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Modernization of Haiti's Civil Registry: Promoting the Right to Identity

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BACKGROUND

PRIOR TO 2005

Fiscal identity card:

Created in 1987 by Haiti's Tax Branch.

The card's main purpose was for the collection of taxes.

It was not linked to the civil registry

Massive voter registration campaigns were carried out before every election.

BACKGROUND: OAS Technical Assistance

The National Identification Card introduced in 2005

4.8 million adults registered

FEATURES

- PHOTO
- FINGERPRINT
- SIGNATURE
- NATIONAL IDENTIFICATION NUMBER
- NAME, COMMUNE, DOB, SEX
- BARCODE
- SECURE MICRO-IMPRESSION

ACCESS IMPORTANT SERVICES

- OBTAIN LEGAL EMPLOYMENT
- OBTAIN PUBLIC DOCUMENTS
  Driver's license, license plates, passport, insurance policies, firearms license, professional academic title
- EXERCISE THE RIGHT TO VOTE
- BENEFIT FROM SOCIAL PROGRAMS
- FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS
- ENROLL IN ADVANCED EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

SECURE REGISTRATIONS

The Automatic Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) verifies the digitally scanned fingerprints of every registrant to prevent false and multiple identities.

BACKGROUND : OAS Accomplishments since 2005

4.8 MILLION ADULTS (85% of adult population) have been registered with a secure National Identification Card

2,800 HAITIANS have been trained in registration procedures

141 REGISTRATION OFFICES opened nationwide with the latest registration equipment

12.5 MILLION civil registry acts digitalized at the National Archives

Nationwide **PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS** launched promoting the right to identity

Activities were made possible due to funding from:

Canadian International Development Agency | Agence canadienne de développement international

DEFINITIONS

IDENTIFICATION

The **National Identification Office** aims to ensure universal access to the right to identity through the registration and issuance of national ID cards for adults.

CIVIL REGISTRY

The **Civil Registry** is the official catalog of persons and their legal status. It records all information concerning the legal status of individuals from birth until death (ex, adoption, marriage, divorce)

PROBLÉMATIQUE

The challenges faced by the Civil Registry:

1. Complex judicial procedures and discriminatory laws
2. Unequal and insufficient service coverage
3. Lack of resources
4. Limited by its manual system and processes

PROBLÉMATIQUE: Discriminatory laws

The law discriminates against single mothers and children born out of wedlock

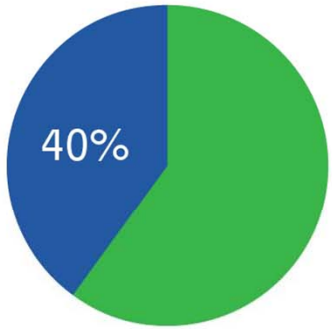
Children are labelled either 'legitimate' (child was born within a marriage), 'natural' (child was born out of wedlock), a discrimination resulting from the actions of their parents.

It is illegal for an unmarried woman to claim their child under the patrimony of the father.

RESULT: The majority of birth declarations are made by the father even though:

According to the Haitian Ministry for the Condition and Rights of Women:

40% of families are headed by single mothers



PROBLÉMATIQUE: Insufficient resources

Salaries are insufficient and operational expenses are not covered by the State.

By law, birth certificates (0-2 yrs) are free of charge; however, officers charge illegal fees in order to cover operational costs

Entrenched illegal fee system.

The illegal fee system has become entrenched into the culture and practice of the civil registry system. Issuing birth certificates is a profitable business for officers.

Civil Registry Officers

Average salary issued by the State:

$340/month

Average salary including illegal fees:

$700 - $1,500/month

CITIZENS MUST PAY ILLEGAL FEES TO REGISTER A NEWBORN

100-250 HTG ($2.50-$6.25 USD)

PROBLÉMATIQUE: Manual system

Manual processes are inefficient, labor intensive and are susceptible to misuse and fraud

A paper-based system does not permit the interconnection between offices, the sharing of information or the generation of statistics

Racketeers take advantage of these deficiencies to market fraudulent documents

Paper registries are fragile and cannot safely conserve Haiti's history

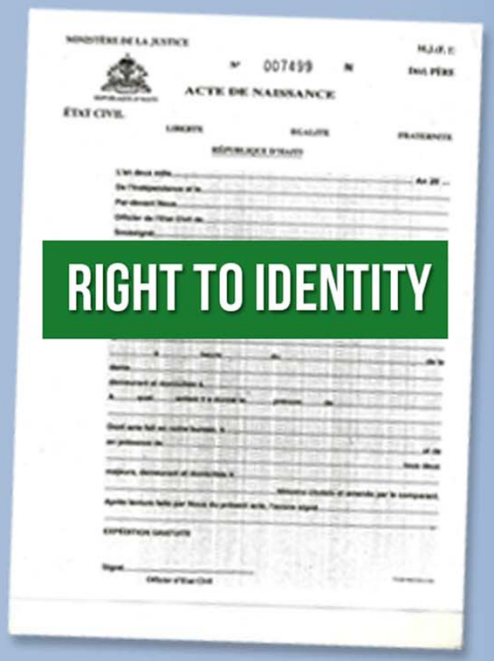
Conclusion of the assessment

Citizens are denied access to their fundamental right to identity

Having a birth certificate is essential to protect a child's identity, family ties and nationality

Enrollment in school, access to health services and social programs are dependent upon having a birth certificate.

Civil registry is important for the state to effectively plan for basic social services: education, health, justice, and security.



VISION: MODERN CIVIL REGISTRY SYSTEM

1. Legislative reform permitting modernization of institutions and procedures
2. Creation of a unified system covering and integrating all registration acts, from birth to death
3. State capacity building and ensuring the sustainability of modernization
4. State-led communications campaigns

THANK YOU

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