



CHILD
IDENTITY
PROTECTION



WEBINAR SERIES

“I was born. I exist. Add me to the list.”

Accelerating birth registration for the hardest-to-reach populations — those living in poverty

Partners: African Child Policy Forum (ACPF), Child Identity Protection (CHIP), UNICEF

Host organisation: ATD Fourth World

Introduction

To be registered at birth is a fundamental human right, essential for our very existence and vital if children are to be protected from harm and are to have access to what they need to grow and thrive. Public and private groups have undertaken many initiatives to promote universal birth registration and increase coverage. Yet countless children — especially those marginalised and trapped in poverty — remain unregistered, uncounted, and unrecognised. **Birth registration is a gateway right:** without it, children are often denied access to other critical rights. The absence of a legal identity creates a domino effect, impeding a child’s access to education, health care, and social protection services. If children are not registered at birth, they are more vulnerable to abuse, exploitation, child labour, early marriage, and statelessness. Without proof of identity, they are more likely to be excluded from school enrolment, vaccination campaigns, and essential legal protections. Global commitments that have been made to leave no one behind include targets on achieving universal birth registration and legal identity, yet translating these promises into meaningful change for the most excluded children remains a persistent challenge.

Objectives

This webinar series, a follow-up of the “I was born. I exist. Add me to the list” international roundtable organised by ATD Fourth World and partners on 17 October 2024, will:

- better identify the nexus between the global, regional, and national levels in accelerating birth registration for the hardest-to-reach populations, analysing how international commitments and regional frameworks translate (or fail to translate) into effective national policies and implementation strategies;
- emphasise the cost of action versus the cost of inaction by presenting compelling evidence and budgetary considerations that demonstrate the long-term economic and social benefits of investing in robust birth registration systems as opposed to the far-reaching consequences of neglecting this fundamental right;

- address the critical intersection of statelessness and birth registration, exploring how lack of birth registration contributes to statelessness and identifying effective strategies to prevent this cycle.

In **the process** of moving beyond just words and sparking real action, the webinar series will:

- amplify the voices of children and families living in poverty, listen to their unique insights on their lived experience, create a true space for dialogues, and ensure they can participate meaningfully in shaping solutions;
- take stock of regional and global efforts to attain universal birth registration, draw lessons on progress and challenges, and identify key success factors;
- facilitate open and honest dialogue among all stakeholders at all levels to share what works and what doesn't work and to collectively identify pathways for more effective and practical interventions. We will encourage speakers to provide honest accounts of both the successes they achieve and the challenges they face;
- build concrete partnerships that lead to action by fostering connections and identifying opportunities for collaboration among stakeholders to implement and scale up effective birth registration programs.

Target Audience:

- Government officials (relevant ministries such as health, interior, justice, and social welfare);
- Directors/officials of civil registration offices/agencies of selected countries with high birth registration and those struggling to expand the service;
- Regional stakeholders (civil society and regional organisations);
- Representatives from UNICEF, ACPF, CHIP, and ATD Fourth World;
- Civil society organisations working on child rights, birth registration, and statelessness;
- Families and individuals from communities living in poverty, including children themselves;
- Academics and researchers;
- Development organisations;
- Community leaders and advocates.

The webinars will be 90 minutes long and all three webinars will offer English/French interpretation. The first webinar will also have Wolof interpretation and the third webinar will have Spanish interpretation.

Proposed Format and Content for the Series of Webinars

Webinar 1: Interconnectedness: From Global/Regional Commitments to National/Local Realities — A Focus on Senegal

Date: 10 June 2025 (13h00 to 14h30 Paris time; 11h00 to 12h30 Dakar time; 7:00 to 8:30 a.m. New York time)

Chair: Bhaskar Mishra, UNICEF

- Overview of the global and regional legal frameworks on birth registration (for example, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child) and how binding recommendations from these committees are (or are not) being translated into national policies and legislation in Senegal.
- Overview of those being left behind in birth registration. Profiles of children missed out in birth registration provide insights into the barriers to reach out and help devise appropriate strategies to expand coverage and ensure that these children enjoy their basic right to get their birth registered. (African Child Policy Forum)
- Contribution by children and families living in poverty of their unique insights and their lived experience. What barriers have they faced in registering births? Has anyone successfully obtained birth certificates; and, if so, what practical measures offered by the government or other stakeholders helped people living in poverty register births and obtain birth certificates?
- Presentation from the national agency responsible for civil registration on its national policy and how its policy aligns with regional/global frameworks, highlighting both successes and ongoing challenges.
- An honest assessment of the gap between global/regional commitments and national implementation. Identify pathways for more effective and practical interventions. What works and what doesn't work? What needs to be improved?

Webinar 2: Stepping Up Action at the Regional Level — a Focus on Africa

Date: 18 September 2025 (13h00 to 14h30 Paris time; 11h00 to 12h30 Dakar time; 7:00 to 8:30 a.m. New York time)

Chair: Mia Dambach, CHIP

- Understand the challenges: Explore the specific obstacles hindering birth registration, particularly for families and children living in extreme poverty. (An ATD Fourth World activist from the Central African Republic will provide context.)
- Gain a regional overview: Get a continental perspective on the current situation, gaps, and opportunities. (The African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC's) Special Rapporteur on the Right to Name, Birth Registration, and Nationality)
- Defining regional policy priorities for civil society advocacy in birth registration. How civil society organisations can effectively organise and advocate for change at a regional level. (African Child Policy Forum)
- Identify policy priorities: Define key policy areas that need attention to advance universal birth registration. Discussion of ID4Africa and other regional initiatives.
- Explore partnerships: Understand the role of organisations like UNICEF and potential avenues for collaboration.

Webinar 3: Building Bridges — Stepping Up Action in Other Regions and at the International Level

Date: Around 20 November 2025 (13h00 to 14h30 Paris time; 11h00 to 12h30 Dakar time; 7:00 to 8:30 a.m. New York time)

Chair: Isabel Magaya, ACPF

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16.9 aims to provide legal identity for all, including free birth registrations by 2030. In December 2024, UNICEF reported progress in birth registration, with over 500 million children under five (close to 8 in 10) having their births registered in the previous five years. Latin America and the Caribbean region is reaching 95 per cent birth registration; Eastern and South Eastern Asia, 94 per cent; Central and Southern Asia, 78 per cent; and sub-Saharan Africa around 51 per cent, constituting more than half of the world's previously unregistered children. Although there has been progress, around 2 in 10 children under five still remain unregistered and invisible to government systems. Even when births are recorded, over 50 million of them lack birth certificates critical for acquiring nationality, preventing statelessness, and ensuring that children can enjoy their rights from birth.

After devoting the first two webinars to the Africa region, the third and final webinar in the series will focus on experiences from other regions and consider what needs to be done to accelerate action at national, regional, and international levels to reach universal birth registration and legal identity by 2030.

The following speakers are scheduled to participate:

- a member of the European Parliament will speak about the situation in the EU;
- a member of the Committee on the Rights of the Child;
- a representative from the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights will present the new report on solutions to accelerate birth registration;
- a representative from the UN Legal Identity Agenda Task Force will present key priorities to achieve universal birth registration — the SDG target 16.9;
- Families and individuals from communities living in poverty, including children themselves.

Expected Outcomes:

- Enhanced understanding of the interconnectedness of global, regional, and national efforts in birth registration;
- Increased awareness of the critical link between birth registration and the prevention of statelessness;
- Clearer understanding of the economic and social costs of inaction versus the benefits of investing in birth registration;
- Identification and dissemination of concrete best practices and scalable solutions;
- Strengthened partnerships and collaborative frameworks for accelerating birth registration;

- Increased engagement and ownership of birth registration efforts by families and communities living in poverty;
- Sharing of community-driven initiatives that bridge formal and informal birth declaration processes;
- Concrete action plans and commitments from participating stakeholders.

Call to Action:

This webinar series is a call to move beyond words and commit to concrete actions that will ensure that every child is counted and recognised. By fostering genuine dialogue, sharing knowledge, and building strong partnerships, we can collectively accelerate birth registration for the hardest-to-reach populations and uphold the fundamental right of every child to an identity. We urge all stakeholders to participate actively and contribute to this critical endeavour.