even if you implement an effective and efficient CRVS system, if the people who interact with it every day do not accept it, the change will fail. It is also very important to understand individual needs and tailor communications to these needs. Be prepared with the various roles they play and possible misconceptions they might have as a starting point.

7. **Alignment with Behaviour Change Activities:** Align change management communication plans with behaviour change communication plans as they will always overlap, this will help ensure consistency in messaging and an increase in coverage. See "Investment Opportunity #3: Behaviour Change Impact" for more information.

8. **Create a Risk Register:** Identify risks and mitigation strategies when preparing change management strategy.

9. **Feedback Loops:** Structure a feedback loop that will support the reporting on change initiatives and measure their success, but also help pivot for greater future success.

# INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY #3: BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE IMPACT

This chapter elaborates on the challenges, solutions, and investment recommendations for achieving behavioural change impact from parents and guardians; creating demand for birth registration through an integrated marketing and communications campaign. No matter how accessible and effective birth registration services are, if the community does not value birth registration they won't engage or seek birth registration services. This includes understanding the importance and benefits of notification, registration, and certification of events of birth as well as how and where to access these services.

## EXISTING CHALLENGES

Plan International Kenya assessed the Tulinde Tusome project on key barriers preventing parents and caregivers from engaging in and completing the birth registration process. The results were consistent with other studies that show that the main reason for not registering and acquiring a birth certificate is lack of awareness or the belief that registration and certification are not necessary until a birth certificate is really needed as a mandatory document. This points to the importance of sensitizing and the promotional work that needs to be done across Kenya, at all levels regarding the importance, benefits, and procedures for registration. Some of the key challenges in creating demand for birth registration are:

1. Many people do not know what birth registration is and do not understand why it is important.
2. People are not aware of how or where to register a birth. There is a lack of publicly available, clear documentation and information on the birth registration process, including what supporting documents are needed.
3. The centralized nature of the birth registration process requires parents and caregivers to travel long distances to sub-county or county offices to collect birth certificates, which can be time-consuming and costly.
4. Culturally, women may not have the authority to make decisions regarding birth registration. Where the fathers or male relatives do not value birth registration or are not engaged in the process, children may miss out on this important right.
5. Birth notification, which leads to issuance of an Acknowledgment of Birth Notification (ABN) slip, is often mistaken for a birth certificate. As such, parents and caregivers do not fully complete the process.
6. Standalone communication activities aimed at increasing knowledge on birth registration are expensive and unsustainable.
7. Lack of consistent behaviour by parents in notifying and getting birth certificates for their children. Where efforts are driven towards registering new-borns, a backlog of unregistered older children still exist.

## PILOTED SOLUTION

Communication for Behavioural Impact (COMBI) is a methodology developed by Dr. Everold Hosein on behalf of the World Health Organization for behavioural and social communication in disease outbreak response[8]. It recognizes that most communities are empowered with knowledge or information about the desired behavioural change from hearing about it, but do not take further steps towards appropriate actions (i.e. adopt and maintain the behaviour change). This methodology has been adapted and used by Plan International Kenya, in partnership with CRS, to create a behaviour change communication plan for birth registration, recognizing that providing an effective and accessible system alone is not enough to increase registration and certification rates. Instead, parents also need to actively and consistently want to register their children and have the know-how to execute the process. This ensures that there is a balance between the demand and supply of birth registration services.

Behaviour change impact is **NOT** about sensitizing communities about birth registration **BUT** driving the community towards adopting and maintaining positive behaviour change that is consistent in the long term around strategic objectives set out on birth registration.

## KEY MESSAGES AND CHANNELS

The COMBI methodology focuses on five integrated communication components. No single communication component, activity or material will have the desired behavioural impact in isolation of the others. Different but integrated actions that are appropriate to the context and behavioural objectives are combined and sequenced. The COMBI plan for birth registration was developed, tested and implemented by Plan International Kenya in Kwale County in partnership with CRS integrates two behavioural change goals which drive towards compliance with the law:

- Apply for a birth notification within 6 months of birth
- Apply for a birth certificate immediately after and within 12 months after birth

These statements are examples of specific, measurable, appropriate, and timebound behavioural objectives. The key message for the campaign is **“My Birth Certificate, My Identity!”**. Each of the five communication components used in the COMBI campaign for birth registration are described below:

### 1. COMMUNITY MOBILISATION

Focuses on the involvement and participation of community leaders (political, social, religious, influential people, and organizations) and community members to discuss the benefits associated with birth registration and certification services, and the risks from not engaging in the process. Within the Plan International Kenya pilot, this was done through community theatre and outreach events at popular gathering points for women and men, and girls and boys. Emphasis was placed on targeting fathers and male caregivers who commonly act the key decision-makers on this issue within the household and wider community. Community mobilization events also included the use of traditional media, music, song, dance, roadshows, and community drama, followed by time for dialogue with community members to respond to their specific questions and concerns.

8 Reference to Dr. Everold Hosein’s work and The COMBI Institute: http://www.combiinstitute.org/

### 2. INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION AND COUNSELLING

Interpersonal communication and counselling (also referred to as personal selling) focuses on engaging trusted community leaders such as Assistant Chiefs, CHVs and VEs who will directly lead discussions at the individual and household level on the two behaviour change objectives. These actors will continue to act as 'birth registration ambassadors' who directly engage parents and caregivers on a personal level through home visits and counteract negative cultural and gendered barriers hindering mothers and fathers from registering and obtaining birth certificates. This will be done well if the actors are trusted within the community (by both mothers and fathers), as well as thoroughly trained and understand the birth registration service.

### 3. PUBLIC RELATIONS, ADVOCACY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MOBILIZATION

This component focuses on public advocacy and mobilization of decision-makers and administrative structures from the grassroots level to the national level to make the necessary policies, processes, systems changes, etc. and provide rights-based and inclusive birth registration services to all populations, including the marginalized and hardest to reach. This entails CRS officials and Registration Agents leading communication and change management processes within their organizations, and ensuring the work is in alignment and supportive of long-term strategies (e.g. MCH Strategy). and Chiefs and Assistant Chiefs facilitating birth registration discussions at village baraza meetings within their communities and institutional structures.

### 4. SUSTAINED APPROPRIATE ADVERTISING

This component focuses on creating consistent promotional material that informs communities that birth registration services are available and important, and the steps they need to take until all populations are registered. This includes a radio campaign that spreads COMBI messaging through talk shows, pre-packaged programs, advertisements, and sound bites. The timing of when to air the radio talks and pre-recorded programs has a strong impact on the population targeted (e.g. women, men, full families, etc.). Evening and weekend programs were found to be effective when all family members are together. A range of local actors and religious leaders can be involved to support in demystifying the gender and cultural barriers associated with birth registration. This will provide a higher-level of trust and access to a wider audience.

### 5. POINT-OF-SERVICE PROMOTION

This final component involves mapping key places where parents and caregivers will go to access birth registration services, inclusive of Chiefs' and Assistant Chiefs' offices, health facilities, MCH clinics, civil registration offices, Huduma centres, etc., and using them to emphasize the availability and accessibility of birth registration services at a specific place. This consists of placing visible branding items such as posters, promotional signs, brochures, and fliers with images of both mothers and fathers engaging in the birth registration process for their daughters and sons. Additionally, the Chiefs and Assistant Chiefs held discussions around gender equality and inclusivity while helping parents and caregivers register the births of their children. They were urged to encourage all parents, male and female, including teenage and single parents to obtain birth certificates for their children, and not discriminate against them because of their sex, age or status.

## RECOMMENDATIONS WHEN INVESTING IN BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE IMPACT

Before you invest and implement activities on behavioural change impact, always first align with CRS as the lead coordinator and ensure the strategy is supportive of their long-term plans.

- **Use Existing Resources:** Reuse and / or repurpose existing and successful campaign materials that have been created to avoid additional costs in designing new ones, and most importantly to avoid introducing inconsistencies in behaviour change messages.

- **Contextualize the Approach:** As each part of the country will have unique traditions and cultures, it is vital to contextualize messaging to the needs of your target community. This can be done through a situational market analysis and reviewing key messages with mothers, fathers, community leaders and services providers in these locations to ensure the messages on the two strategic behaviour change objectives are clear and appropriate.

- **Validate Existing Services:** If you are going to raise awareness and demand for birth registration services, the services need to be largely available, accessible, and effective. If the services have gaps and challenges, it is important to be transparent on the functionality otherwise you risk spreading a bad reputation for birth registration services and future inaction by those who need it.

- **Gender Equality Considerations:** Make deliberate efforts to actively engage fathers, male caregivers and male community leaders, as they are often the key decision-makers in a household and community. Their understanding of the importance of birth registration will drive towards better engagement with the service. Where appropriate, communicate the benefits of joint decision-making with their female partners, aiming to improve the agency of women in the communities.

- **Apply an Integrated Approach:** Ensure that you take an integrated approach to the implementation of COMBI activities with a judicious blending and selection of communication actions developed. The combination is determined by the information collected during the situational market analysis where successful strategies are identified (including alignment with CRS), as well as the capacity and resources of your organization. Apply a continuous learning process and ensure unsuccessful strategies are modified, input from stakeholders is used to inform decisions and course-correction, and information on birth registration issues and obstacles are shared and reflected upon.

- **Explore Various Communication Channels:** Consider leveraging the following actors and channels to deliver COMBI messages:

    - Religious and local leaders (e.g. one-on-one interactions with mothers and fathers, through community gatherings, or on local radio programs).
    - Leverage existing MCH interactions to deliver COMBI messaging to mothers and fathers, including antenatal and postnatal care and immunizations.
    - Existing community groups (e.g. savings, investment and welfare groups).
    - Existing formal and informal community meetings (e.g. monthly community meetings and barazas facilitated by Assistant Chiefs and County Officials).

# INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY #4:
# GOVERNANCE, LEGAL, AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

- Events within schools targeted at students and / or parents and teachers.

*"The child shall be registered immediately after birth and have the right from birth to a name, the right to acquire a nationality and as far as possible, the right to know and be cared for by his or her parents."*
*1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Article 7*

This chapter elaborates on the challenges, solutions, and investment recommendations required to create a supportive and rights-based legal, policy and regulatory framework to enable effective birth registration services for all citizens in Kenya.

## CHALLENGES TO BE RESOLVED

Key challenges in creating a supportive and rights-based legal and regulatory environment are:

1. Lack of an active coordination mechanism, established through relevant regulations to provide oversight and coordination for CRVS strengthening efforts including amongst CRS, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and ICT Authority.

2. Lack of flexibility in birth registration procedures to reflect changes in roles and responsibilities as systems and processes modernize. Different approaches are required for marginalized populations and hard to reach areas, and regulations need to reflect this.

3. Rights-based issues such as fees for late registration and birth certifications.

4. CRVS strengthening efforts are often not prioritized by the government and are therefore under-resourced. Legal and policy work is also a long-term process, which does not always align with donor strategies and project frameworks, leading to gaps in funding and / or uncoordinated pockets of advocacy work.

## PILOTED SOLUTIONS

Advocacy efforts are required to encourage the relevant authorities to: (i) invest in; and, (ii) create a legal environment that supports effective birth registration services, to ensure that no child is left behind. Every child, including the marginalized and those within hard to reach areas, has the right to birth registration without discrimination. Flexibility in regulations is required to reflect the different contexts across the country and the different people who need to be involved in the service to make it accessible and effective. By creating flexibility in birth registration procedures, local structures can be used to make birth registration easy for those who need it.

In rural, marginalized, and low resource settings, a community-led birth registration approach that works through community leaders, specifically CHVs and VEs, has the potential to bridge the gap resultant of the distances (and costs) to accessing registration points; one of the known key barriers to registration. These proactive grassroot leaders when properly trained, facilitated, and held accountable; essentially have the potential to complete registration coverage. CHVs are recognized for their mandate to provide last mile primary healthcare under the Ministry of Health; VEs are recognized for their last-mile role in maintaining peace and security under the Ministry of Interior. Formal inclusion of CHVs and VEs as registration agents through a gazette notice and appropriate professional support will provide the authority and incentive for these key community leaders to further decentralize access.

## PROCEDURAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are important points to keep in mind as you undertakes supportive work to create a supportive governance, legal, and regulatory framework:

- To ensure no discrimination, the father's details are not mandatory for a birth to be registered.
- Regulations that govern procedures for civil registration should be flexible to facilitate varying needs and actors in different contexts (e.g. the individuals who can notify a birth should be broadly defined but should allow for changes where opportunities arise and CRS agrees that this is the right approach).
- Minor corrections to records, due to clerical errors, should be free of charge and be actioned by those who receive the request. Requiring additional fees and paperwork associated with correcting records may disincentive change requests and lead to lower quality of data.
- In periods of emergency or when hosting foreign nationals, it is essential to recognize different naming conventions to ensure acceptance of birth registration documents by the applicant.
- Access to essential services and other government services should not be made conditional on being registered or having a birth certificate.
- Consider providing a safeguard in citizenship-related laws for children born on the territory who would otherwise be stateless, to be granted nationality when they apply for it.

## RECOMMENDATIONS WHEN INVESTING IN GOVERNANCE, LEGAL, AND REGULATORY ENVIRONMENTS

Before you invest and start implementing suggested activities on Legal and Regulatory Environments, always first align with CRS as the responsible agency.

1. The Government of Kenya is encouraged to provide sufficient finances required to achieve universal coverage of birth registration in Kenya. This includes:
    - Staffing CRS offices down to the sub-county level
    - Allocate a budget for equipment, connectivity, and stationery down to the sub-county level
    - Transport to allow mobility of sub-county level staff to the community and health facilities
    - Investment in each of the components outlined in this investment case: (i) Process and Technology; (ii) Change Management, (iii) Behavioural Change Campaign, (iv) Legal and Regulatory Review; and (v) Continuous Improvement Efforts

2. Increase the number of registration points sustainably by leveraging existing service points from the national government (e.g. Huduma Centres).

3. Conduct a comprehensive assessment of the legal and regulatory environment, working with experts in the field to identify gaps in alignment among the various registration laws and policies. The Bloomberg Data for Health initiative has developed the CRVS Legal and Regulatory Review that provides a framework for a competent legal team to conduct this work[9].

4. Make birth certificates free – introducing fees discourages parents and guardians from engaging with the birth registration services, and other opportunities to generate revenue for CRS should be considered.

5. Conduct sustainable communication campaigns and sensitization for citizens to understand the importance of registering vital events and how to do so. Birth registration messaging should be mainstreamed into government service delivery efforts such as ante-natal, post-natal and immunization schedules and school enrolment schedules.

6. Establish an active CRVS advocacy coordination mechanism so that partners can coordinate advocacy activities in support of CRS's strategic plans.

7. Invest in CRVS digitisation by adopting a comprehensive enterprise architecture approach to designing and implementing a digital CRVS system. Leverage the CRVS Digitisation Guidebook (www.crvs-dgb.org) from the African Programme for the Accelerated Improvement of CRVS. When procuring/improving the digital CRVS system, consider existing open source solutions (e.g. OpenCRVS (www.opencrvs.org). This can be beneficial in avoiding vendor lock-in and be a more sustainable option moving forward.

9 Vital Strategies. CRVS Legal and Regulatory Review. https://www.vitalstrategies.org/resources/crvs-legal-regulatory-review/

# INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY #5: MONITORING AND EVALUATION

> *"Evaluation compels responsible practice. Evaluation is meant to be used."*
> *- The African Evaluation Guidelines (2020)*

This chapter elaborates on the challenges, solutions, and investment recommendations around monitoring and evaluation of CRVS system strengthening efforts. While learning has already been incorporated into each section of this investment case, continuing to monitor, learn, and continuously improve birth registration services on an ongoing basis to ensure that they are as effective as possible, is an important section on its own. There is always room for improvement.

In addition to continuously improving the service itself, it is equally important to monitor civil registration in line with national and globally recommended indicators. This will provide a set of consistent rates that can be monitored over time to understand whether things are improving.

## CHALLENGES TO BE RESOLVED

Key challenges associated with monitoring and evaluation of birth registration in Kenya are:

- Lack of a mechanism to track applications from the point of receipt which can lead to multiple registrations for the same child and thus duplicate records.
- Lack of performance management data of different registration offices, inhibiting the provision of targeted support and resources to low performing offices.
- Poor data quality due to inconsistent registration practices.

## SOLUTIONS

1. Implement a continuous improvement approach that ensures the effective provision of birth registration services over time. Identify which actors will be engaged in the process and how data will be presented and analysed to inform continuous improvement and course-correction. Feedback loops with key stakeholders are important for transparency and accountability.

2. Develop key performance indicators and metrics that can be tracked over a financial year to measure how well the birth registration service is performing in relation to the strategic goals and objectives set. These should be developed in consultation with CRS and could include:

- Birth registration rates:
  - Early registration: Percentage of births that are registered within 180 days of birth
  - Late registration: Percentage of births that are registered after 180 days of birth
  - Percentage of all children under the age of 18 that have been registered
  - Certificate issuance: Percentage of births registered who have had a certificate issued to them

- Number of visits by an applicant to the office required to complete registration
- Time taken from:
  - Application to receipt of notification
  - Application to certification
- The cost associated with getting a birth certificate (direct and indirect)
- The satisfaction rate of birth registration service from applicants
- The satisfaction rate of birth registration service from service providers
- Knowledge of citizens on the importance of birth registration and the process

These indicators can be measured by:

(i) Conducting small scale surveys or focus group discussions with applicants who engage with birth registration services

(ii) Putting in place a monitoring system that tracks the progress of applications

(iii) When a digital system is in place, ensuring that a clear set of indicators are monitored and easily viewable in the system

All measurements should be disaggregated by age, sex, region and population group, displacement and migratory status (including statelessness).

**Experience within Tulinde Tusome:** Following a Results-Based Management approach, Plan implemented a robust M&E framework to measure the results of birth registration efforts within the Tulinde Tusome project. This included a performance measurement framework complete with results statements, indicators, baseline values, targets and progress against targets. The M&E framework integrated both quantitative and qualitative indicators and collected data from girls and boys, mothers and fathers, community leaders (e.g. CHVs and VEs), and CRS officials to gain a fulsome understanding of the quality of the project's activities. Data was used to inform evidence-based programming and decision-making.

## RECOMMENDATIONS WHEN INVESTING IN MONITORING & EVALUATION

Before you invest and start implementing suggested activities on monitoring and evaluation, always first align with CRS as a responsible agency.

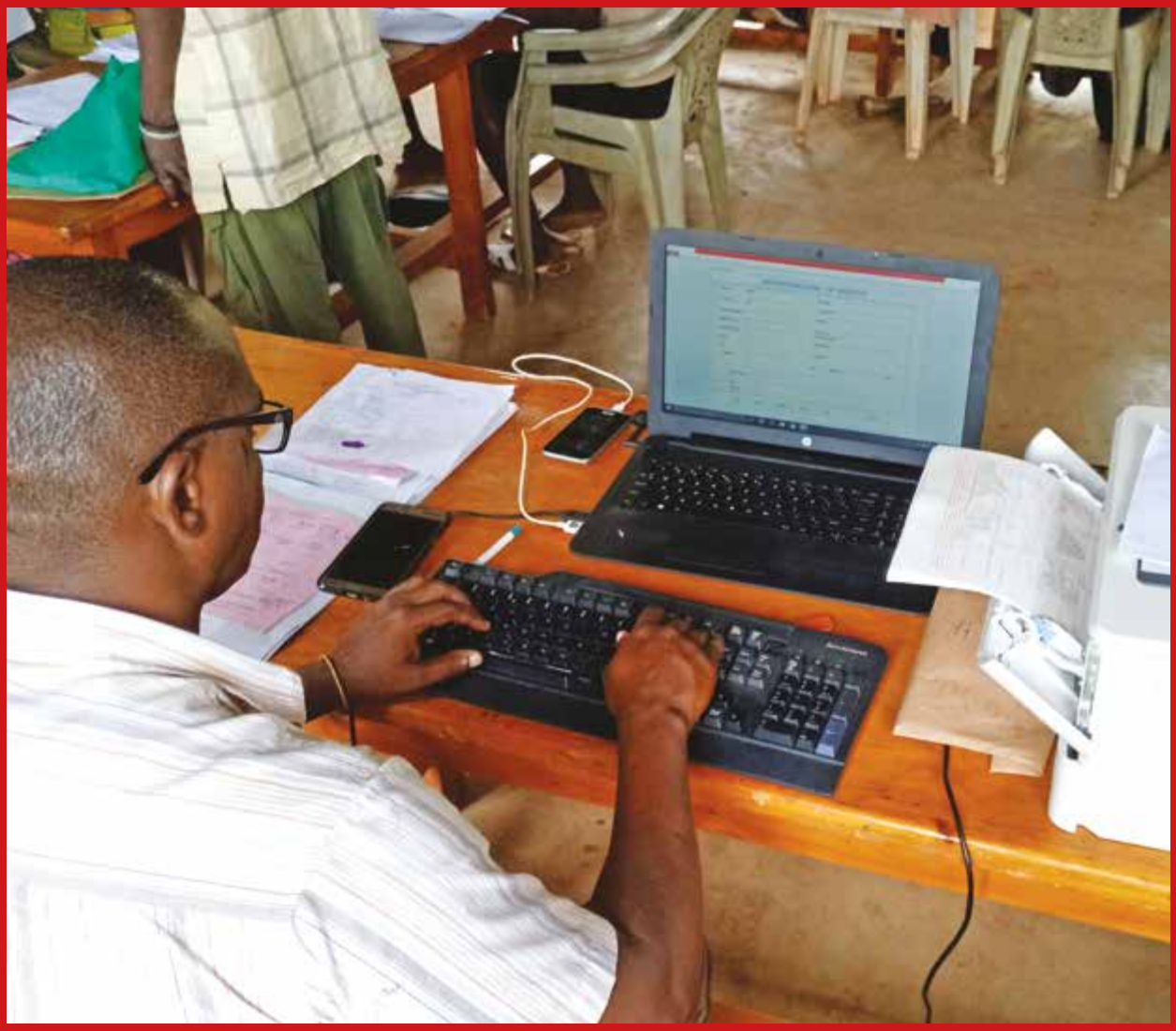
1. Develop a robust project monitoring, evaluation and continuous improvement strategy to continuously improve measures to refine system and processes over time generate evidence for scale-up.

2. Obtain baseline data from CRS and use it to track progress and measure the impact of the integrated model. Where data is not available, primary data can be collected by your organization and / or reliable secondary sources can be used (e.g. UNICEF).

3. Start monitoring key birth registration rates, noting the coverage and completeness available. Report on and share these rates with relevant stakeholders.

4. Develop an accountability mechanism for whereby registrars and senior management are held accountable for performance related to birth registration and service provision.

5. Where a digital system exists, build performance dashboards to provide a real-time, disaggregated view of data that can track key performance indicators, progress against national CRVS, development and SDG targets set by governments for improved accountability and transparency. Make these data available for consumption by different partners.



# 6. FINANCIALS AND STAKEHOLDERS TO ENGAGE

The following chapter offers a financial template that can be used for preparing and customizing the budget needed for investing in one or more of the five components. The most effective strategy is to invest in all five components for a dedicated sub-county or county or collaborating with other partners who could each cover different components of the investment for a holistic response.

## USE OF FINANCIAL TEMPLATE AND ASSUMPTIONS

Over the last five years, Plan International Kenya has invested in all five components within Kwale County. Based on that experience, a financial template has been designed that other partners and investors can use to customize to a county of interest. The template has been prepopulated for Kwale County as an example of how it can be used. It is recommended that the user of this template contextualizes the budget lines and unit costs for the county of interest and the operating context and capacity of their organization. The following assumptions have been made in designing this financial template:

- Most costs are planned for one year
- There are a number of one-off costs (e.g. legal review and design fees). Cost savings can be incurred through reusing and repurposing successful materials from CRS and partners.
- CRS has an adequate budget for staff and registration activities at the sub-county level
- Existing meetings and interactions between actors are used for training, ongoing support and continuous reflection and improvement
- The training-of-trainer is the model of choice for capacity building
- Manual and digital processes outlined in this investment case are formalized by CRS into standard practice
- The implementing partner staff costs are covered through existing / additional resources

The financial template has been created in excel and includes an overview of the number and type of stakeholders to engage when investing in birth registration. This can be made available to partners upon request to Plan International Kenya. Below is a summary of the types of costs that have been inputted within the financial template.

| Area: Kwale County, Kenya | Description |
|---|---|
| **Process Improvements – Manual Notification at Community Level** | |
| Train the trainer (CRS Registrar) | A day's training sessions for CRS Registrar's and Assistant Registrar's who will be responsible for training and onboarding other stakeholders in the sub-county. Cost per person includes tea and lunch for each attendee. |
| Training sessions with process stakeholders | A day's interactive training of key process stakeholders to gain buy-in and ensure consistency in the process and messaging. CRS Registrar trains process stakeholders in the sub-county: Assistant Chiefs,VEs and CHVs per Sub Location. |
| Reflection meetings and refresher training bi-annually | A day's interactive meeting with a representation of key process stakeholders to reflect on the birth registration service, what works, what doesn't and how it can be improved. Cost includes tea, lunch, and transport for each attendee. |

| Area: Kwale County, Kenya | Description |
|---|---|
| **Change Management** | |
| Communications Lead | On the partner's side who would dedicate 10% level of effort |
| Change management strategy development meeting with key stakeholders at National Level | A meeting with key stakeholders with decision making authority to develop and review the strategy and its implementation. |
| Change management strategy development meeting with key stakeholders at County Level | A meeting with key stakeholders with decision making authority at the county level to review and input on the strategy developed at the national level and its implementation. |
| Strategic communication materials | Design agency fees for the design of materials and printing (e.g. posters, brochures and handbooks) |
| Change management review meetings with stakeholders led by CRS (biannual) | A day's interactive meeting of key process stakeholders to understand how the process is working and update on any changes in process, procedures, and controls if any; and clarify issues arising from the users of the service |
| **Governance, Legal & Policy Framework** | |
| Legal and policy review | Consultancy fees for legal and policy assessment for CRVS in Kenya |
| National Technical Working group meetings with key stakeholders | Meeting with key stakeholders with a keen interest in CRVS in Kenya - this includes government ministries and departments, UN agencies, donors, implementing partners, etc. |
| **Behavioural Change Impact** | |
| Train-the-trainer on key messaging and delivery channels | A day's interactive training of key representatives of process stakeholders involved in the behavior change communication campaign |
| County sensitization and reflection meetings | An interactive meeting (four times per year) with all process stakeholders to reflect on the behaviour change communication campaign including what works, what doesn't and how it can be improved. |
| Design and printing of communication materials | Design agency fees for the design of materials and printing (approximately 1000 materials for distribution) |
| Radio talk shows | Radio talk show to inform, educate and enlighten the public on the birth registration process, its importance and benefits and help to positively change their behaviour towards birth registration |
| Community theatre | Partnership with a professional community theatre group on a monthly retainer |
| **Monitoring and Evaluation** | |
| Existing meetings and interactions between actors are used for continuous reflection and improvement. | |

# 7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

# CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Birth registration is a fundamental right of all children:** Their identity is a foundation to enjoying all their rights and entitlements.

2. **Birth registration supports gender equality:** Birth registration unlocks the potential of women and girls through improving their ability to claim to rights to education, health, protection, and livelihoods.

3. **Birth registration yields individual and collective value:** Investing in CRVS and identity management positions governments to track progress towards SDGs and provides essential data to inform national programming and policy development to benefit citizens.

## ACHIEVING UNIVERSAL BIRTH REGISTRATION IN KENYA IS ATTAINABLE

In order for this to happen:

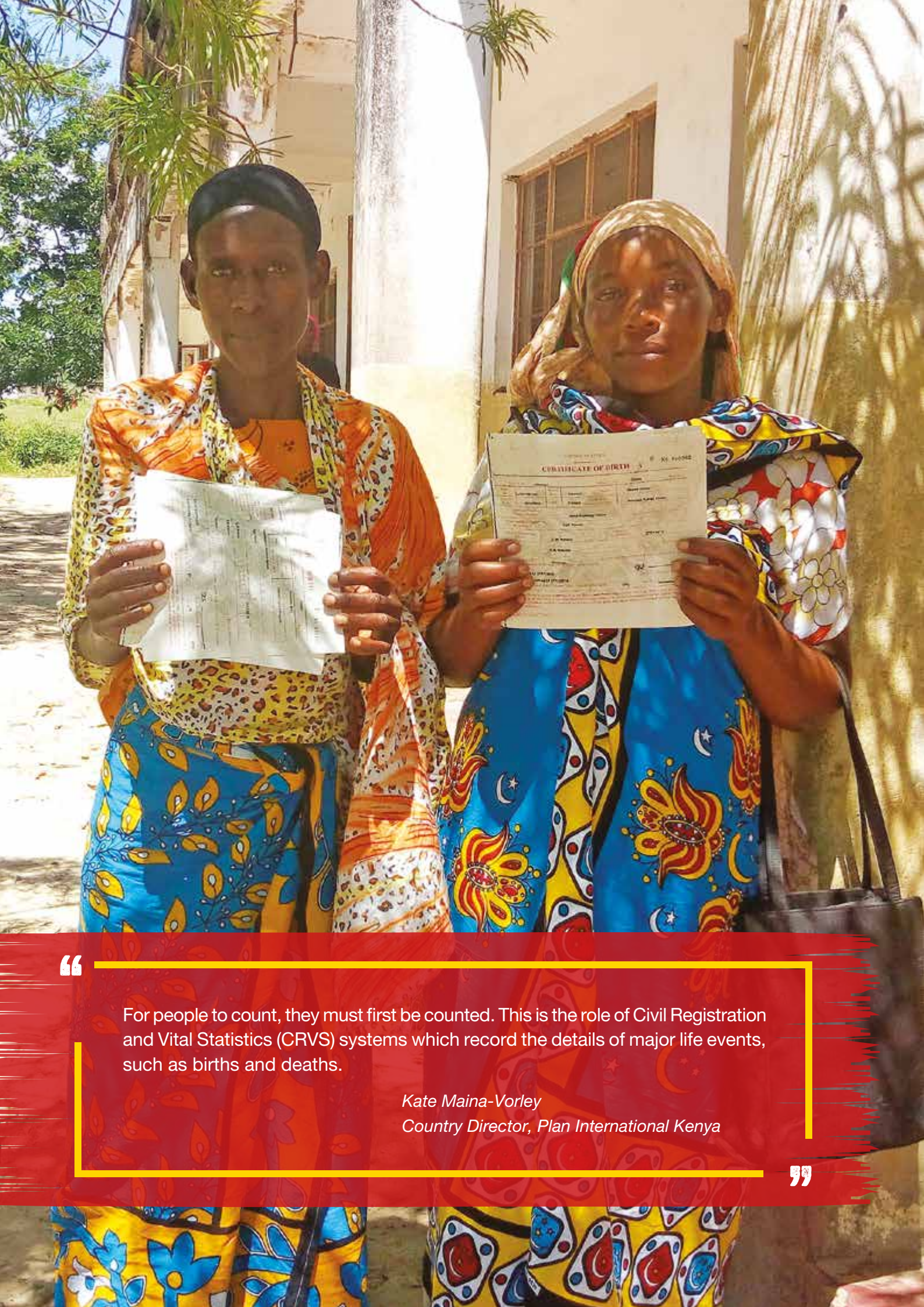
1. CRS, as the responsible agency for birth and death registration, needs support from various partners working in different parts of the country to share the workload.

2. Activities implemented by supporting partners need to be streamlined and well documented to ensure that there is consistency in the delivery of birth registration services across the country.

3. An integrated approach to birth registration is critical. As outlined in this document, this includes: (i) process and technology improvements; (ii) change management; (iii) behavioural change impact; (iv) governance, legal and regulatory framework; and (v) monitoring and evaluation.

4. The value of manual registration processes should be acknowledged and invested in and can pave the way for digital registration initiatives in the future.

5. Investment in an appropriate digital CRVS solution that works and is designed for the Kenyan context is critical to ensure that no one is left behind.




> For people to count, they must first be counted. This is the role of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) systems which record the details of major life events, such as births and deaths.
>
> *Kate Maina-Vorley*
> *Country Director, Plan International Kenya*

# ABOUT US

Plan International is an independent development and humanitarian organisation that advances children's rights and equality for girls. We strive for a just world, working together with children, young people, our supporters and partners. By actively connecting committed people with powerful ideas, we work together to make positive, deep-rooted and lasting changes in children and young people's lives.

For over 80 years, we have supported girls and boys and their communities around the world to gain the skills, knowledge and confidence they need to claim their rights, free themselves from poverty and live positive fulfilling lives.

Plan International has been operating in Kenya since 1982 and to-date continues to work in 9 counties: Nairobi, Machakos, Kajiado, Tharaka Nithi, Siaya, Kilifi, Kwale, Homabay and Kisumu.

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