



RESEARCH REPORT

Catch-up birth registration via the education system in Cameroon

*Strengthening the civil registration and vital statistics system (CRVS),
by optimising and extending the Special Operation conducted by MINEDUB with other partners,
in order to guarantee a legal identity for all pupils in Cameroon.*

with the support of



FOREWORD

Every child has the right to birth registration and an education as confirmed by international standards, notably the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC). These rights have been reinforced by Sustainable Development Goal 4 on universal access to inclusive and equitable quality education and SDG objective 16.9 on legal identity and birth registration. Despite these rights, over one million school-children in Cameroon do not have a birth certificate - a mandatory document - for sitting exams to enter secondary education while in CM2/Class 6 (11 to 12 years). Being held back under these circumstances has obvious dire consequences for the educational future and wellbeing of these children, but also for the economic health of the community and the State.

The Ministry of Basic Education (MINEDUB) has taken the lead in responding to this alarming situation, where these children are exposed to the risks of not having a legal identity and potentially being excluded from continuing their education. This action is aligned with the National Development Strategy, which aims for a 100% completion rate at primary level as one of its strategic objectives.

Partnering with relevant Ministries including the Ministry of Decentralisation and Local Development, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Justice, as well as the National Civil Status Registration Office (BUNEC) and other key technical and financial partners such as UNICEF and the World Bank, the MINEDUB has organised a Special Operation to regularise the backlog of pupils without birth certificates. The operation successfully led to 544 mobile court hearings being held, dealing with 49,311 children's cases out of a total of 57,244 pupils (CM2 and Class 6) identified by the local services of MINEDUB. In total, 48,232 favourable declaratory judgements were delivered, i.e. 84.25% of the expected cases.

To reinforce this collaborative effort and ensure that no child is left behind, research was undertaken by Child Identity Protection with the support of a technical working group chaired by the MINEDUB and aforementioned partners. We welcome the results of this research as outlined in this joint publication which identifies promising practices to accelerate the dual goals of ensuring every child benefits from their right to identity and accesses education in a manner that respects their right to development on a key dimension. We encourage the wide dissemination of this research and its recommendations, to strengthen the second phase of the Special Operation and similar initiatives, so that these mid-term solutions will eventually become redundant. We hope that this research and catch-up birth registration initiatives through schools will inspire other countries to implement this medium term solution to reduce the backlog of pupils without a birth certificate. To build on the success of the Special Operation and ensure long-term impact, there is a pressing need to establish permanent and viable mechanisms that institutionalise birth registration processes, enabling continuous collaboration among key stakeholders and guaranteeing every child's right to identity and education.

We trust that together we can work to ensure that every child in Cameroon fully enjoy all the rights set out in the CRC and ACRWC.

May 2025

Pr. Laurent Serge ETOUNDI NGOA,
Minister of Basic Education, Cameroon

Nadine PERRAULT,
Representative of UNICEF, Cameroon

Philip D. JAFFÉ,
Member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

LIST OF ACRONYMS

| | |
|------------|--|
| ALVF | Association to Combat Violence Against Women |
| APAI-CRVS | Africa Programme for the Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Africa |
| BUNEC | National Civil Status Registration Office |
| CEP | Primary School Certificate |
| CHIP | Child Identity Protection |
| CRC | Convention on the Rights of the Child |
| CM1 | First year middle school |
| CM2 | Second year middle school |
| CPAoR | Child Protection Area of Responsibility |
| CRVS | Civil Registration and Vital Statistics |
| DHS | Statistical survey used in particular by UNICEF - Demographic and Health Survey |
| DRC | Danish Refugee Council |
| DREB | Regional Delegation for Basic Education (Délégation Régionale de l'Éducation de Base (DREB)) |
| | Délégation Régionale de l'Éducation de Base |
| FEICOM | Special Council Support Fund for Mutual Assistance (Fonds spécial d'Équipement et d'Intervention Intercommunale) |
| IAEB | Basic Education District Inspectorates (Inspections d'Arrondissements de l'Éducation de Base (IAEB)) |
| MINAS | Ministry of Social Affairs |
| MINDDEVEL | Ministry of Decentralisation and Local Development |
| MINEDUB | Ministry of Basic Education |
| MINJUSTICE | Ministry of Justice |
| MINPROFF | Ministry for the Promotion of Women and the Family |

| | |
|--------------|--|
| MINSANTE | Ministry of Public Health |
| NRC | Norwegian Rescue Committee |
| SDG | Sustainable Development Goal |
| PAREC | Education Reform Support Program in Cameroon (Programme d'Appui à la Réforme de l'Éducation au Cameroun) |
| PRE2C | Cameroon Civil Status Rehabilitation Programme |
| PTA | Parents and Teachers Association |
| RECOPE | Community Child Protection Network |
| SASO | Social Action Department |
| SND30 | National Development Strategy 2030 |
| TGI | High Court (Tribunal de Grande Instance) |
| TPI | Court of First Instance (Tribunal de Première Instance) |
| UBR | Universal Birth Registration |
| UCCC | United Councils and Cities of Cameroon (Association des Communes et Villes Unies du Cameroun (CVUC)) |
| UNHCR | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| UNICEF WCARO | UNICEF West and Central Africa Regional Office |

LIST OF MAIN DEFINITIONS

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Birth declaration | In Cameroon, parents, or any person who attended the birth, are obliged to inform the civil registrar of the child's birth within the jurisdiction of the civil registry centre (main or secondary, as the case may be) with a view to having the event entered in the register. ¹ |
| Civil registrars | In Cameroon, oversee the registration process in the main centres and in secondary centres attached to a main centre. In communes, the duties of civil registrar are performed by the mayor, a deputy mayor, a municipal councillor or a civil servant specially designated and delegated by the civil registrar. ² |
| Civil status | Generally refers to a person's legal status in a society, and is established through civil registration of other vital events, such as marriage, divorce, adoption and death. "Birth registration establishes and provides the official record of a person's existence and thereby establishes legal identity. Registration of other vital events, such as marriage, divorce, adoption and death, establishes and provides the official record of a person's civil status." ³ In Cameroon, all births, marriages and deaths must be recorded in the form of an act in the civil status registers. ⁴ |
| Crisis | 'Crisis' refers to situations including war, armed conflict, natural disasters or any other serious emergency, which have dedicated civil registration processes in place. ⁵ |
| Declaratory judgement | A declaratory judgement is a decision taken by a court to replace an authentic instrument (in this case, a birth certificate), either because it was required to be drawn up and was not drawn up within the legal time limit, or because it has been destroyed. |

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Hearing | A session during which a court takes cognisance of the parties' claims, conducts the trial and hears the various actors. In principle, hearings before a tribunal, court or judge take place in the courthouse. This is the case, for example, for the ordinary and special hearings of the Court of First Instance (TPI) in civil status matters. However, a hearing may, by order, be held outside the courthouse. This is known as a mobile hearing. ⁶ |
| Interoperability | 'Interoperability' refers to the system's capacity to develop interfaces that fully communicate among themselves in the process of its operation. ⁷ |
| Legal identity | 'Legal identity' is defined as the basic characteristics of an individual's identity, for example, name, sex, and place and date of birth, conferred through registration and the issuance of a certificate by an authorised civil registration authority following the occurrence of birth. In the absence of birth registration, legal identity may be conferred by a legally-recognised identification authority; this system should be linked to the civil registration system to ensure a holistic approach to legal identity from birth to death. ⁸ |
| Registration of births | 'Registration of births' is the continuous, permanent and universal recording of births and their characteristics in a civil status register, listed and initialled by the President of the Court within his or her jurisdiction, in accordance with the national legal provisions in force. ⁹ |
| Regularisation | 'Regularisation' consists of allowing a person to have official recognition or identity in accordance with the legal procedures in force, after the "normal declaration period". |
| Universal education | 'Universal education' refers to the idea that every person, regardless of their origin, social situation, gender or other characteristics, has "the right of access to equitable, inclusive and quality education and lifelong learning opportunities." ¹⁰ |

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We are particularly grateful to representatives from MINEDUB, MINDEVEL, and MINJUSTICE, particularly the members of the Working Group, the Chairperson Mrs. Ayukegba Evelyne (MINEDUB) and four representatives from MINEDUB (DSSAPPS, DPPC, DEMP, DAJ), Mr. Cyrille Apala Moïffo (MINDEVEL), Ms. Mankentsop Sylvie from MINJUSTICE, Mr. Alexis Mayang and Mr. Georges Bissiongol (UNICEF), Mr. Joseph Sylvain Endezoumou (PAREC), Mr. Ousmaila Amadaou (NRC), Mr. Jean Ebela, Mrs. Chimène Donkep, Mr. Franck Tedou Zeufack (BUNEC) and all their colleagues for their welcome, remarkable collaboration and cordiality during the interviews conducted remotely and during our mission to Cameroon. We would like to express our sincere thanks to the many experts who contributed to this research and who gave up their time to take part in discussions that enriched this report.¹¹

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April 2025

The Child Identity Protection (CHIP)* team

Brussels, Geneva, Lisbon and Yaounde

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2024, 48,232 “Classe Moyenne 2” (CM2) and Class 6 pupils had their civil status regularised through the Special Operation of the Support Programme for Education Reform in Cameroon (PAREC), an intersectoral initiative launched by the Ministry of Basic Education (MINEDUB), in collaboration with the Ministry of Decentralisation and Local Development (MINDDEVEL), Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice (MINJUSTICE), the National Civil Status Registration Office (BUNEC), UNICEF and the World Bank.

This initiative aims to provide birth certificates to pupils without proof of birth registration, thereby establishing their legal identity. It focuses on those at the end of primary education (CM2 and Class 6). The aim is to ensure that these pupils have access to and remain in the education system, by regularising their situation before the final exams. This mass registration style campaign is a temporary solution that will enable Cameroon to reduce the over 1.4 million pupils without birth certificates, so that future efforts can be focused on registering births within the legal deadlines.

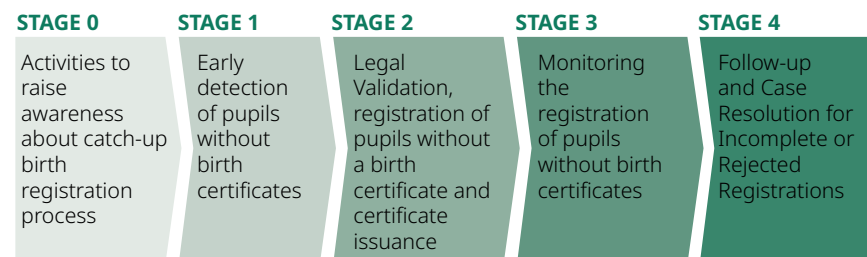
This initiative is part of a wider effort to reform civil status and improve conditions of access to education for all children in Cameroon. Cameroon adopted Law 2024/016 of 23 December 2024 to organise the civil registration system in Cameroon aimed at digitalising civil registration and vital statistic systems including birth registration¹², extending legal deadlines and simplifying procedures for vulnerable populations such as internally displaced persons and refugees. Interoperability with the health and education sectors was also a priority.

RESEARCH AND METHODOLOGY

This report is the result of research supported by a technical working group led by MINEDUB including UNICEF Cameroon and undertaken by the international organisation Child Identity Protection (CHIP). This operational research accompanies the PAREC Special Operation with the aim of optimisation, with the goal that mass catch-up practices are redundant in the long run. The research was carried out in **six regions of Cameroon (Centre, Littoral, South-West, East, North and Far North)** by four teams of national and international experts, involving more than **100 interviews** based on **semi-structured questionnaires** with over **230 actors** targeted by the Special Operation.

THE FIVE STAGES AND FOUR PREREQUISITES

The report recommends a five-stage approach to formalising the process of catch-up birth registration via the school system. At the same time, these steps should be accompanied by prerequisites to ensure their success. All these stages and prerequisites should be covered by an overarching legal and policy framework that enables school-based registration. The proposed stages are as follows:



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PREREQUISITES

FOR CATCH-UP BIRTH REGISTRATION VIA THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

1. Clear institutional arrangements and coordination mechanisms between actors
2. Resources for implementation and community engagement
3. Capacity building of actors
4. Monitoring mechanisms

RESULTS AND GUIDELINES

The research highlighted a number of **promising practices**, including the involvement of schools (headteachers, teachers, parents and parent teacher associations (PTAs)) and the commitment of local authorities (prefectures, councils, registrars). However, **a number of challenges** remain, including the need to inform parents and the community about the catch-up birth registration process, coordinate actions, inform, train and actively include all those involved, and to mobilise sufficient resources for this type of mass operation.

Based on the findings, the report proposes a series of **guidelines organised according to three activities that are either to be repeated, avoided or prohibited altogether**. These guidelines aim to optimise the process, suggesting, for example, the nomination of focal points at each level to monitor pupils' files throughout the process and to ensure the proper coordination. It also calls for greater mobilisation of human and financial resources and simplification of administrative procedures, especially for groups of children in vulnerable situations. For the activities to be avoided and prohibited, these seek to ensure the integrity of the CRVS system and to prevent issues such as duplication, fraud and inappropriate use of processes.

CONCLUSION

The “PAREC Special Operation” initiative represents a step forward for Cameroon in its efforts to register children. However, this mass catch-up registration initiative should remain a transitional tool and not replace birth registration within the legal timeframe. The report stresses the importance of raising parents' awareness of the need to register children systematically from birth and of strengthening inter-sectoral collaboration to ensure the effective implementation of obligations relating to children's civil status.

In the long term and once the backlog is addressed, the education sector should remain a critical partner, through an integrated and automated mechanism, not ad hoc mobilisations. For example, if a child is exceptionally identified at school without a birth certificate, the Education Management Information System should automatically flag the absence and generate a secure notification to the civil registration authority. Through interoperable data systems, the civil registry would then validate the child's information against existing records. If the child is confirmed as unregistered, the system would initiate the registration and deliver the birth certificate directly to the school. This real-time, data-driven model reduces administrative burden, improves service efficiency, and—most importantly—ensures the child's right to legal identity is fulfilled without relying on campaign-based interventions. As such the research proposes that Cameroon develop a Legal and Policy framework enabling school-based registration for exceptional cases that may arise.

The report proposes a mass catch-up process through the five stages and prerequisites that could inspire other sub-Saharan African countries facing similar birth registration challenges. Leveraging interoperability between sectors will not only help to improve access to legal identity, but will also promote universal access to education and social protection for all children, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 16 and SDG 4).

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. SITUATION REGARDING BIRTH REGISTRATION

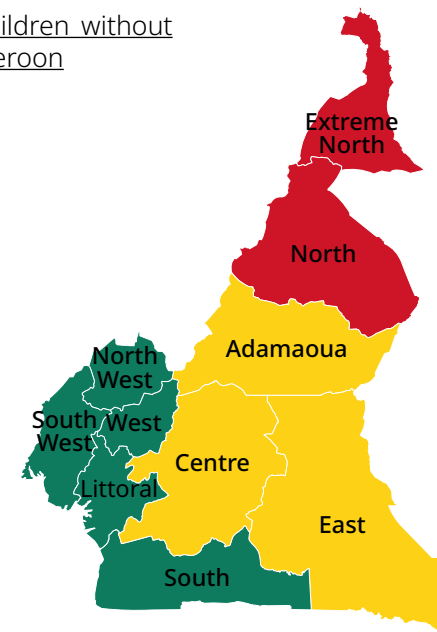
Birth registration is essential for establishing a child's legal identity, ensuring official recognition before the law, and enabling access to fundamental rights and services. It also provides critical protection against rights violations such as exploitation, trafficking, and child marriage. Collectively, it provides crucial data for public policy planning.¹³ Over the last 15 years, sub-Saharan Africa has made slow, but steady, advances to improve the level of birth registration. UNICEF reported in 2025, that of the 150 million children under the age of five who are not registered worldwide, sub-Saharan Africa is home to over 110 million of these children including "90 million unregistered children and 21 million children whose births are reported as registered but who lack proof in the form of a birth certificate."¹⁴

The Republic of Cameroon has a population of more than 28.5 million people,¹⁵ including 8 million who have no official proof of identity, such as a birth certificate or national identity card.¹⁶ One in three children have not been registered at birth and more than half of all children do not have a birth certificate.¹⁷ Ministry of Basic Education (MINEDUB) data for 2023 shows that around 1.55 million children (31% of pre-school and primary school enrolments) do not have a birth certificate. There are 1,486,689 children in primary school, of whom 266,638 are in middle school.¹⁸ The problem is more pronounced in the French-speaking education sub-system, where 1 in 3 children do not have a birth certificate (compared with 1 in 5 in the English-speaking education sub-system). The problem occurs more at the primary level (30.1%) than at the pre-school level (11%), with the greatest disparities observed in the Far North and North regions, as illustrated in image 1 opposite.¹⁹ The absence of a birth certificate can prevent children (particularly those in CM2/Class 6) from sitting the end-of-primary exams (CEP), as this document is an essential part of the application file. The factors behind the failure to register births in Cameroon²⁰ are varied (Section 3.1).



Extent of the phenomenon of children without birth certificates by region in Cameroon

Number of children
■ 45 245 - 71 817
■ 71 818 - 176 612
■ 176 613 - 436 112



1. INTRODUCTION

1.2. LEGISLATIVE AND STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Birth registration in Cameroon is traditionally governed²¹ by Ordinance No. 81/002 of 29 June 1981 on the organisation of civil status and various provisions relating to the status of natural persons.²² In response to the factors leading to non-registration of civil status events, the government launched in 2010 the Cameroon Civil Status Rehabilitation Programme (PRE2C) with a focus on birth registration, supported by technical and financial partners.²³ In 2010 Cameroon joined the APAI-CRVS programme to guarantee an efficient civil status system,²⁴ before this PRE2C policy was updated in 2018. Law N°2011/011 of 6 May 2011²⁵ strengthened the 1981 Ordinance on civil status, enabling the creation of BUNEC in 2013. Law 2024/016 of 23 December 2024²⁶ provides for digitisation, extends deadlines, simplifies procedures for vulnerable populations, and increases interoperability with health and education. A new 2025-2029 Strategic Plan was also adopted in early 2025. In addition to these reforms, several policy briefs and evaluations have been carried out, including the diagnostic study conducted by the organisation Vital Strategies.²⁷ Efforts in Cameroon have led to a consensus on the urgent need to modernise the CRVS system, with notable progress in decentralisation thanks in particular to the implication by Mayors and digitisation. At the Mayors' Forum in Yaoundé in April 2024, one of the main outcomes was the adoption of a Mayors' Charter with 95% support for speeding up birth registration. One of the recommendations agreed in this Charter was improving interoperability with the education sector. This framework supported UNICEF's #MyName campaign²⁸ and positioned Cameroon as one of the pioneering countries in this field, which can serve as a model for other countries on the continent.

1.3. SPECIAL PAREC OPERATION FOR CATCH-UP BIRTH REGISTRATION VIA THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

Building on these initiatives (Section 1.2), in 2024 the MINEDUB,²⁹ in collaboration with MINJUSTICE, MINDDEVEL, the World Bank through PAREC, and UNICEF Cameroon, launched a project to register the births of pupils at the end of primary school (i.e. "Special PAREC Operation").

This operation focuses on the process of late registration through declaratory judgements to ensure that children without a birth certificate, are properly regularised with the civil registry between April and May 2024. Particularly focusing on the 58,812 CM2 and Class 6 pupils sitting final examinations.³⁰

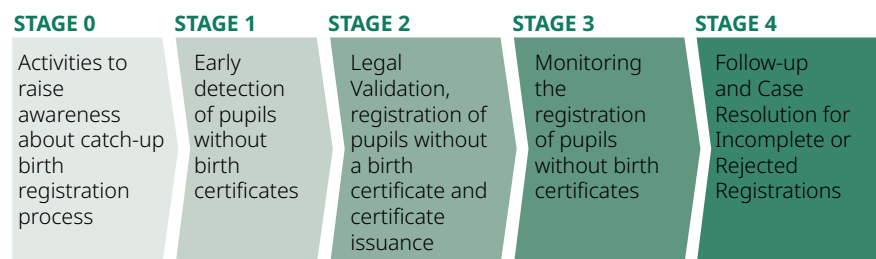
During the first months of its implementation, the operation led to 544 mobile court hearings being held, dealing with 49,311 children's cases out of a total of 57,244 pupils (CM2 and Class 6) identified by the decentralised services of MINEDUB. In total, 48,232 favourable declaratory judgements were delivered, i.e. 84.25% of the expected cases. The operation has had a real social impact including highlighting the importance of intersectoral work of the institutions (e.g. schools, IAEB, the Sub-Prefecture, councils and judiciary) to resolve the backlog of pupils without birth certificates.³¹ A number of similar initiatives are also underway to address this issue, including those led by MINDDEVEL,³² BUNEC/OIF³³ and various civil society players, such as the International Rescue Committee, the Norwegian Rescue Committee (NRC) and Plan Cameroon.³⁴

2. BACKGROUND, OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE RESEARCH

2.1. RESEARCH CONTEXT

The independent research builds on the mid-term evaluation initiated by the Ministry of Justice in the ten regions noting the specific context of the PAREC programme.³⁵ In order to facilitate this research, MINEDUB set up a Working Group in September 2024, in collaboration with the same partners as well as those of BUNEC, PAREC and NRC.³⁶ The Working Group was chaired by Mrs Evelyne Ayukegba of MINEDUB. At the beginning of October 2024, the Working Group held its first meeting to discuss the scope of the research and agreed to collaborate with Child Identity Protection (CHIP), an international organisation based in Geneva.³⁷

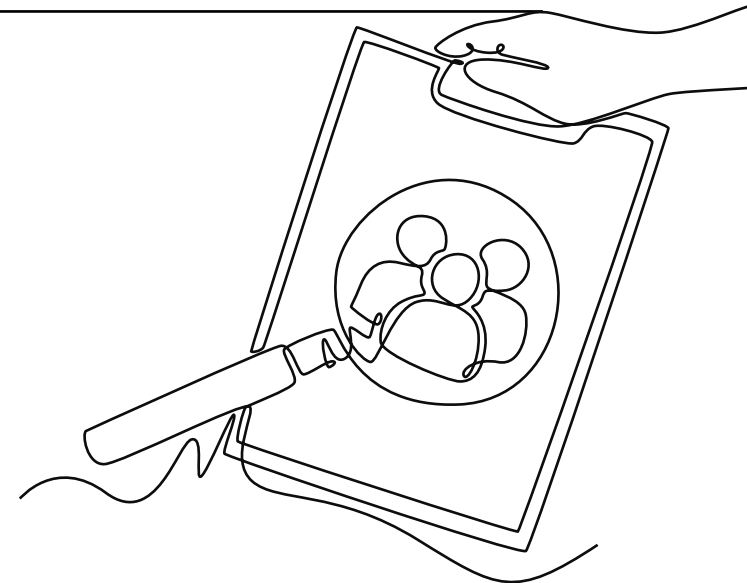
In 2023, UNICEF WCARO and UNICEF Senegal supported similar research in Senegal conducted by CHIP³⁸ which led to the conceptualisation of five key stages to facilitate catch-up birth registration of pupils via the school system.³⁹ These steps should be built on certain prerequisites.⁴⁰ All these stages and prerequisites should be outlined in an overarching legal and policy framework that enables school-based registration, as is the case in Senegal. The proposed stages are as follows (Sections 3.2. and 3.3.):



PREREQUISITES

FOR CATCH-UP BIRTH REGISTRATION VIA THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

1. Clear institutional arrangements and coordination mechanisms between actors
2. Resources for implementation and community engagement
3. Capacity building of actors
4. Monitoring mechanisms



2.2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The **main objective** of the research is to identify how to optimise the implementation of the Special PAREC Operation and the catch-up process via the school system, to absorb the backlog and make such practices redundant in the long run. The **specific objectives** are:

1. **Highlight the successes and obstacles** encountered, with a view to scaling up the project across the country to reach all school-age children, including those from marginalised groups or living in remote areas;
2. **Formulate guidelines** to facilitate the process according to the five stages proposed; and
3. **Develop a proposed model** that formalises the process of catch-up birth registration via the school system.

2. BACKGROUND, OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE RESEARCH

2.3. RESEARCH APPROACH

The **approach** used for implementation, monitoring and evaluation, knowledge management, and research **was mixed**, taking into account both qualitative and quantitative elements, including:

- **Review and analysis of existing documents and data;**
- **Key informant interviews**, including structured and semi-structured interviews;
- **Structured telephone surveys** with the various stakeholders;
- Organising **in-country missions and field visits** to carry out the assignment; and
- Organising **validation meetings** with UNICEF offices and/or other UN agencies.

The CHIP team used **human rights and intersectionality approaches** to guide its work based on **UNICEF's Procedure on Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis** (Annex 1).⁴¹ A human rights-based approach provides a lens through which to assess the situation of children in relation to the rights enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and other key international obligations. A human rights-based approach helps to understand the key challenges preventing vulnerable children, particularly those with special needs, from realising their rights.

2.4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

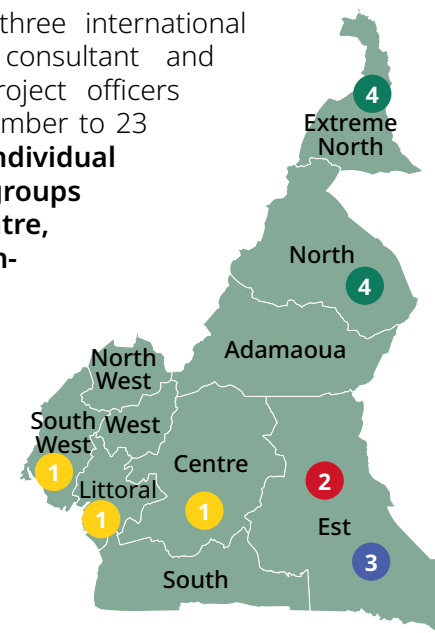
The research was carried out in three phases:

Phase 1: preparatory phase (September to November 2024)

- **In-depth analysis** of available and relevant documentation.
- Carrying out **individual interviews and remote focus groups** with the **key players** involved in catch-up birth registration via the school system (Annex 2).
- Consultation with the members of the Working Group to agree on the methodology to be adopted.
- Drafting of the **inception report**.

Phase 2: exploration phase (exploratory mission from 07 November to 23 December 2024)

- Four teams⁴² made up of three international consultants, one national consultant and three UNICEF Cameroon project officers were deployed from 07 November to 23 December 2024 to carry out **individual interviews and focus groups** within six regions: **the Centre, the Littoral, the South-West, East, the North and the Far North**. In total, over 230 key informants were interviewed in 108 interviews, focus groups and meetings (Annex 2). Key informants were identified by the technical working group led by President Ayukegba at the Central level (Annex 1). The Working Group led by MINEDUB



Source: maps-cameroon.com

2. BACKGROUND, OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE RESEARCH

played a key role in organising these numerous meetings with the main players, thanks to its support in the form of letters and telephone calls. This work was reinforced by the support of UNICEF and other technical and financial partners, who also made a decisive contribution to making these exchanges possible. A structured questionnaire was prepared to guide questions.

- The regions were selected by the working group (see map above and found on maps-cameroon.com). Most of the regions visited were affected by crisis (East, Far North, North and South-West).
- The interviews and focus groups were conducted using semi-structured questionnaires.⁴³

Phase 3: validation phase (from December 2024 to February 2025), **presentation of the report** (on 27 and 28 January 2025 in Ebolowa)

- Compilation of progress, achievements and challenges encountered.
- National workshop held with key stakeholders to present the report and the proposed model for catch-up birth registration. The workshop was used to identify the priorities and potential approaches to optimise the process through the five stages and prerequisites.

2.5. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The field research (October 2024 to February 2025) sought to comply with the UNICEF procedure statement for ethical evidence generation.⁴⁴ Oral consent was obtained from all key informant interviewees with a clear explanation about the purpose of the research and use of findings in a final publication. Every effort was made to ensure all relevant stakeholders were able to participate in the evidence generation and have their voices heard. However, due to the sensitive nature of interviewing child beneficiaries and challenges with organising, ethical approval, children were explicitly excluded from the research. Their views were represented by professionals working closely with them. A national consultant and local UNICEF staff accompanied the international research team at all times to facilitate respect for Cameroon culture.

This field research made it possible to update the information from the desk research and to assess the practical application of laws and strategies (i.e. gaps and promising practices) in relation to birth registration. The geographical scope of the mission was limited for reasons of time and security, but the regions covered enabled promising practices and obstacles to be identified.

The research was carried out in accordance with the birth registration procedure provided for by the 2011 law and by the 2018-2022 Strategic Plan. The new law 2024/016 of 23 December 2024⁴⁵ introduces numerous adjustments to the procedure and deadlines, which are only taken into account in this report as part of the guidelines formulated for moving forward.

3. RESEARCH RESULTS

The preliminary results⁴⁶ of Special Operation collected prior to this research were largely encouraging despite some difficulties.⁴⁷ Separate sub-sections are devoted to groups of children in vulnerable situations, namely 'children in crisis situations' (green boxes) and 'children from indigenous communities' (blue boxes) to ensure that their specific needs are taken into account and that they are not 'left behind'.⁴⁸ The difficulties associated with birth registration can be exacerbated for children in crisis situations, such as refugees or internally displaced persons, who live in vulnerable populations deprived of many basic services.⁴⁹ Indigenous children, such as the Baka and Mbororo, are also particularly exposed to social and economic inequalities⁵⁰ (Sections 3.2. and 3.3.).

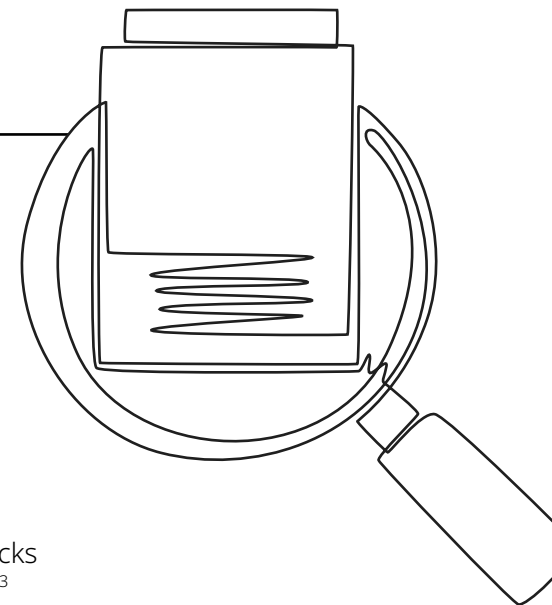
3.1. FACTORS LEADING TO NON-REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS AND ASSOCIATED CHALLENGES

This report presents the factors cited by the interviewees during the mission. Further research is required to identify whether these factors are systemic or whether they reflect more one-off incidents.

Before the birth certificate is drawn up:

- Access to civil registry services, particularly in rural areas, can be difficult due to **the geographical remoteness of civil registry centres and the quality of road and transport infrastructure**, which often results in travel costs too high for the population.⁵¹ There may also be indirect costs associated with travel and losses of wages.⁵² In addition, extra fees may be "charged" to process files⁵³ and may lead to fees that are not uniform between courts.⁵⁴ Parents may not have the capacity to meet their obligations to register their children for diverse reasons.⁵⁵
- **Communication can be difficult**, as families do not have access to the internet, telephones or computers.⁵⁶

- **Civil registry offices (main and secondary) may lack resources**⁵⁷ including staff, computers and registers.⁵⁸ Some secondary civil registry centres are not operational at all,⁵⁹ operate from home,⁶⁰ lack registers,⁶¹ may manipulate records using forged signatures⁶² and/or operate with only a secretary who lacks motivation because the job is unpaid.⁶³
- **As the system has not been digitised**, the figures remain approximate and it is difficult to quantify how many children are actually detected and benefit from late registration procedures, especially in rural areas.⁶⁴
- The procedure for appointing civil registrars, as well as registrars in secondary centres, can also be cumbersome, and their **training remains inadequate**.⁶⁵
- The **late registration procedure is administratively cumbersome and costly**: the need for a certificate of the child's apparent age and documents that may be lost and/or non-existent are required to obtain declaratory judgements. Additional costs are associated with these procedures.⁶⁶
- There is **a high risk of duplication**.⁶⁷ During regularisation campaigns, some NGOs collect files and submit them directly to the court, without going through the council to check that the file for the child has not already been submitted. This risk is exacerbated by long waiting times, which encourages parents to re-submit an application when another actor comes to the community to detect children without documents.



3. RESEARCH RESULTS

Once the original document has been drawn up:

- Difficulties associated with **keeping the original document**, which is either lost or inadvertently destroyed by the parents.⁶⁹ The authenticity of the document can sometimes be called into question, due to the involvement of certain people who may take advantage of regularisation campaigns in an inappropriate manner.⁷⁰
- **Parents do not collect the birth certificate.**⁷¹
- Occasionally, when **the original document is lost**, the parents submit another application to another centre⁷² and/or change the child's name.⁷³

Children in crisis situations

In these communities, **women often give birth at home and do not receive information on birth registration.**⁷⁴ These groups, usually involved in asylum procedures, have made it clear that when they lose or do not have identity documents, they feel less safe and become even more vulnerable.⁷⁵

A major challenge is the **lack of coordination between the actors involved in crisis situations**, although the CPAoR in Cameroon⁷⁶ systematically addresses the issue of birth registration at its monthly meetings (Section 3.3.1.).⁷⁷ In addition, **sharing information on humanitarian aid beneficiaries with State actors may be problematic.**⁷⁸ Humanitarian actors generally collect essential information for birth registration, but also sensitive details of beneficiaries' backgrounds and experiences often linked to protection needs, particularly for children involved in armed conflict. The Danish Refugee Council (DRC) suggests that humanitarian actors should only share information that is strictly necessary for the preparation of civil status documents.⁷⁹

Security problems in the Far North due to activities of **non-state armed groups and flooding** have created upheavals and multiple **logistical challenges.**⁸⁰ For example, secondary centres require the appointment of a civil registrar by MINDDEVEL, yet in the Far North region, this appointment has sometimes not taken place.⁸¹ 60 of the 127 centres are not operational due to **political sensitivities linked to the CRVS and lack of resources** (Section 3.3.2.).⁸² In some cases, these centres have had to be relocated and the communities are informed of their location by the village chiefs, although a number of disputes between different chiefs can be an obstacle to information sharing.⁸³ In addition, **internally displaced people do not stay in the same area or region for long.** Keeping track of them is made all the more difficult by the fact that not all civil registry offices are interconnected.⁸⁴

In the South West region, birth registration can be seen as a **political issue**⁸⁵ given a context where non-state armed groups (NSAG) attack State authorities, particularly those providing education and birth registration services. For example, in the run-up to the presidential elections in October 2025, some NSAG threatened certain mayors not to engage in civil documentation activities, believing that this was linked to political intentions through the registration of children's names on electoral rolls. These threats have led to kidnappings in the vicinity of civil registry centres.⁸⁶ **It is essential to raise public awareness of the separation between birth registration and the registration of children on electoral rolls from the age of 20.**⁸⁷ The attacks have also affected schools, with the abduction of pupils and teachers and the destruction of buildings.⁸⁸

3. RESEARCH RESULTS

Children from indigenous communities

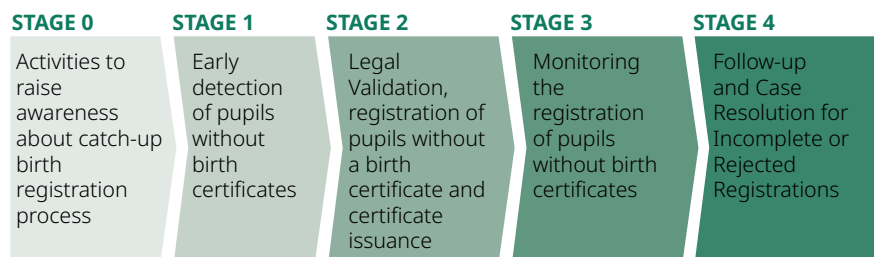
The research revealed specific needs of children living in vulnerable situations, including those from indigenous Baka and Mbororo communities:⁸⁹

- In Baka communities, the identification of children is made more complex by the **low school enrolment** rate, the frequent absence of parents' civil status documents, the low level of autonomy, the parents' lack of means, and the irregular school frequency due to the fishing and gathering seasons.⁹⁰
- There are **challenges related to the mobility** of SASO chiefs and other agents to get to communities in rural areas, as vehicles are not available or there is no budget for petrol.⁹¹
- In rural areas, there are a **multitude of awareness-raising** and/or child identification initiatives by NGOs and the authorities which are not coordinated.⁹²
- **The cohabitation and/or separation of parents** is an obstacle to the systematic establishment of children's birth certificates. Parents who no longer wish to share personal information, including civil status information, penalise their children.⁹³
- **Some councils were not informed or asked to check** that Baka children were not already on the registers.⁹⁴
- **A child's surname does not always coincide with the parents' names on paper**, for example, with Mbororo girls.⁹⁵
- Parents may **feel that the deed should be drawn up when the child reaches school age**⁹⁶ or even at any time in the **child's life**.⁹⁷
- Some parents wait to see how their child **performs at school** before deciding to issue a birth certificate.⁹⁸



3. RESEARCH RESULTS

3.2. THE FIVE STAGES IN CATCHING UP WITH BIRTH REGISTRATION VIA THE SCHOOL SYSTEM



PREREQUISITES

FOR CATCH-UP BIRTH REGISTRATION VIA THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

1. Clear institutional arrangements and coordination mechanisms between actors
2. Resources for implementation and community engagement
3. Capacity building of actors
4. Monitoring mechanisms



3.2.1. STAGE 0 – Awareness raising

This stage consists of raising the awareness of the community, parents and the general public, about the catch-up birth registration process (Section 3.1.). This stage is distinct from the awareness-raising that needs to be undertaken on birth registration within the legal timeframe (from pregnancy).

Awareness raising on timely birth registration

Numerous initiatives to raise awareness about birth registration have been put in place, intensified since the launch of the UNICEF #MyName campaign in April 2024 (Section 1.2.). Posters about this campaign are regularly displayed, particularly in the main and secondary civil registration offices, on the radio,⁹⁹ in hospitals and health centres.¹⁰⁰

A number of initiatives have also been implemented by people working in neighbourhoods and in collaboration with traditional chiefs who play a key role,¹⁰¹ using various means of communication such as radio spots, television and social media.¹⁰² Some actors suggest running mass awareness campaigns for at least 5 years in a row to really bring about changes in behaviour¹⁰³ or taking advantage of existing campaigns run by MINSANTE or MINEDUB to involve other actors, particularly those in the justice system.¹⁰⁴

All these awareness-raising initiatives come from different types of actors, both State and civil, who often work together and carry them out in different locations such as:

- **Buea Town** Council organises official birth certificate ceremonies in the presence of the mayor. Other municipalities have also taken this initiative.¹⁰⁵ These events, seen as moments of pride, are further spread by word of mouth and social media. An official photographer is present, and the mayor encourages families to share this moment with their friends and neighbours, highlighting the importance of the birth certificate.¹⁰⁶
- The **Batouri** council has organised awareness campaigns on universal birth registration. The only risk is that this activity is not planned in advance and depends entirely on the motivation of the mayor.¹⁰⁷
- Many councils, such as **Garoua II, Lagdo and Maroua I**, have a validated action plan that includes awareness-raising activities for the population and a civil status platform where the importance and challenges of registering births are discussed.¹⁰⁸
- At **Buea** Municipal Hospital, the person responsible for collecting fees facilitates birth declarations. She visits the maternity ward to collect the necessary information from the mothers. In collaboration with the nurses in charge of vaccinations, she raises awareness among families and checks which children do not yet have a birth certificate. She works closely with the town council to ensure that birth declarations are transferred.¹⁰⁹

3. RESEARCH RESULTS

- In **Gado Badzere**, the GADO 2A school raises parents' awareness at parent-teacher meetings (PTA).¹¹⁰ This is also the case at the PTA general assembly in **Garoua-Boulai**, where the inspectorate and head teachers are present to inform everyone about the process of catch-up birth registration and the role of each party.¹¹¹
- School headmasters sometimes post announcements in churches and mosques about registering children.¹¹²
- The civil registrar at the secondary centre in **Gado** raises awareness among families when women have not given birth at the health centre. He travels around the village on a motorbike funded by UNICEF. If the women have given birth at the hospital, the births are automatically communicated to the civil registration centre.¹¹³
- ALVF workers organise awareness-raising sessions in their community centres on the importance of birth registration and take part in door-to-door initiatives to check whether all children residing in households have a birth certificate. ALVF frequently works with village chiefs to carry out these activities.¹¹⁴
- In the **south-west**, the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) has undertaken a number of awareness-raising activities, particularly in connection with the #MyName campaign. BUNEC's regional office supported the activities by lending its vehicle so that outreach activities could take place in the communities.¹¹⁵

Raising awareness and providing information about catching up on birth registration

Special PAREC operation

At the end of February 2024, as part of the Special Operation, the World Bank invited representatives of all the stakeholders to a workshop to validate the project document for catch-up birth registration via the school.¹¹⁶ MINEDUB then officially launched the Special Operation on 22 March 2024. Information about the campaign was disseminated through various channels, including

letters from MINEDUB to its regional delegates,¹¹⁷ from BUNEC to its regional offices and technical advisers¹¹⁸ and from the World Bank to the partners involved.¹¹⁹ During the Special Operation, a number of awareness-raising initiatives were carried out:

- The **Douala 5** council put up announcements in classrooms and in the playground during breaks, as well as at school pick-up times. These announcements emphasised the importance of birth certificates, the fact that the procedure was free, and specified the dates for filing applications.¹²⁰
- An imam, who is also a registrar in **Douala 2**, organised meetings with religious leaders of different faiths, using their local dialect. He also shared information via WhatsApp to reach a wider audience.¹²¹
- **Limbe** Council took a proactive approach, visiting schools to distribute leaflets to children under 13. They also broadcast awareness-raising messages on the radio, encouraging the community to go to the local council to regularise the administrative situation of their children.¹²²

Children in crisis situations

- In crisis situations, such as those involving Central African refugee **children in the East region, our interviews in Gado-Badzere**, where there is a refugee camp,¹²³ showed that most Central African babies born in Cameroon, in Gado, are born in a training centre or health centre. The person in charge of the centre then passes on the child's details to the civil registry (secondary centre) to ensure that Central African newborns have a birth certificate.¹²⁴
- In the **Eastern region**, refugee children in the Gado camp are informed of as soon as they arrive or are born in the camp.¹²⁵ Partners, such as Plan International, are responsible for raising families' awareness and following up cases with parents

3. RESEARCH RESULTS

and the civil registrar. However, there is sometimes a lack of willingness on the part of parents to go to the registry office to collect the documents and ensure that the situation is in order as raised at the camp's Parents' Committee.¹²⁶ The NRC and DRC associations are also responsible for raising awareness and monitoring the process of obtaining birth certificates so that Central African pupils can sit their exams at school.¹²⁷

- In the **Far North region**, a number of general awareness-raising activities surrounding accessing basic services take place when several groups live in the same community (e.g. displaced children, refugees, etc.). One such activity involves education around having a birth certificate.¹²⁸

Children from indigenous communities

Where children from vulnerable groups do not attend school, village chiefs play a central role in raising awareness, as they can explain the importance of birth registration and the procedures for obtaining a birth certificate to everyone in their locality.¹²⁹

- In **Abong Mbang**, the SASO chief has been able to establish a bond of trust with the Baka and to raise awareness of the importance of registering children using a picture box.¹³⁰ She also organises general sessions on registration, sometimes in the meeting rooms of forestry companies, the village courtyard or development communities. To do this, she approaches community leaders to attract as many people as possible. The Mindourou, Bomban and Tok districts have benefited from awareness-raising campaigns as part of a project implemented by the FAIRMED organisation.¹³¹
- In **Abong Mbang**, three awareness campaigns were organised in the space of a year, run by MINDDEVEL in partnership with the FAIRMED organisation.¹³²

- RECOPE members in **Toungou/Mandjou** meet school headmasters at the start of the school year to raise awareness of the need to register children at school and provide them with birth registration forms, sometimes using "picture boxes" that explain each child's right to an identity.¹³³ These same members, with the help of NGOs such as Plan International - despite the lack of resources for photocopying and travel - find ways of going directly to families to have birth declarations completed.¹³⁴
- In **Bindia**, two associations are particularly active in raising awareness of the UBR among parents and children notably: the Big Sister, Little Sister association, which brings together teachers and pupils (girls); and Mother and Child association, which brings together teachers, mothers and children (girls and boys). They visit families directly to show them their children's school books and talk to them about birth registration. In addition, the right to identity for every child is "sung" every morning when the flag is raised in the school playground.¹³⁵

Early
detection
of pupils
without
birth
certificates

3.2.2. STAGE 1 – Detection of pupils without birth certificates

The first step is to detect pupils without a birth certificate as soon as they enrol in school,¹³⁶ and then to reinforce this at the end-of-cycle exams in CM2/Class 6.¹³⁷ The headteacher/principal plays a central role in this process due to their direct contact with pupils and their families as part of their day-to-day duties (i.e. "focal point").¹³⁸

As part of the mayors' campaign, some actions have been implemented by councils, directly working with schools to identify children without birth certificates.¹³⁹ At the same time, village chiefs play a key role in

3. RESEARCH RESULTS



identifying children without birth certificates, given their proximity to the community.¹⁴⁰ Their involvement is particularly essential in cases where mothers give birth at home. In some Muslim communities, imams play a decisive role. At the naming ceremony for newborns, held eight days after birth, they can identify children who still require birth certificates.¹⁴¹

Promising practices

Registers kept by village chiefs: In some villages, such as the Chefferie de **Beedi** and **Jourdain** neighbourhoods in Douala 5, as well as in **Buea**, village chiefs keep their own registers, enabling them to identify children born without birth certificates. They work with neighbourhood chiefs to raise families' awareness of the importance of registering within the legal timeframe and the necessary steps of the procedure.¹⁴² In the commune of **Lagdo**, traditional and religious leaders are involved in identifying children without birth certificates.¹⁴³ In some communes, they use a "village register".¹⁴⁴

Information sessions in community centres: Civil society organisations such as ALVF in **Douala** and RECOPE in **Mandjou**¹⁴⁵ conduct information sessions in community centres and through door-to-door activities.¹⁴⁶ The **PTAs** also support parents in the detection process by sending a summons to the parents of children without birth certificates and by helping them to prepare the files.¹⁴⁷ In **Mbalmayo**, the Amicale des Directeurs de Mbalmayo is validating identification and awareness-raising strategies. The headmaster of the Oyack II public school identifies children without birth certificates, invites their parents to educational talks and helps them to obtain authentic certificates.¹⁴⁸

3. RESEARCH RESULTS

• *Special PAREC operation*

The interviews revealed that the process of detecting pupils without birth certificates was mainly carried out by teachers, with a specific intensification as part of the Special Operation and the mayors' campaign. According to the letter sent to regional delegates by MINEDUB, they were invited to work with the Basic Education District Inspectorates (IAEB) to collect a complete list of pupils without birth certificates from schools.¹⁴⁹

- The regional delegates in **Buea** and **Douala** indicated that their role was limited to implementing the directives received from the capital, although no additional resources had been made available to them (Section 3.3.2).¹⁵⁰ However, at a meeting with over 100 head teachers in Buea, it became clear that these lists had not been systematically prepared for each school, despite the explicit request of the regional delegate.¹⁵¹ In fact, only six headmasters out of the 100 present confirmed that they had taken this step, revealing a degree of confusion as to the expectations associated with drawing up the lists.¹⁵²
- This lack of commitment seems characteristic of the **South West** region, where communication regarding the funding of this work had not been sufficiently clear. As a result, local players were less motivated to participate actively, delaying mobilisation until the situation became critical.¹⁵³
- In the **Eastern** region, for the councils taking part in the Special Operation,¹⁵⁴ le BUNEC worked with school headmasters to draw up the list of CM2 pupils, check their documents and take the necessary steps with the council and hospital (e.g. certificate of non-registration and of apparent age).¹⁵⁵
- During a MINEDUB campaign in the **East** region in 2024, some school headmasters did not want to get involved because there was no payment to help identify children without certificates. Some mayors had not been informed in advance

of the Special Operation.¹⁵⁶ This is in part since, to speed up the process, departmental delegates for basic education were often uninformed by regional delegation¹⁵⁷ or unable to inform school headmasters.¹⁵⁸

Children in crisis situations

Children in crisis situations are more likely to be detected and identified by civil society actors. As part of all its projects, the **CPAoR** facilitates the systematic identification of children who need to be registered at birth, by lobbying all the relevant authorities for registration to be free of charge or for a minimal fee.¹⁵⁹ For its part, UNHCR carries out detection activities mainly in health centres (FOSA).¹⁶⁰ UNHCR has adopted a "continuous registration" approach, which involves registering all children seeking asylum in its own database. Once these families have been integrated into the community, UNHCR has focal points in the villages who can then help to "find" them, support them and complete their files in preparation for the mobile court hearings.¹⁶¹ In **Gado-Badzere**, in the Eastern region, the headmaster of Gado 2A primary school, which has 857 pupils, says he has carried out a census of pupils by calling their parents, trying to assess the children's ages and filling in their details on cards. Among the pupils without birth certificates are children of Cameroonian origin and others of Central African origin. The latter will use their family composition certificate (attestation de composition familiale) signed by the Mayor as a supporting document to be submitted to the council so that they can sit the CM2 (CEP) exams.¹⁶³ UNHCR also issues such certificates (e.g. Gado-Badzere refugee camp) when families arrive in the camp and are then regularised every two years. Very few refugee children born in the Central African Republic have a birth certificate. At the Gado Annexe school, 52 Central African pupils in 2024 were able to register for exams thanks to a "birth certificate" signed on the basis of such certificates, on which their name appears.¹⁶³

3. RESEARCH RESULTS

In the **Far North**, the identification of children without birth certificates can be carried out in schools through the head teachers and the district inspector of basic education. Organisations such as Plan International will then collect the lists in order to identify the children in the communities in which they work.¹⁶⁴ Plan International works with the district authority to undertake a more in-depth examination of the child's background to check that they really do not have birth certificates. Although BUNEC has ten regional offices, their database is not connected and verification therefore requires more intensive work with each family.¹⁶⁵

In the **South West** region, NRC supports the identification of children and has more recently carried out a number of activities with mayors as part of the #MyName campaign.¹⁶⁶

Children from indigenous communities

In Baka communities, identifying children is made more complex by the low school enrolment rate, the frequent absence of civil status documents from parents, the low level of empowerment, parents' lack of means, and irregular school attendance due to the fishing and gathering seasons. In **Abong Mbang**, the SASO Chief, who is responsible for identifying children with special needs, including Baka children, works closely with the social action centres of two secondary schools.¹⁶⁷ A document has been drawn up jointly by the Head of SASO and the secondary schools to record the names of children who have not yet been registered, thereby avoiding duplication. At the same time, the SASO Chief monitors births and helps to report births to the health centres by sending them an identification form.¹⁶⁸ In **Bertoua**, the ANGO ELA Foundation¹⁶⁹ is proposing a model to encourage parents to play a more active role in registering their child by making a contribution in kind, instead of a monetary contribution.¹⁷⁰

Legal
Validation,
registration of
pupils without
a birth
certificate and
certificate
issuance

3.2.3. **STAGE 2** – Legal Validation, registration of pupils without a birth certificate and certificate issuance

This second stage consists of regularising the pupils' situation by legal means aiming to obtain a birth certificate by transcribing the declaratory judgements into the civil status registers.¹⁷¹ The president of the TPI is at the heart of this stage. Once the children have been detected and identified as part of the Special Operation, considerable effort is required to prepare the files, submit them to the courts and obtain the declaratory judgements. Although the project's reference document (February 2024) describes the steps to be taken,¹⁷² their implementation varied significantly depending on the various key actors at the region, division, sub-division or council levels. Key actors' roles and responsibilities are not always clearly defined, creating considerable confusion among stakeholders (Section 3.3.).

This phase focuses on two key actions: preparing cases and holding mobile court hearings.

A. Preparing files

The files include all the documents that should be submitted to the court to support the regularisation application. Various efforts are made to support families in compiling their files, ranging from simple guidance to more proactively completing files (Section 3.3.2). If the parents do not have identity documents or have lost them, they can bring two witnesses to the court. In some communes, they can go to the prefect to fill in a "declaration on honour" and/or ask for two witnesses to confirm the veracity of the parents' background.¹⁷³

The research revealed that it was not clear, either at the regional level or at district or council levels, who was responsible for preparing pupils' files for declaratory judgements (eg. gathering the necessary documents or organising witnesses when documents were missing).¹⁷⁴

3. RESEARCH RESULTS

Some regional delegates believed that only the lists with the names of the children detected and identified - and not a set of documents - should be transferred to the courts.¹⁷⁵ On several occasions, school directors stated that they did not prepare any files, as many of them had not even prepared the detection lists requested by the regional delegate (Section 3.2.2.).¹⁷⁶

In some cases, the mayors or their council representatives explained that it was the basic education inspector at the district level who prepared the files in collaboration with the schools in the council.¹⁷⁷ However, in other interviews, the basic education inspector stated that they had not prepared any files,¹⁷⁸ whereas the mayor's office of the same municipality clarified that this task was the inspectors' responsibility.¹⁷⁹

In other contexts, it was the local council that was responsible for preparing the files, using specific forms and making several visits to the communities to gather the necessary information.¹⁸⁰ This proactive approach was partly motivated by the #MyName campaign. This work was sometimes supported by civil society organisations, such as ALVF, which assisted teachers in their efforts to contact parents and help them to compile the files.¹⁸¹

In Douala 2, secretaries prepared the files and checked their contents before forwarding them to the court.¹⁸²

A more active role for mayors and councils was encouraged, as this enables them to ensure that the necessary information is properly collected for the declaratory judgement, which is not always guaranteed when schools are in charge of this task.¹⁸³ **Several councils suggested that they should be involved from the moment children are detected right through to the follow-up phase, in order to ensure that every child obtains his or her birth certificate.**¹⁸⁴ **This point of view was not shared by members of MINEDUB, who feel that they have this coordinating role, since the initiative concerns their target populations.**¹⁸⁵

Promising practices

Community visits by civil registry offices: At **Douala 5** council, civil registry officers visit local communities to compile files.¹⁸⁶ This work is supported by the ALVF, which works directly with families and village chiefs when documents are missing. At the same time, as part of the #MyName campaign, they have stepped up their efforts, in particular by organising catch-up birth registration days at the council, in the presence of a doctor responsible for providing the certificate of apparent age. In some cases, the local authority's social services can also provide direct support to families (e.g. by providing a certificate stating that they are unable to pay the costs of the declaratory judgement (i.e. a certificate of indigence)).¹⁸⁷

ALVF support in obtaining a birth certificate: The ALVF helped a two-year-old child who had been the victim of sexual abuse to obtain a birth certificate.¹⁸⁸ While the criminal case was before the court, the judge in charge of the case stated that it would not be possible to continue proceedings against the alleged perpetrator without the child (victim) having a legal identity confirmed by a birth certificate. In this case, the court social worker was able to work and coordinate the various administrative bodies within the judicial system to ensure that the child received his birth certificate within five days.

Traditional chiefs as civil registrars: to register children legally, traditional chiefs are sometimes called upon to act as civil registrars.¹⁸⁹ For example, at **Douala 2** council, the imam is a traditional chief and also designated as a civil registrar, enabling him to process birth certificates efficiently in his community.¹⁹⁰ He works closely with his neighbourhood chiefs so that they can inform him of newborn babies and those who need a birth certificate. He encourages other imams to ask families to declare the birth before taking part in naming ceremonies.

3. RESEARCH RESULTS

B. Mobile courts

Several mobile (local and/or high-level) hearings were held. For example, in Douala 5, the hearing was held at the council for 6th year pupils, bringing together magistrates, doctors and council staff. The research highlighted a lack of clarity regarding the jurisdiction of the courts. In Douala, for example, the cases were sent to the TPI,¹⁹¹ while in Buea, the cases were sent to the High Court (Tribunal de Grande Instance (TGI)), which appears to have jurisdiction in the English-speaking regions.¹⁹²

The courts face a number of difficulties. Although files are prepared and received, families do not always attend the hearings, often because they are not informed of the dates or do not have the financial means to cover the cost of transport.¹⁹³ In addition, some school headmasters submit files without involving the parents,¹⁹⁴ which result in parents not attending the mobile court hearings.¹⁹⁵

It is important to clearly communicate to beneficiaries information about the Special Operation process, key dates, and the role of the court in issuing declaratory judgements (e.g. an explanatory leaflet describing the various stages of the process).

Promising practices

To ensure that the process ran smoothly, **Douala 5** Council used pre-filled forms and families were very happy to take selfies with different stakeholders in a non-formal setting.¹⁹⁶ A key success factor is that the council works closely with the schools to collect information and prepare the applications. In addition, the president of one court noted that the fact that the municipality organised the logistics, such as seating and forms, made their task easier.¹⁹⁷ Judges in **Yaoundé** noted that even if some documents and/or procedures were not fully compliant, they applied a flexible approach to ensure that as many children as possible could be regularised (i.e. the lesser of two evils approach).¹⁹⁸ This same logic is adopted by the TPI in **Bertoua**, in the **East**.

Children in crisis situations

The regularisation of children in crisis situations, once detected, requires a tailored approach. For families with children without identity documents, UNHCR reconstitutes their file to capture all major life incidents and provides a “family composition attestation” (Section 3.2.2).¹⁹⁹ In the **Far North** region, the IRC, in partnership with Plan International, works with displaced people, many of whom have lost their identity documents. Birth registration can be carried out through the judicial system or through an administrative procedure. Judicial proceedings through “ordinary hearings” are often costly and time-consuming.²⁰⁰ The IRC covers the costs for the population so that registration is free of charge (e.g. stamps, certificate of apparent age, certificate of non-registration).²⁰¹ **The administrative process introduced by a “circular” to all stakeholders in the Far North has the major advantage of being simpler, faster and less costly (2,500 XAF).**²⁰² According to Plan International, BUNEC prepares forms for families and Plan checks the lists to avoid duplication. On the basis of the list of families, the sub-prefect may, on the basis of a “verbal process”, grant birth certificates as part of a collective act.²⁰³ The files are then sent to the council to be transcribed and the birth certificate issued. One of the challenges of this administrative procedure is that certain groups of children may be excluded, such as children who were not born in Cameroon (for example, refugees or other groups who migrate to the Far North).

In the **East** region, DRC takes charge of the files of these children, particularly in Garoua-Boulai. DRC identifies CM1 and CM2 pupils without birth certificates, with the help of school headmasters. It advances the costs of regularising the registration of birth certificates²⁰⁴ in order to prepare and monitor the files of children in crisis situations. DRC works in partnership with MINAS (CLP) and BUNEC at various stages. DRC is responsible for checking that pupils do not have a birth certificate at the council, compiling

3. RESEARCH RESULTS

the files, filing them with the court, collecting the copies of the judgements, forwarding them to the civil status centre and, finally, collecting the birth certificates. DRC acts as a real focal point throughout the procedure.²⁰⁵

The **Yaoundé VI** and **Yaoundé III** District Councils, through the Decentralised Cooperation and Local Development Support Units, have had very short-term partnerships with the IOM (2023-2024) to deal with the regularisation of the civil documentation of IDPs. This collaboration was based on the project Supporting Internally Displaced Persons and Vulnerable Mobile Populations in Cameroon Centre and East Regions through Assessment and Access to Legal Identity. In the Commune of **Mfou**, the objective of the current executive is to clean up the civil registry.²⁰⁶ Improving collaboration with the court is a key link in achieving this objective. In the **South West** region, there are a number of councils where “mobile civil status units” travel to local communities to provide their services.²⁰⁷ NRC supports the preparation of children’s files.²⁰⁸ The BUNEC regional office has implemented a promising practice by linking regional offices to track the files of displaced people who are highly mobile and for whom it is difficult to complete the CRVS process. It is also difficult for them to return home to obtain original identity documents because of security risks.²⁰⁹ In principle, an identity card can be issued in any locality by the mayor.²¹⁰ For birth registration, if a family starts the procedure in one region, the file can be moved to another region for the declaratory judgement and/or the collection of the birth certificate if necessary.²¹¹ Although BUNEC facilitates the movement of documents, families still have to bear the costs, which can be an obstacle to completing the UBR process.²¹² Another promising practice is where the court has a representative (i.e. a focal point) within the council, facilitating the work of the CRVS.²¹³ In **Tiko**, when the parents initiating the procedure do not have birth certificates, the court is flexible and allows the use of other ID documents, as well as two witnesses.²¹⁴

Children from vulnerable groups including indigenous communities

According to the **Bertoua** civil status centre, around 1,000 declaratory judgements will be issued in 2023-2024, including 90 via the Special Operation. A judge in Bertoua notes that although 156,000 children in the East region do not have birth certificates, it was decided, due to lack of resources, to target the 12,000 children in CM2 for the Operation. Judges are feeling a certain pressure to regularise as many cases as possible during the mobile court hearings, which increases the risk of “botched” procedures and regularisations “no matter what”.²¹⁵

- The management of Baka children’s files at the mobile court hearings is mainly handled by NGOs.²¹⁶ In **Abong Mbang**, for example, the NGO FAIRMED has taken charge of filing the files and distributing the certificates to the communities once they have been recorded in the registers.²¹⁷ In **Batouri**, requests for birth certificates are increasing: in 2022, 4,000; 2023, 6,000; 2024, 10,000 requests. This is mainly due to mass awareness campaigns by the local council and the good condition of the road linking Bertoua to Batouri.²¹⁸ According to MINDDEVEL, the organisation responsible for consolidating civil status records each year, by the 1st quarter of 2024, 1,315 certificates had been issued, and by the second quarter, 6,699 certificates.²¹⁹
- At the **Buea** prison, a school exists for children who are being detained. These children receive support from the regional basic education delegate and basic education inspector to compile their dossiers to obtain a birth certificate so that they could sit their final exams.²²⁰
- **Tiko** town council is working with the army to gain access to people living in creek areas.²²¹ The village chiefs announce the visit and prepare the files with the families. On the day of the visit, council staff gather all the documents needed to register

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the births of children, targeting those who do not attend school. This information is forwarded to the TGI and the mayor covers the costs from his own budget. Once the birth certificate has been obtained, the mayor's office shares it with the village chiefs, who distribute it. Although this practice ensures that children living in inaccessible areas can be registered, it is very costly for the mayor, as the use of army infrastructure adds extra costs to the CRVS procedures.

- To prevent parents from losing the originals, the village chief of **Djibot** keeps a metal box at home in which he keeps the originals of the deeds of the children in his village. In **Mindourou**, the originals are kept in a cupboard belonging to the Baka Azbadja association, which has a drawer for each village in its district.²²²
- In the **Bindia** school, the headmistress took the initiative, after receiving training, to approach MINAS to draw up an identification form for the pupils in her school without birth certificates.²²³
- In **Foumbot**, the mayor has taken the lead and made civil status a priority, equipping the secondary centres with a civil registrar and a civil status secretary.²²⁴
- For vulnerable groups, some councils issue certificates of indigence to facilitate the registration of children without birth certificates.²²⁵

Monitoring
the
registration
of pupils
without birth
certificates

3.2.4. **STAGE 3** – Monitoring the registration of pupils without birth certificates

This stage involves updating the information on pupils who have been regularised by a declaratory judgement. Once they have been registered with the registry office, the birth certificates must be collected and sent to the children's parents. The

research shows that the way in which pupils' files are monitored varies according to the actors involved. However, it is clear that village chiefs play a key role in this process and in disseminating birth certificates within their communities.²²⁶

In some cases, the local council's registrars collect the declaratory judgements from the courts and call the parent(s) to collect their file.²²⁷ **This process is made more effective by the fact that the council works closely with teachers and headteachers to ensure that the files are shared with families, thereby closing the loop.**²²⁸ **For example, this process enabled the city of Buea to regularise the situation of pupils in years 5 and 6 during Special Operation.**²²⁹ Although parents are informed that the birth certificate can be collected from the registry office, some do not pay the fees for issuing it, do not come to collect it or turn up without an identity card enabling them to collect their child's certificate.²³⁰

Some stakeholders suggested that a focal point should be set up in the education sector to ensure consistent follow-up, from the identification of pupils to the transmission of files, based on established relationships with families.²³¹ When civil society is involved and works directly with families, it can retrieve the files from the council and redistribute the birth certificates to the parents.²³²

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Promising practices

In a **Yaoundé** court, a separate register of declaratory judgements issued as part of the Special Operation has been set up. This register enables rapid and effective follow-up, particularly in the event of questions or incidents during the transcription phase.

The municipality of **Akono** has set up a birth registration monitoring system. Information relating to the date on which the birth certificate was issued and withdrawn is systematically monitored.²³⁴

The commune of **Mbankomo** automatically transfers all civil status statistics to BUNEC.²³⁵

Children in crisis situations

In the **Far North** region, once the file is complete, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) carries out follow-up activities to ensure that the child finally receives a birth certificate.²³⁶ The IRC physically collects the birth certificate from the council and transfers the files to the partners who will distribute them to the families.²³⁷

In the **South West** region, for cases involving NRC beneficiaries, the organisation will carry out follow-up activities to ensure that families receive birth certificates. In cases where families have moved and/or cannot be found, NRC keeps the files in its offices.²³⁸ This is also the case with DRC, which carries out this follow-up in the **Eastern** region.²³⁹

Children in vulnerable situations

In **Togo**, RECOPE members are responsible for monitoring the files.²⁴⁰ A change of governance within RECOPE has led to difficulties.²⁴¹ In 2023, of the 207 birth declarations prepared, only 60 were filed with the court. This situation occurred due to missing information about the parents in certain files, making them inadmissible, and by the failure of the former RECOPE president to return certain files, blocking processing.²⁴²

During MINEDUB's 2024 campaign in the **East** region, the Regional Delegation of Basic Education followed up on the applications submitted, working closely with the school headmasters to make the process more efficient.²⁴³



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Follow-up and Case Resolution for Incomplete or Rejected Registrations

3.2.5. STAGE 4 – Follow-up and Case Resolution for Incomplete or Rejected Registrations

This stage concerns pupils who have not been detected, where identified pupils have not received the necessary support to complete the regularisation procedure and includes students who have received an unfavourable ruling on their regularisation. **It is**

therefore essential that a follow-up mechanism is put in place to support all children who have not been able to go through one of the previous stages.

A number of factors explain why some students' files did not result in them obtaining a birth certificate.²⁴⁴ In some cases, the applications came from an inappropriate council (i.e. not place of birth), which made the judge incompetent to rule on the application for regularisation. In addition, the Special Operation, which was limited to CM2/Class 6 pupils was therefore unable to include all pupils.²⁴⁵ The follow-up of these files is also complicated by the lack of interconnection between councils and lack of resources (section 3.3.2.).²⁴⁶ **A simple solution would be to provide the families concerned with an information sheet explaining the steps to be taken. The social services of councils could also play an important role in guiding families through these procedures.**²⁴⁷

Promising practice

Buea council has a “social work” section that supports families and helps them apply for grants to cover the costs of birth registration procedures.²⁴⁸

Children in crisis situations

In the **Far North** region, if families not on the list are sent to the sub-prefect to benefit from the administrative procedure (for example, the parents do not have identity documents), they have the option of going through “ordinary hearings” with declaratory judgements. In this case, the families can be supported by the extended family, village chiefs and neighbours.²⁴⁹



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3.3. PREREQUISITES FOR CATCHING UP ON BIRTH REGISTRATION VIA THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

Alongside the five stages described above, it is essential to understand the four fundamental prerequisites, detailed below, to ensure that the process is implemented effectively.

3.3.1. Clear institutional arrangements and coordination mechanisms between actors

Existing coordination mechanisms

A cross-sectoral approach is essential for the implementation of a catch-up process as envisaged by the Special Operation as it involves the collaboration of many Ministries.²⁵⁰ The project's reference document emphasises that specific legal provisions confer precise mandates on the vast majority of Ministries.²⁵¹ For example, MINDDEVEL, which is responsible for decentralisation, plays a key role in the provision of civil status services at the council level. BUNEC is responsible for controlling and verifying the regularity of civil status registers, as well as compiling and managing the national civil status files.²⁵²

In addition to State actors, Cameroon collaborates with numerous technical and financial partners. These include United Nations agencies (such as UNFPA, UNICEF and UNHCR, IOM, WHO, etc.), development partners such as the World Bank, civil society organisations (national and international), community and traditional players, as well as the media, particularly community radio stations.

A good example is in the East region, the regional BUNEC coordinates the players by holding, at known intervals, meetings of the regional platform of civil registry players, in which institutional players, civil society and a few opinion leaders participate. These meetings are always chaired by the Governor's office and BUNEC provides the Technical Secretariat.²⁵³ The role of this platform is to facilitate the coordination and monitoring of the various civil status interventions

at the regional level, concerning all children, including those in crisis situations and from indigenous communities.²⁵⁴

Coordination mechanisms within the framework of the Special Operation

The organisation chart in the Special Operation's reference report shows that a series of coordination mechanisms have been set up at the national and local level (regional, district, communal) to support the implementation of the operation.

At the national level, a coordination committee bringing together all the actors representing relevant Ministries has been set up in Yaoundé. This committee meets monthly and relies on dedicated working groups (general coordination, technical assistance, etc.) to ensure the transmission of information and resource allocation in a hierarchical manner to the decentralised levels (section 3.2.1.2.). In addition to the physical meetings, a WhatsApp group has been set up to enable real-time communication and rapid reaction to the Ministries' mandates.²⁵⁵ Each Minister has prepared an official letter to their regional counterparts to ensure harmonised dissemination of the guidelines.

At the regional and local level, a one-stop shop has been set up, bringing together the main players under the supervision of the sub-prefect.²⁵⁶ In addition, ten WhatsApp groups were set up with a representative of MINEDUB and PAREC at the central level, acting as a hotline to resolve practical problems.²⁵⁷ Issues not resolved at the regional level could be passed on to the central WhatsApp group, where the focal point from the relevant Ministry would intervene to take the necessary action.²⁵⁸ For example, in September 2024, the Governor of BUNEC in the Eastern Region invited all the stakeholders to a consultation meeting within BUNEC to take stock of birth registration and discuss the difficulties encountered and the way forward. The meeting was attended by BUNEC, MINEDUB, DRAS, the Court, MINDDEVEL, MINSANTE and some NGOs.²⁵⁹

3. RESEARCH RESULTS

However, the implementation of these mechanisms has encountered several obstacles. Some councils were not informed or contacted to check that children had not already been entered in the registers.²⁶⁰ Creating more confusion, the planned communication channels did not always function smoothly or uniformly.²⁶¹ **To remedy this, it is recommended that the essential information be centralised in a user manual, including contact details for the various coordination committees, so that any questions or problems encountered can be dealt with effectively.**²⁶²

The political will to continue this Special Operation is clear. This determination is illustrated by the creation of a Working Group led by MINEDUB (Annex 3). **One of the determining factors for the success of future initiatives to catch up birth registration will be the clear identification of MINEDUB as the lead agency since the needs of pupils fall explicitly within its remit.**²⁶³

3.3.2. Resources and community engagement required for birth registration

Mobilising resources and encouraging community engagement at the local level

Funding for civil registration activities relies mainly on local budgets (mayors are considered to be primarily responsible for the CRVS), which are often insignificant or non-existent.²⁶⁴ However, while Ministries such as MINDDEVEL grant annual funds to councils (for example, XAF 100 million per year), their allocation remains at the discretion of the mayors, who often do not have specific budget lines for civil registration.²⁶⁵ To guarantee minimum funding, it is suggested that **central Ministries allocate a fixed percentage (e.g. 1 to 2% of MINDDEVEL or MINSANTE funds) to CRVS activities in councils.**²⁶⁶

In some councils, such as Buea in the South West region, the provision of CRVS services is not explicitly integrated into local budgets. Although six employees work in the registry office, these human resources are not clearly planned in the budget.²⁶⁷ **An accurate assessment of the specific costs associated with CRVS activities would be useful to ensure effective budgeting.**

Councils may also receive funding from the relevant Ministries or technical and financial partners for one-off initiatives. Better coordination could be ensured if councils had the opportunity to give their opinion during the MINAS accreditation process, while being informed of the activities planned by technical and financial partners in their localities.²⁶⁸

Another major challenge is the need to encourage mayors to prioritise CRVS among other urgent needs, such as WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) projects or the construction improvement of public infrastructure. **One solution could be to raise awareness of the importance of universal birth registration to motivate mayors to make it a priority.** As part of the 2024 Mayors' Forum, several initiatives to raise awareness and change social behaviour have recently been launched or reinforced (Section 3.2.1.).²⁶⁹ **Other incentives could include the introduction of accountability mechanisms, such as village chiefs presenting the results of their CRVS efforts at quarterly council meetings.**²⁷⁰

Funding for secondary civil registry centres is mainly the responsibility of the community applying to set them up. The creation of these centres is seen as an honour for the community and so they often do this themselves.²⁷¹ These centres do not receive a regular budget from the Ministries, although they are supposed to receive a token fee (XAF 100 per certificate drawn up).²⁷² However, they do receive logistical support from BUNEC, particularly for the supply of registers, and may receive one-off funding for specific projects. This lack of sustainable funding, based mainly on the goodwill of councils and communities, is a major obstacle to the stability of CRVS services in Cameroon.

3. RESEARCH RESULTS

Mayors can access **additional funding for their CRVS activities via the FEICOM, which supports various initiatives, such as the development of public infrastructure or capacity building.**²⁷³ For example, several councils have obtained FEICOM funding to build their councils, including spaces dedicated to the CRVS in the “model architectural plans”. Examples include the municipalities of Garoua Boulai, Moutourwa and Tonga. **Mayors need more support to take advantage of the opportunities offered by FEICOM.**

Another way of ensuring adequate allocation of resources is to explicitly integrate CRVS activities into municipal budgets.²⁷⁴ A pilot project is underway in eight “Child-Friendly Cities” in Cameroon,²⁷⁵ where technical support is being provided on three priorities. The integration of minimum operational costs for CRVS as a sub-priority in these councils could serve as a model for other councils.

Resources deployed (or required) to implement the Special Operation

As part of the Special Operation, funding of XAF 600,000,000 was allocated by PAREC, via the World Bank, to various players. These funds were divided between several Ministries, including XAF 400,000,000 for MINJUSTICE and XAF 120,000,000 for MINEDUB.²⁷⁶ Thanks to this financial commitment, the barrier of “direct costs” has been lifted for beneficiaries, facilitating free access to the regularisation process for pupils. The funds were used to cover various activities, tailored to the needs of each Ministry. For example, for MINEDUB, the budget included costs in the form of lump sums for:²⁷⁷

- The signing of apparent age certificates by doctors;
- The processing of certain files relating to the activities of the main registry office (i.e. issuing birth certificates);
- The IAEB produces the forms and other documents that make up the basic student file;
- Travel expenses for the IAEB and the school headmaster; and
- Support for the administrative authority.

For its part, MINJUSTICE benefited from PAREC funds to finance the mobile court hearings needed to draw up civil status declarations.²⁷⁸ In addition, cost reductions have been negotiated with other Ministries. For example, the cost of certificates of apparent age was reduced from XAF 600 to XAF 300 per child thanks to the commitment of the Ministry of Health.²⁷⁹

The funds allocated were redistributed to the regional counterparts of the various Ministries on the basis of a proportional approach regarding the number of pupils without birth certificates. The regions most affected thus received larger allocations. This system was then cascaded down to the sub-division and council level.²⁸⁰ Although this distribution mechanism is designed to be equitable, it still does not systematically take account of local needs.²⁸¹ For example, although traditional chiefs play a key role in supporting the process, they have not received direct funding for their contributions.²⁸² Moreover, councils did not always receive the necessary funds. In the city of Buea, for example, the Operation would have been severely limited had it not been for the initiative of the mayor, who financed the purchase of additional registers for the BUNEC regional office.²⁸³ In other localities, however, the funds allocated made it possible to cover the mobile court hearings successfully.²⁸⁴ **To improve transparency and efficiency in the distribution of resources, a precise and quantified estimate of needs by region before the funds are deployed would be useful.**

Given the budgetary constraints faced by local stakeholders, the continuation and sustainability of this Special Operation aimed at clearing the backlog of around **1.4 million pupils without birth certificates** will depend on continued technical and financial support. The World Bank, via PAREC, will be essential in guaranteeing this support. The investment of **XAF 600,000,000** has already proved effective, as demonstrated by the significant number of pupils regularised in a relatively short space of time.²⁸⁵

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3.3.3. Capacity building to achieve birth registration

Capacity building in general

In addition to an effective coordination mechanism (section 3.3.1.) and an adequate budget (section 3.3.2.), strengthening the skills of the actors involved in the CRVS is fundamental. At present, some ad hoc training is provided, in particular hospital registrars and village chiefs. For example, ALVF includes CRVS training in its support programmes for vulnerable families as part of the fight against gender-based violence.²⁸⁶

An online initiative is also available to support mayors in developing local action plans in line with the Mayors' Charter, developed by UNICEF WCARO and CHIP.²⁸⁷ These plans, which include budget estimates, are a key outcome of the #MyName campaign and should incorporate interoperability efforts, such as those implemented in schools.²⁸⁸ Following this training, local players, such as BUNEC's regional offices and Vital Stratégies, will in turn be able to build the capacity of players at the regional and local level.²⁸⁹

Capacity building as part of the Special Operation

Although a meeting was organised to finalise the reference document for the Special Operation²⁹⁰ and discuss its stages with the main players, no specific training was set up due to time constraints.²⁹¹ This lack of targeted training has contributed to confusion among local stakeholders. In this respect, the regional delegate for basic education in **Buea** stresses that in-service training in the education sector must become a priority, as teachers, who are in direct contact with pupils and their families, play a key role in this process.²⁹² According to the project report, 10 regional capacity-building seminars are already planned to address these shortcomings.²⁹³ **These seminars could be made permanent by drawing up a user manual, accompanied by short basic or ongoing training provided by BUNEC's regional offices.**

Children in crisis situations

Coordination mechanisms

UNICEF, as co-coordinator for child protection (CPAoR), leads a 95-member group that supports the efforts of institutional and State actors and addresses the issue of birth registration in crisis contexts.²⁹⁴ In the past, a civil documentation working group, made up of representatives from the relevant Ministries, UN agencies, and civil society played a central role in overall coordination.²⁹⁵ While traditional chiefs promote dialogue between divergent groups and support birth registration initiatives, there is currently no protocol in place for the registration of births.²⁹⁶ There is currently no formal memorandum of understanding between the various players, including the government.²⁹⁷ Efforts are currently underway to reactivate this group. A strategic consultative meeting was held at the end of 2024. **It is recommended that this group be provided with permanent resources so that it can coordinate actions effectively, particularly in crisis situations.**

In the **North-West** and **South-West** regions, UNICEF and Street Child co-lead the CPAoR with 65 members.²⁹⁸ Within this framework, local coordination committees, such as the one in Buea, bring together mayors, representatives of the judiciary, UNICEF, education, traditional chiefs and civil society (e.g. NRC).²⁹⁹ However, coordination remains a major challenge, as many technical and financial partners implement activities without systematically informing the mayors (section 3.2.1.1.).³⁰⁰

In the **Far North** region, a working group on child protection, led by MINAS (DRAS) and co-led by UNICEF with Plan International as co-facilitator, has been set up.³⁰¹ Coordination takes place mainly via a WhatsApp platform, enabling information to be exchanged in real time. **To improve collaboration between all the players involved, it is essential to adopt a common, multidimensional and inclusive strategy. This would**

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facilitate better coordination and an effective distribution of responsibilities.³⁰²

Resources deployed or required for civil registration

Several international organisations provide financial support for specific activities relating to the registration of children's births in the context of conflict, such as United Nations agencies (UNHCR and UNICEF), development organisations (GIZ and the World Bank) and civil society actors (RDC, IRC, NRC and Plan International). CRVS activities can be integrated into specific initiatives or included in broader projects, such as those focusing on child protection or the fight against violence.

Capacity building for stakeholders

No specific training on the CRVS in crisis situations has been identified.³⁰³

Children from indigenous communities

Further research is needed to better identify the specific needs of indigenous children and to formulate appropriate recommendations with regard to the four prerequisites. However, in the **Eastern** region, it was found that the regional BUNEC plays a central role in coordinating the players, particularly through the platform which also includes these children (see above). In terms of resources, funding for birth registration initiatives in indigenous communities remains a priority. However, no training specifically dedicated to CRVS for vulnerable groups, in particular indigenous communities, has yet been identified.³⁰⁴

3.3.4 Monitoring mechanisms

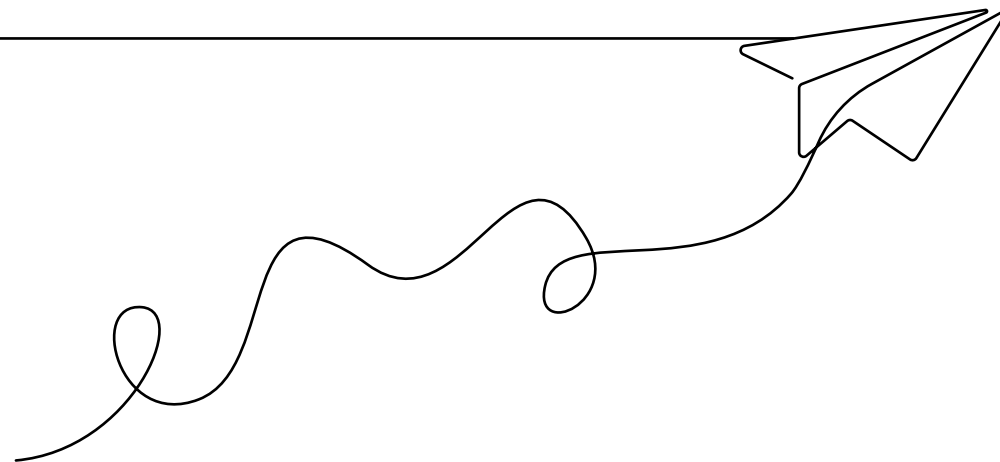
There is a need for indicators to track overall progress of the catch-up birth registration mechanism beyond the individual cases (i.e. stage 4). This could include indicators such as the percentage of previously unregistered school-aged children who have been registered through the school-based initiative which helps measures effectiveness in reaching the target population. Another indicator could include the percentage of birth registration records submitted by schools that are complete, accurate, and accepted into the national CRVS system, which helps tracks data quality and system integrity. Another indicator could focus on the percentage of participating schools with at least one trained staff member responsible for supporting birth registration activities. Having such an indicator facilitates the monitoring of capacity and readiness at the school level. Other indicators could include turnaround time from file submission to certificate issuance and number of schools/staff trained on registration facilitation.

4. GUIDELINES

This report proposes a structured model consisting of five stages, supported by prerequisites, to guide the implementation of catch-up birth registration for children whose births were not registered within the legally prescribed timeframe. It draws on field-based research and documents a range of practices—some recommended for replication, others discouraged or explicitly to be avoided—as part of a future catch-up process, particularly in the context of special operations. Specific attention is given to children in crisis situations and from indigenous communities (referenced in blue and green, respectively), based on qualitative data collected during stakeholder interviews.

The proposed guidelines are aligned with Cameroon's **Law No. 2024/016**, adopted on 23 December 2024, and the **National Strategic Plan 2025–2029**, both of which mark significant progress in civil registration system reform. The new law introduces key innovations, including:

- The digitalisation of the civil registration system and the introduction of a **unique identification number (UIN)** aim to improve the traceability of individuals across their life course, prevent duplicate records, enable secure data linkage across sectors (such as with the education sector through EMIS), and facilitate timely access to birth certificates and other essential services.
- A time-bound extension of legal deadlines for birth registration, targeted to underserved regions or populations, to support the reduction of the current backlog of unregistered children—while maintaining the long-term objective of timely registration.
- Simplified and modernised procedures, particularly for vulnerable populations; and
- Strengthened interoperability with the health and education sectors to facilitate birth declarations at maternity level and improve tracking of unregistered children.



Catch-up registration through schools is proposed as a **medium-term remedial measure**, conducted within the school calendar, to address the current backlog. Once the backlog is cleared, Cameroon is encouraged to institutionalise a system to manage **exceptional late registrations** through existing legal channels, such as judicial procedures, in line with national legislation and international CRVSID standards.

4. GUIDELINES

Activities to raise awareness about catch-up birth registration process

STAGE 0: Raising public awareness of the importance of registering with the civil registry - at birth or later in the process.

The #MyName campaign plays a crucial role and has been widely publicised across the country. In addition, the involvement of mayors has helped to encourage them to give particular priority to this approach. Other incentives could include the introduction of accountability mechanisms, such as village chiefs presenting the results of their CRVS efforts at quarterly meetings at the council.

However, not all the stakeholders or all of the population were informed about the Special Operation. It is therefore essential to communicate in a clear and accessible way to beneficiaries the key dates, stages in the process and any other relevant information relating to this type of operation. This could be done, for example, by means of a leaflet describing the various stages of the process and the role of all the players in the chain.

Situations to replicate

- Awareness-raising campaigns are held using various means such as radio spots, television, social media, and in places prior to school enrolment. For example, meetings between RECOPE members and school headmasters are held at the beginning of the year.
- Arrangements are in place to help parents declare births and to provide advice, support and guidance throughout the process. Through the health sector, this approach must be integrated into prenatal health checks and at the time of delivery.
- Officials at secondary civil registry centres raise awareness among families when women have not given birth at the health centre.
- Village chiefs are involved in raising awareness in their communities. For example, school headmasters post announcements in churches and mosques.

- SASO raises awareness among families in indigenous communities by approaching community leaders and using tools such as image boxes.

- Civil society organisations such as ALVF and RECOPE conduct information sessions in community centres and door-to-door activities.

- It is essential to make people aware of the separation between the registration of births and the registration of children on electoral rolls from the age of 20.

Situations to avoid

- Awareness-raising materials are not available in national or local languages, nor in child-friendly versions.
- Civil registrars are not trained in birth registration procedures.
- Women in crisis situations are not informed about the procedure for registering the birth of their child.
- Awareness-raising and/or child identification activities by the authorities and NGOs are not coordinated.

Situations to be prohibited

- The procedure is unnecessarily complex, particularly in terms of documentation, geographical location and the time required.
- Headteachers have excessive responsibilities and limited resources.

4. GUIDELINES

Early detection of pupils without birth certificates

STAGE 1: Identifying students without birth certificates

School headmasters play a central role because of their direct contact with families, often supported by village chiefs, imams, certain NGOs and civil society organisations that raise awareness and identify the children concerned. Specific initiatives, such as those

by mayors and the PAREC special operation, have helped to intensify these efforts. It was noted that this stage was often supported by NGOs or civil society players, such as UNHCR or SASO, which work with local authorities on behalf of children in crisis situations or those from indigenous communities.

Situations to replicate

- The child is detected as soon as it is born, thanks to the involvement of religious and customary authorities.
- A unique identification number exists for each child, making it easier to monitor the child's situation in various areas such as health, education and civil status.
- A focal point for civil status is identified within the schools.
- An IT platform for identifying and training managers has been set up and is operational.
- A hotline dedicated to the platform to offer assistance and advice has been set up and is operational.
- The detection of children without birth certificates must be carried out in compliance with the rules relating to the protection of their personal data.
- When headteachers or teachers detect a child without a birth certificate, they should also find out if there are any other children in the family and try to regularise them at the same time.
- The Council works closely with schools to gather information and prepare applications.

Civil registry offices travel to local communities to compile children's files.

Imams play an active role in helping to identify children who do not yet have a birth certificate. Designating them as civil registrars enables them to process birth certificates efficiently in their communities.

Village chiefs keep their own records of children born without birth certificates.

Catch-up birth registration days are organised by the ALVF at the council, in the presence of a doctor responsible for providing the certificate of apparent age. The ALVF provides assistance in obtaining the birth certificate.

BUNEC works closely with school headmasters to draw up a list of pupils without birth certificates.

Consultation meetings are being held to take stock of birth registrations and discuss the difficulties encountered and future prospects, with the participation of BUNEC, MINEDUB, DRAS, the court, MINDDEVEL, MINSANTE and civil society associations.

UNHCR carries out detection activities mainly in health centres and works with focal points in villages, through an approach of continually registering children seeking asylum.

The family composition certificate is the supporting document to be attached to the regularisation application.

The SASO chiefs responsible for identifying children from indigenous communities work closely with the social action departments of secondary schools.

A system of contributions in kind instead of money is being introduced at the local level to encourage parents to participate more actively in their child's registration.

4. GUIDELINES

Situations to avoid

- There is a lack of user manuals or tutorials for setting up the process.
- Councils do not play an active role in checking that the necessary information is correctly collected for the declaratory judgement.
- Lists have not been drawn up to identify the exact number of children without birth certificates.
- Councils are not informed about special operations.
- Regional delegates do not have the resources to support the implementation of special operations.
- State actors do not receive information from humanitarian actors about beneficiaries of humanitarian aid who require civil status documents.
- SASO chiefs and other agents do not have vehicles at their disposal to travel to communities in rural areas.
- Councils are not informed or asked to check that children from indigenous communities are not already on the registers.

Situations to be prohibited

- Detection does not begin when a pupil without a birth certificate starts school.
- There is a lack of resources to support school headmasters in their task of detecting children without birth certificates and providing the relevant training.

Legal
Validation,
registration of
pupils without
a birth
certificate and
certificate
issuance

STAGE 2: Registering students without a birth certificate

Although some promising practices have emerged, disparities in the approaches and responsibilities of the players hamper the effectiveness of the process at this stage. The lack of clarity and coordination between schools, municipalities and judicial authorities has often led to confusion and delays.

Situations to replicate

- A flexible procedure, specifying the jurisdiction of the courts and other players to issue declaratory and/or declaratory judgements, would be necessary and would facilitate this process.
- A focal point within the community already identified for the preparation of the application.
- Child protection stakeholders play a role in the process.
- A sufficient number of civil registrars are responsible for entering birth certificates in the registers.
- Civil society associations, as focal points, work closely with MINAS and BUNEC to compile children's files.
- Mobile civil registry units to provide services and help with the compilation of files.
- The court has a focal point within the council, which facilitates the work of the CRVS.
- CSO carry out follow-up activities to ensure that the child finally receives a birth certificate.
- In high-risk areas, town councils are working with the army to gain access to the population.
- Identify ways for mayors to encourage vulnerable groups to take part in the regularisation process, such as offering a packet of rice or candles.

4. GUIDELINES

- Secondary centres are equipped with a civil registrar and a civil secretary.

Situations to avoid

- Mobile court hearings are held in the absence of the necessary resources.
- The cost of regularising birth registration is too high.
- Mobile hearings are the rule when they should remain an exceptional measure used only in specific circumstances (e.g. remote or crisis-affected areas). Any catch-up cases should be dealt with at ordinary hearings in alignment with national legislation to preserve the regular functioning and integrity of the civil registration and justice systems.
- Regularisation applications are submitted to the courts as part of awareness-raising campaigns, without first checking with the civil registrar that the child is not already on the registers.
- Following the judgement, the parents are not informed of the need to go and have the judgement transcribed at the registry office and to look for the birth certificate.
- Solutions to facilitate data collection have not been found (availability of computer equipment, filling in data on a mobile phone or tablet, sharing the connection via the mobile to a computer, etc.).
- Once the judgement has been entered in the register, the civil registrar does not sign the birth certificate.
- The players who intervene in crisis situations are not coordinated.

Situations to be prohibited

- There is no system in place to prevent abuses such as the use of mobile courts for other purposes.
- Involvement of unauthorised intermediaries, including self-proclaimed “brokers” in the registration process - often acting for financial gain or with fraudulent intent - poses a serious threat to the integrity of the civil registration system and the legal identity of children (e.g. producing fictitious documents, falsifying a child’s age). Measures should be taken to strengthen oversight, increase public awareness, and enforce penalties against fraud, while ensuring that families can access legitimate support through formal channels.
- NGOs that are not supervised or coordinated under the scheme act as obstacles to monitoring cases.
- An additional fee will be charged to complete the check-in process.
- Secondary civil registry centres are not provided with sufficient human and financial resources.
- Civil registrars at secondary centres in crisis situations are not appointed.

4. GUIDELINES

Monitoring the registration of pupils without birth certificates

STAGE 3: Monitoring student registration

Putting in place more systematic mechanisms, such as focal points dedicated to managing and monitoring children's files in all the sectors involved in the process (education, justice, civil status) and improving the way files are kept using specialised registers (ideally computerised), could further

strengthen the coherence and sustainability of efforts.

Situations to replicate

- Judges, IAEBs and civil registrars regularly exchange information on the number of judgements handed down at ordinary, special and mobile court hearings.
- Information is sent by the registrar to the schools about pupils who have been regularised and who have obtained a birth certificate.
- The school automatically fills in and updates the student's details.
- Judgements are transmitted by official means using a document that provides proof of transmission and archiving (e.g. dispatch notes).
- Original birth certificates are kept in secure locations.

Situations to avoid

- The maximum time limits for parents to collect their child's birth certificate are not clearly defined.
- The platform is not updated by the school following the regularisation of pupils.
- Parents are not accompanied when or made aware of the importance of collecting the civil register section.
- The civil registry centres do not ensure regular monitoring of IDPs who are in their area.
- People are not aware of the separation between the registration of births and the registration on electoral rolls from the age of 20.

Situations to be prohibited

- Copy of the birth certificate is not sent to the competent authority.



4. GUIDELINES

Follow-up
and Case
Resolution for
Incomplete or
Rejected
Registrations

STAGE 4: Follow-up for all students who have not passed one of the stages

This stage highlights the need to put in place specific follow-up mechanisms for pupils who have not been able to pass through the previous stages of regularisation. This may be due to a lack of detection at the school level, unfavourable court rulings or administrative difficulties at the civil status level. Solutions such as better guidance for families, strengthening the social services within councils to provide support and making clear information available on the steps to take can considerably improve results.

Situations to replicate

- Appropriate solutions tailored to the local context are available to support families facing these challenges, particularly in rural areas.
- The Conventions of the International Commission on Civil Status (ICCS), which enable cooperation between States and automatic recognition of civil status records, have been ratified.
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of the various players - by means of a protocol - both within and outside the framework of Special Operations.
- Set up "civil status" focal points in each sector/with each stakeholder involved, including in the communities, to ensure coherent management and coordination.
- Develop tools - such as village notebooks - to record births and strengthen mechanisms for recording children without birth certificates.
- Support from start to finish. For example, RECOPEs, community child protection networks, are key players in raising community awareness of universal birth registration and in supporting the detection and registration of school-age children from birth and afterwards.³⁰⁵

- Rationalise the costs of Special Operations and clarify legal fees for late registrations through circulars from MINJUSTICE.

Situations to avoid

- Children at risk of being left behind, in particular migrant children, nomadic children and pupils in Koranic schools, are not targeted by the scheme.
- An insufficient number of civil registrars in rural areas to meet needs.
- Ignoring official recognition mechanisms to encourage local players, such as village chiefs or registrars.
- Lack of support from the Governor and the President of the Court of Appeal to facilitate Special Operations in these areas.

Situations to be prohibited

- Children not attending school are not included in the scheme.
- Birth records spanning several generations are lacking.
- The system is becoming the norm, encouraging late registrations.
- Consuls and ambassadors are not involved in implementing the scheme or monitoring foreign pupils without birth certificates.

4. GUIDELINES

PREREQUISITES for catching up on birth registration via the school system

1. Clear institutional arrangements and coordination mechanisms between actors

Coordination committees exist but there is a need to improve collaboration between all the players involved. A common, multidimensional and inclusive strategy would enable better coordination and a more effective distribution of the responsibilities between players involved in the process. The creation of focal points - in the form of a trio, MINEDUB, MINJUSTICE, MINDDEVEL - (for example, at the level of the Operation's Working Group) is essential to ensure the proper coordination of this type of operation and the quick resolution of problems when they arise. Finally, a practical guide or protocol, adapted to local conditions, would facilitate the implementation of special operations by including the contact details of the coordination committees. At the same time, communication could continue through WhatsApp groups.

- Develop a strategy to optimise collaboration between the various players, with a clear division of responsibilities.
- Centralise essential information in a single document, including the contact details of the coordination committees, to make it easier to manage questions and problems.
- Explicitly identify MINEDUB as the lead agency for birth registration in schools and among pupils, to ensure centralised and efficient management.

2. Financial and logistical resources, including community engagement

To ensure effective birth registration, it is crucial to mobilise sufficient resources at the local level. At present, funding for CRVS activities relies mainly on municipal budgets, which are often insufficient or non-existent. It would be necessary for central Ministries to allocate a fixed portion of their funds (e.g. 1-2% of MINDDEVEL or MINSANTE budgets) specifically for CRVS at the local level. In addition, although ad hoc funding is provided through initiatives such as the Special Operation, the distribution of these funds remains disorganised and does not always take account of local needs, particularly in crisis areas. Better budget planning, including specific cost assessments and explicit integration of CRVS activities into municipal budgets, would be essential to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of registration services.

- Allocate sustainable resources to coordinate actions in favour of children in crisis situations.
- Provide for an adequate and fixed percentage of the budgets of central Ministries (MINDDEVEL, MINSANTE) to be dedicated to CRVS activities in municipalities.
- Carry out an accurate assessment of the costs of CRVS activities to ensure appropriate budget planning in order to calculate the budget to be allocated.
- Ask each region to provide a cost estimate of its needs before funds are deployed, to ensure greater transparency and efficiency.
- Encourage the use of other modes of financing, such as FEICOM, to fund CRVS initiatives, like capacity building and infrastructure improvements.
- The computerisation of the civil registry is one approach to combating duplication. It must be sped up.

4. GUIDELINES

3. Capacity building and operational tools

Building the capacity of those involved in the CRVS is essential to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of UBR efforts. Although occasional training courses exist, they are still insufficient, particularly for local players such as teachers and village chiefs. It is crucial to integrate an ongoing and systematic training programme, adapted to local needs, in order to strengthen the skills of public officials, particularly in the context of Special Operations. A reference manual and regional seminars could ensure better preparation and coordination.

- To perpetuate the existing training courses by creating a user manual and organising basic and ongoing training courses by BUNEC's regional offices or through PAREC training courses for the various players involved in the process.
- Develop standardised protocols for transferring cases to the courts responsible for declaratory judgements.
- Effectively communicating the stages and key dates of future Special Operations through media such as leaflets, radio and television broadcasts, so as to be able to prepare and anticipate procedures in advance.

4. Monitoring mechanisms

There is a need for indicators to track overall progress of the catch-up birth registration mechanism beyond the individual cases (i.e. stage 4). Potential indicators are mentioned in section 3.3.4.



5. CONCLUSION

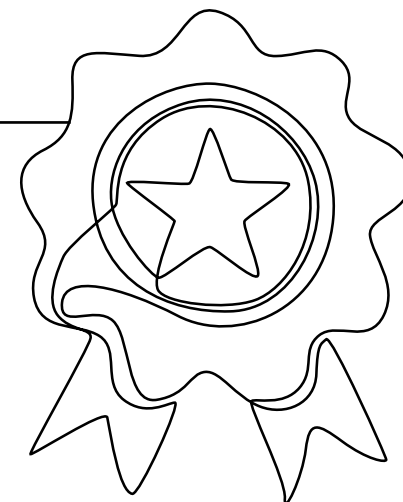
The “Special PAREC Operation” in 2024 led by MINEDUB in partnership with MINJUSTICE, MINDDEVEL, UNICEF Cameroon and the World Bank, aimed to catch-up on the backlog of pupils without a birth certificate at the end of primary school (CM2 and Class 6). This initiative has made it possible to deal effectively with the problem by guaranteeing children a legal identity - a fundamental right - and reinforcing their equitable access to essential services such as education, justice and health. Thanks to the 544 mobile court hearings organised in the first months of the operation, 49,311 children had their situation regularised, representing 84.25% of the expected cases. The research supported by the Technical Working Group including UNICEF Cameroon and undertaken by the CHIP team between September and December 2024 highlights the considerable impact of the initiative. This impact is due to in particular to the involvement of various stakeholders: the education community (school headmasters, teachers, PTA), local institutions (sub-prefects, mayors, civil registrars, judges, court clerks, etc.) and local communities (leaders, religious chiefs). Interoperability between Ministries, supported by technical and financial partners, played a key role, reinforced by the creation of a working group dedicated to monitoring the operation. The second phase of the Operation is currently underway.

This initiative is part of a wider dynamic, supported by complementary efforts by State actors, international organisations and NGOs. New legislation to modernise Cameroon’s civil registry system accompanies these efforts to provide a lasting solution to the problem of unregistered births and reduce social and geographical disparities. These efforts include children living in remote areas, in crisis situations or in marginalised communities, such as indigenous populations. However, challenges remain to ensure sustainable and inclusive implementation. Around 8,000 pupils have still not been regularised, and school-age children outside the education system, such as those on migratory journeys or apprenticeships, remain

excluded. It is imperative to formalise these operations on the basis of a clear and sustainable model, based on well-defined stages and a strong commitment from all stakeholders, particularly local players. This report proposes detailed guidelines for institutionalising this process at the national level and better equipping those involved.

In the long term and once the backlog is addressed, the education sector should remain a critical partner, through an integrated and automated mechanism, not ad hoc mobilisations. As such the research proposes that Cameroon develop a Legal and Policy framework enabling school-based registration for exceptional cases that may arise.

Sustained efforts should be made to raise parents’ awareness of the importance of registering births within the legal time limits, so that this transitional measure does not become a permanent solution. By pursuing this dynamic, Cameroon, in line with the CRC, ACRWC and the SDGs 4 and 16, could inspire other countries in the region to adopt similar strategies to guarantee the right to universal education and legal identity.



PAGE NOTES

1. Articles 16 et seq. of Ordinance No. 81/002 of 29 June 1981 on the organisation of civil status and various provisions relating to the status of natural persons, as well as Article 3 of Law N°2024/016 of 23 December 2024.
2. Article 3 of law no. 2024/016 of 23 December 2024
3. UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Guidelines on the Legislative Framework for Civil Registration, Vital Statistics and Identity Management Systems, 2023 [CRVS GOLF Final-E.pdf](#)
4. Ordinance No. 81/002 of 29 June 1981
5. Law N°2024/016 of 23 December 2024, Arts. 56-58 and Ordinance No. 81/002 of 29 June 1981, Arts. 25-27
6. <https://cdad14.fr/glossaire-du-droit/audience-foreaine/>
7. [UNDESA, Handbook on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems, Management, Operation and Maintenance, Revision 1, 2021, §475](#)
8. [Economic and Social Council, Launch of the United Nations Legal Identity Programme: a comprehensive approach to civil registration, vital statistics and identity management, E/CN.3/2020/15 \(United Nations 2019\), § 4.](#)
9. Law no. 2024/016 of 23 December 2024
10. [Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG\) 4](#)
11. See Appendix 5 for the names of the people consulted.
12. <https://www.prc.cm/fr/multimedia/documents/10257-loi-n-2024-016-du-23-12-2024-web>
13. <https://www.child-identity.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/UNICEF-CHIP-Report-Senegal-FR.pdf>, p. 13.
14. UNICEF, Birth Registration in Sub-Saharan Africa: Current levels and trends, 2025: <https://data.unicef.org/resources/birth-registration-in-sub-saharan-africa-current-levels-and-trends/>; See also UNICEF, The Right Start in Life: Global levels and trends in birth registration: <https://data.unicef.org/resources/the-right-start-in-life-2024-update/>, 2024.
15. World Bank data (2023: <https://data.worldbank.org/country/cameroon>
16. Identification and Civil Registration Ecosystem Assessment and Policy Dialog in Cameroon (P179547, AA, Track 2)
17. Identification and Civil Registration Ecosystem Assessment and Policy Dialog in Cameroon (P179547, AA, Track 2)
18. World Bank Cameroon, report Réformes visant l'amélioration de l'accès équitable et le maintien des enfants à l'enseignement primaire et secondaire au Cameroun, 2023 and Dr MIMFOUMOU OLO Louise épse EDOU, Directeur de l'Enseignement Maternel et Primaire, MINEDUB La Multisectorialité Et La Collaboration Entre Les Services D'état Civil Et Les Autres Secteurs : Éducation, Justice, Affaires Sociales, Relations Extérieures, Sécurité Nationale Et Autres (Yaoundé Conference Centre, 26-27 April 2024)
19. World Bank Cameroon, report Reforms to improve equitable access and retention of children in primary and secondary education in Cameroon, 2023
20. These factors represent challenges that still need to be overcome, and the aim of this report is to list them in more detail and suggest possible solutions where available. See also section 3.1 "Non-registration factors" of this report.
21. Other legislative and regulatory texts should be taken into consideration, in particular Law no. 2006/015 of 29 December 2006 on Judicial Organization (articles 13(2) and 18(1)); the Decree of 19 December 1969 (article 4(1)); the Code of Civil and Commercial Procedure; Law No. 88/015 of 16 December 1988 on the basis of collection of court fees and state debt (article 3 (2)); the General Tax Code (article 237); the Finance Law; Decree n°69/DF/544 of 19 February 1969 amended by Decree N° 71 / DF / 607 of December 3, 1971 on the organization of traditional jurisdictions of eastern Cameroon, supplemented by law N° 79/4 of 29 June 1979 (articles 1-a, 4 (2), 9 (1), 44.
22. <https://yaounde.eregulations.org/media/ordonnance%20du%2029%20juin%201981.pdf>
23. https://systemesec.ca/sites/default/files/assets/files/CRVS_Cameroon_f_WEB.pdf
24. In parallel, the Africa Programme for Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (APAI-CRVS) also launched in 2010, sets out UNICEF's ambition to carry out comparable studies in the region - in 22 states in West and Central Africa, examining the feasibility of establishing partnerships with the education sector on these issues.
25. [Law N°2011/011 of 6 May 2011 on civil status amending and supplementing certain provisions of ordinance No. 81/002 of 29 June 1981](#)
26. <https://www.prc.cm/fr/multimedia/documents/10257-loi-n-2024-016-du-23-12-2024-web>
27. Vital Strategies, State of play and system diagnostics ESEC of Cameroon, mars 2024.

28. In 2024, UNICEF WCARO, leading football players and the private sector launched the ["#MyName" campaign](#) at the African Cup of Nations in Côte d'Ivoire, which aims to "mobilise the African continent in favour of universal birth registration, using the power of sport." Cameroon has adapted this campaign to its own context and launched it at the Mayors' Forum in April 2024, including the Bamoun King and young people. A competition is currently underway among the 364 mayors to select those with the most successful birth registration results.
29. This is an initiative of the Education Sector
30. This includes (the CEP and the 6th) entrance exam for the French-speaking system; First School Leaving Certificate and Common Entrance Examination for the English-speaking system. MINEDUB and partners, Projet d'enregistrement hors délai des naissances des élèves en fin de cycle primaire (année 2023-2024), report, February 2024, p.6.
31. These data come from the first evaluation (13-17 May 2024) of the project, Progress Report, World Bank, 2023.
32. MINDDEVEL has also set up a system for catching up birth registrations in five regions of Cameroon, targeting both children and adults. The results of this initiative are still awaited.
33. <https://www.francophonie.org/lancement-du-projet-etat-civil-au-cameroun-3312>
34. These actors are implementing ad hoc initiatives to support the catching up of children's civil status registration through ordinary hearings in courts of first instance and mobile hearings.
35. These data come from the first evaluation (13-17 May 2024) of the project, Progress Report, World Bank, 2023.
36. List of members: Ms Ayukegba Evelyne (MINEDUB), Mr Alexis Mayang and Mr Georges Bissiongol (UNICEF), Mr Joseph Sylvain Endezoumou (PAREC), Mr Ousmaila Amadaou (NRC), Mr Cyrille Apala Moiffo (MINDDEVEL), Mr Jean EBELA, Ms Chimène Donkep, Mr Franck Tedou Zeufack (BUNEC), a representative of the World Bank, a representative of MINJUSTICE and four representatives of MINEDUB. Chimène Donkep, Mr Franck Tedou Zeufack (BUNEC), a representative of the World Bank, a representative of MINJUSTICE and four representatives of MINEDUB (DSSAPPS, DPPC, DEMP, DAJ).
37. <https://www.child-identity.org/fr/>
38. [UNICEF Sénégal, Enregistrement des naissances and éducation universelle au Sénégal : Le dispositif comme solution à moyen terme efficace pour garantir une identité juridique à tous les enfants en âge scolaire, 2024.](#)
39. Figure 3 taken from the UNICEF Senegal report, 2024 Ibid.
40. For more information, see the UNICEF Senegal report: [Le dispositif comme solution à moyen terme efficace pour garantir une identité juridique à tous les enfants en âge scolaire, 2024.](#)
41. UNICEF, Procedure on Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis, 2021 <https://www.unicef.org/evaluation/media/1786/file/UNICEF%20Procedure%20on%20Ethical%20Standards%20in%20Research,%20Evaluation,%20Data%20Collection%20and%20Analysis.pdf>
42. Team 1: Mia Dambach and Alexis Mayang travelled to the Centre (Yaoundé), the Littoral (Douala 2 and Douala 5) and the South-West (Buea, Limbe and Tiko) from 7 to 15 November 2024; Team 2: Marine Braun and Roderick Ndikum Asana travelled to the East (Bertoua, Gado and Garoua Boulai) from 11 - 15 November 2024; Team 3: Mariama Diallo, Doline Raisa Betdji and Romauld Onah travelled to the East (Abong Mbang and Bertoua) from 11 - 15 November; Team 4: Romauld Onah then travelled to the East (to Mandjou, Batouri and village Bonis II), the Centre (to Mbalmayo, Ngoumou, Akono, Mfou and Mbamkomo), the North (to Garoua, Lagdo, and Poli) and the Far North (to Maroua 1 and Mokolo) from 14 - 23 December 2024.
43. These questionnaires are available on request from UNICEF Cameroon and CHIP.
44. UNICEF, Procedure on Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis, 2021 <https://www.unicef.org/evaluation/media/1786/file/UNICEF%20Procedure%20on%20Ethical%20Standards%20in%20Research,%20Evaluation,%20Data%20Collection%20and%20Analysis.pdf>
45. <https://www.prc.cm/fr/multimedia/documents/10257-loi-n-2024-016-du-23-12-2024-web>
46. Idem.
47. These data come from the first evaluation (13-17 May 2024) of the project, Progress Report, World Bank, 2023.
48. <https://www.unicef.org/eca/our-mandate-no-child-left-behind>
49. Interviews 3 and 7. According to the UNHCR, around 108,000 refugee children in Cameroon have no birth certificate.

50. Because of poverty, low school enrolment and rural and sometimes precarious living conditions, they face major obstacles, particularly with regard to their civil status (lack of birth certificate), which restricts their access to essential services such as education and health.
51. Interviews 3, 6, 39, 46, 49
52. Interviews 19, 20, 24, 25
53. Interviews 19, 20, 24, 25
54. Interviews 7, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 30
55. Interviews 25, 54 and 55
56. Interviews 3, 49
57. Interviews 6, 9, 19, 20, 22, 44, 51
58. Interview 59 - Some civil status centres reportedly did not receive any registers because the national printing works was overwhelmed and unable to print enough.
59. Interviews 9, 19, 20, 22, 29, 41 and 44. For example, in Abong Mbang, 24 out of 49 secondary centres are not operational. In the East region, according to BUNEC, 137 out of 166 secondary centres are operational.
60. Interviews 43 and 59
61. Interview 43
62. Interviews 41, 42, 45
63. Interviews 40, 41, 48, 50, 51, 57
64. Interview 42
65. Interview 29
66. Interviews 7, 9, 19, 20, 21, 22, 25 and focus group 77
67. Interviews 40, 42, 43, 45, 46, 48, 51, 52, 59, 63
68. Interviews 40, 42
69. Interviews 40, 43 and 59
70. Interview 41
71. Interviews 42, 44
72. Interview 43
73. Interview 40
74. Interview 3
75. Interviews 3, 4 and 6, 24 and Street Child Cameroun et UNICEF Cameroun "Child protection needs assessment report for the far north region", June 2024.
76. <https://cpaor.net/>
77. Interviews 7 and 56
78. Interviews 7, 8 and 9
79. Interview 9
80. Interviews 4, 6 and 7
81. Interview 4
82. Interview 29
83. Interview 29
84. Interviews 4
85. Interviews 7, 9, 27 and 29
86. Interview 29
87. Interview 9
88. Interview 28
89. Interviews 40 and 46 - The Baka are particularly exposed to forced labour, especially by logging companies, as well as to trafficking, physical violence and alcohol abuse. A difference in treatment between the Baka and the internally displaced populations gives rise to jealousy. Interviews 42 and 47 - Baka children attend primary school more than secondary school, while illiteracy remains widespread among the Baka and Mbororo. At the inclusive school in Bindia, over 1,500 of the 1,870 pupils are from the Mbororo community, including 1,325 refugees and 153 IDPs. More than 1,000 children do not have a birth certificate, ranging from the first year of primary school to the fifth year of secondary school.
90. Interviews 40, 43 and 46
91. Interview 40
92. Interview 40
93. Interviews 75, 76, 77, 103, 105 and 108
94. Interview 42
95. Interview 47
96. Interview 44
97. Interviews 90, 92, 95 and 102
98. Interview 77
99. Interview 19, 22
100. Interview 36
101. Interview 19
102. Interviews 20, 32, 33, 54
103. Interview 36
104. Ebolowa workshop 27-28 January 2025
105. Interviews 75, 93, 94, 100 and 103
106. Interview 32
107. Interview 75
108. Interviews 99, 100, 103

109. Interview 36
110. Interview 54
111. Interview 61
112. Interview 54
113. Interview 57
114. Interview 19
115. Interview 29
116. MINEDUB, Projet d'enregistrement hors délai des naissances des élèves en fin de cycle primaire (année 2023-2024), report, February 2024.
117. See letter of 29 January 2024
118. See letter of 4 April 2024
119. Letter dated 9 April 2024 from the World Bank (PAREC) and explained by interview 13
120. Interview 22
121. Interview 20
122. Interview 29
123. Interview 56; The camp was created in March 2014 and has 12 sectors, for a total of 16,831 refugees in 2024. The majority of refugees are of Fulani Muslim origin. The camp is located 35 km from the border with the Central African Republic. The refugees are organised into committees (central committee, wise men, young people, women, etc.). For reasons of stability in CAR, 1,778 people have returned voluntarily to their country. The camp site is supervised by the State of Cameroon (Garoua-Boulai sub-prefecture), in partnership with various stakeholders (the public concerned, UNICEF, Plan International, IMC, UNFPA, IOM). Around 10 births are recorded at the site every week.
124. Interview 55
125. Interview 55
126. Interview 56
127. Interview 56 and 63
128. Interview 6
129. Interviews 22, 24, 32, 33, 38, 39, 59, 66, 72, 86 and 92
130. Interview 40, 46
131. Interview 40
132. Interview 41
133. Interview 49
134. Idem
135. Interview 47
136. MINEDUB has a circular for detecting children without birth certificates when they enrol at school, Ebolowa workshop, 27-28 January 2025.
137. Interviews 19, 20, 21, 22, 28, 29, 30, 32, 35
138. Interview 21, 28, 35, 61
139. Interview 22
140. Interviews 19, 32, 33, 54
141. Interview 20
142. Interview 22
143. Interview 100
144. Interviews 68, 72, 82, 107
145. Interview 49
146. Interviews 19, 22
147. Ebolowa workshop, 27-28 January 2025
148. Interview 84
149. Interview 21
150. Interviews 21 and 24
151. Interviews 24, 25 and 26
152. Interviews 25 and 26
153. Interview 37
154. Boumba and Mgoko (Yokadouma, Moloundou, Gar Gmobo, Salapoumba), Lom and Djerem (Belabo), Kadey (Ndélélé, Nguelebok, Mbang), Haut-Nyong (Angossas, Mboma, Lomie, Messok, Ngoyba, Somalomo).
155. Interview 51
156. Interview 51
157. Interview 48
158. Interview 48
159. Interview 5
160. Interview 3
161. Interview 3
162. Interview 54 and 55
163. Interview 55
164. Interview 6
165. Interview 6
166. Interviews 27, 29 and 30
167. In 2024, according to the SASO in Abong Mbang, of the 347 children identified as having specific needs, 48 were from the Baka community and 18 were internally displaced persons.
168. Interview 46
169. <https://fpae-cameroun.org/>
170. Interview 40
171. The World Bank has informed us of the existence of an agreement between the Ministry of Justice and PAREC that contains information relevant to stage 2 of the catch-up process.
172. MINEDUB, Projet d'enregistrement hors délai des naissances des élèves en fin de cycle primaire (année 2023-2024), report, February 2024.

- 173.Interview 20
174.Interviews 21, 24, 25 and 26
175.Interviews 21 and 24
176.Interviews 25 and 26
177.Interviews 21, 28, 29, 30, 35, 36, 37, 40
178.Interview 34
179.Interview 35
180.Interview 22
181.Interview 19
182.Interview 20
183.Interview 29
184.Interview 29
185.Interviews 37 and 39
186.Interviews 19 and 22
187.Interview 23
188.Interviews 19
189.Interview 24, 25, 26 and 33
190.Interview 20
191.Interviews 19, 20, 21, 22 and 23
192.Interviews 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34 and 35
193.Interviews 38, 43, 46, 49, 50
194.For example in Messamena. Interview 43
195.Interview 50
196.Interview 22
197.Interview 38
198.Interview 38
199.Interview 3
200.Interview 6
201.Interviews 4 and 6
202.Interview 6; interviews 102, 104 and 106 and the Ebolowa 27-28 January 2025 workshop welcomed this administrative reconstitution approach, which is admittedly specific to red zones but which seems quicker and more effective than the declaratory judgement procedure.
203.Interview 6
204.Approximately XAF 6,500 for legal procedures and XAF 1,000 for certificates of apparent age.
205.Interview 63
206.Interview 33
207.Interviews 9 and 29
208.Interviews 27, 29 and 30
209.Interview 30
210.Interview 30
211.Interview 29
212.Interview 30
213.Interview 30
214.Ebolowa workshop, 27-28 January 2025
215.Interview 43
216.Interview 43
217.Interview 46
218.Interview 75
219.Interview 44
220.Interview 24
221.Interview 29
222.Interview 40
223.Interview 47
224.Interview 50
225.Interviews 68, 82 and 107
226.Interviews 20, 32 and 33
227.Interviews 22 and 32
228.Interviews 22, 32 and 54
229.Interview 32
230.Interviews 55 and 62
231.Interviews 37 and 38
232.Interview 19
233.Interview 38
234.Interview 71
235.Interview 75
236.Interviews 4 and 6
237.Interviews 4 and 6
238.Interview 30
239.Interview 63
240.Interview 49
241.Interview 49
242.Interview 49
243.Interview 48
244.Interviews 22 and 32
245.Interview 32. The second phase of the Operation PAREC targets all children in primary school.
246.Interviews 22 and 32
247.Interviews 23 and 75
248.Interview 23
249.Interview 6
250.Interview 37
251.MINEDUB and partenaires, Projet d'enregistrement hors délai des naissances des élèves en fin de cycle primaire (année 2023-2024), rapport, février 2024.
252.Art. 10 – (new) (1) 2011 Act
253.Interview 50
254.Interview 51

255. Interviews 37 and 39
256. Interview 37
257. Interview 37
258. Interview 37
259. Interview 48, 50
260. Interview 42
261. Interview 37
262. Interview 21
263. Interview 37
264. Interview 29
265. Interviews 29, 31 and 32
266. Interview 32
267. Interview 32
268. Interview 31
269. Interviews 18 and 32
270. Interview 32
271. Interviews 20 and 32
272. Interviews 8 and 31
273. Interview 14
274. Interview 11
275. <https://www.minddevel.gov.cm/i-communes-amies-des-enfants-de-quoi-parle-t-on/>
276. Interview 37
277. Letter dated 9 April 2024 from the World Bank (PAREC) to the Inspectorate of Basic Education, explained in interview 13
278. Interview 53
279. Interviews 37 and 53
280. Interviews 37 and 53
281. Interviews 19, 20, 22, 24, 29, 31 and 32,
282. Interview 72
283. Interview 31
284. Interview 38
285. First evaluation (13-17 May 2024) of the project, Progress report, World Bank, 2023.
286. Interview 18
287. Interview 12
288. Interviews 99, 100 and 103 - For information, the communes of Garoua 1er, Lagdo and Maroua 1er have their action plans validated.
289. <https://www.child-identity.org/birth-registration-work-in-collaboration-with-unicef-cameroon-wcaro/>
290. MINEDUB and partners, Projet d'enregistrement hors délai des naissances des élèves en fin de cycle primaire (année 2023-2024), report, February 2024.
291. Interview 39
292. Interviews 24 and 25
293. MINEDUB and partners, Projet d'enregistrement hors délai des naissances des élèves en fin de cycle primaire (année 2023-2024), report, February 2024, pp. 64-65.
294. Interviews 5 and 7
295. Interviews 5 and 9
296. Interview 4
297. Interview 3
298. Interview 5
299. Interviews 27, 29 and 30
300. Interview 32
301. Interview 5
302. Interview 4
303. CHIP is currently working with UNICEF and its partners to develop a guidance note on CRVS in crisis contexts in Cameroon. This note will aim to provide an overview of possible training modules, centralising existing material wherever possible.
304. Interviews X
305. Interview 41

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Useful links

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- <https://www.child-identity.org/fr/>

APPENDIX

Appendix 1 – Ethics committee and questionnaire for key informant interviews and focus groups

The Ethics Committee was discussed/planned since the Mayor's Forum in April 2024 when an informal meeting was held with key stakeholders based in Yaoundé. After discussions among Ministries and led by the Ministry of Education, a Working Group was (see image in email) formally established on 3 October 2024, with an official invitation of all relevant Ministries and stakeholders by the Minister of Education. During the inaugural meeting following this letter, this inter-Ministerial Committee considered compliance with the ethical standards required for conducting research, specifically, informed consent for the interviews, confidentiality and privacy, transparency, do no harm, impartiality, responsibility, conflicts of Interest, social relevance etc. Information was provided to the CHIP team about their expectations and how to proceed. Following this communication, CHIP submitted an inception report and proposed questions. The Committee then provided comments on the inception report and provide guidance on the questions. These tools in English and French were validated by the Government / Ethics Committee.

The Committee further provided advice in terms of addressing sensitive issues including those arising in conflict context and those for marginalised children to ensure inclusion. The Committee led also the identification of key information interviewees as well as regions, organisations and stakeholders. The Committee further assured the finalisation of the final research report through a two day workshop discussing and refining the results in Cameroon with over 50 stakeholders. Following this, the Committee had and took the opportunity to provide explicit comments on the report. It is in this preceding context that the Ministry of Education has approved the finalisation of the report and has requested further technical assistance in the development of guidelines for catch-up birth registration in 2026 when the World Bank funds for a special operation will have terminated.

Questions for those involved in Special Operation for catch-up birth registration for CM2 pupils

Utilisation: For each stage, please describe how it works, promising practices and areas for improvement. Please also highlight any groups of children who may face specific challenges (e.g. indigenous, migrants, refugees, those in Koranic schools etc. per stage)?

Aim is to see whether different groups and actors have been implemented as envisioned by the document : *Projet d'Enregistrement hors délai des Naissances des élèves en fin de cycle – Février 2024 (doc 2/24)*.

APPENDIX

QUESTIONS FOR:

| | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|---|
| ALL STAKEHOLDERS, including CSOs and community reps | EDUCATION Ministry of Basic Education | CIVIL STATUS Ministry of Decentralisation and Local Development and BUNEC | JUSTICE (mobile courts, declaratory judgements) | HEALTH (apparent age of pupils)) MINAS (support vulnerable families) |
|--|---|---|--|---|

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Birth registration and context | National level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Main reasons why children are not registered at birth? - Are there particular regions that have lower rates of birth registration ? Reasons ? - Are there specific groups of children that are at risk of not being registered (e.g. those migrating, in Koranic schools, indigenous groups) ? Reasons ? - What awareness-raising campaigns have taken place in general for birth registration among new-borns? - What awareness-raising campaigns have taken place in general for birth registration for pupils ? - What potential solutions can you see to tackle the 1.4 million pupils in schools without a birth certificate ? |
| | MINDDEVEL and BUNEC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What de-centralisation efforts exist in terms of CRVS (e.g. allocation of resources from central and regional level to communes) ? - What exists for promoting inter-operability with health sector (e.g. use of FOSA, health units)? - What digitalisation efforts exist ? How is this part of the broader national digital public infrastructure plan ? - What progress has been made in digitising civil registry offices (e.g. conversion of paper trails)? - How are civil registries connected with capital and among themselves ? - How does the communication of data between central, regional and communal level work (ex. CRVS registers between communes and with national)? - How is information registered ? - Inter-operability of BUNEC data management with education sector (e.g. Education Management Information System) ? |

| | |
|--|--|
| Overarching questions about implementing the Special Operation project | <p>National level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How is the special operation being carried out from central to local level? (e.g. letter from Minister of Education) - Additional resources / budget? - How did the national team for coordination and follow up work (e.g. meetings, drafting of decree for roles and responsibilities of different actors – see p.52 doc 2/24) - How did the national team for technical coordination operate and lessons learnt - see p.52 doc 2/24 ? |
| 0. Preparatory phase (before the implementation of Special Operation) | <p>National level (Education)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How was the “preparatory phase” for the special operation being rolled out from central to local level? - Was there a launch event ? - Was awareness raising material prepared <p>Department level (arrondissement, principals, teachers)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How is preparation organised (at what level: district, department, region?)? - What training exists for different actors including school principals ? <p>Structure-school level (Parents)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When and how should parents enrol their children at school? - How do parents receive information about enrolling at the school ? - Is the lack of documents required to enrol at the school an obstacle to going to school ? - How do parents receive information about school exams? - Is the lack of documents required to sit an exam at the school an obstacle to go to high school? - When are parents informed about the special operation? - Is there a need for a campaign to raise awareness of the special operation? - Role of mothers’ associations and parents’ associations? |

| | |
|--|---|
| 1. Detection and identification of pupils without birth certificates | A. SETTING UP DIFFERENT COMMITTEES |
| | Regional and Department level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is role of Regional Delegation for Basic Education (Délégation Régionale de l'Education de Base (DREB)) ? - What is role of Departmental Delegation for Basic Education (Délégation Départementale de l'Education de Base (DDEB)) ? - What is the role of village chiefs and neighbourhood representatives ? - How did the District Commission operate ? (e.g. centralisation of all dossiers and communication with national level) - see p.54 doc 2/24) - At this level, are there other key actors including Health and Social Affairs, Child Protection involved ? District (arrondissement) and commune level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is the role of the District Inspectorate of Basic Education (Inspection d'arrondissement de l'education de base) ? - How did the School Commission operate ? (e.g. identification of children, preparation of dossiers, transfer of dossiers) - see pp.53-54 doc 2/24) - What is the role of civil registrars during this phase? |
| | B. COLLECT INFORMATION AND DRAW UP A LIST OF THE NAMES OF PUPILS WHO DO NOT HAVE A BIRTH CERTIFICATE |
| | School level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do schools detect students without a birth certificate ? - Census of pupils without a birth certificate ? - Parent/teacher dialogue ? |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Verification at the civil status office that the child does not already have a birth certificate - Are there challenges with mayors issuing certificates of non-registration? |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How is the list of "pupils" without birth certificates transferred to the district commission (i.e. arrondissement education de base (AEB)) and regional level (i.e. DREB) ? |

| | |
|--|--|
| 2. Regularisation of pupils without birth certificates (five stages) | A. PREPARING PUPIL'S FILES |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Compiling the file with the families: How is the file compiled and who is responsible for it? - Role of each stakeholder: Parents, teaching team, registrars, court of first instance, regularisation committee and health structure? - Role of MINAS to support vulnerable families ? - Role of MINPROFF to support families with physical challenges? - Role of MHealth to support with age verification (i.e. certificate of apparent age) ? - Role of CSOs, particularly in emergency areas ? - Role of traditional and community leaders ? - Activities for missing documents ? - Specific efforts for different groups of children ? |
| | B. THE NEGOTIATION AND ORGANISATION PHASE OF THE MOBILE COURT HEARINGS |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How does AEB communicate with the Local Court (TI) to set up mobile courts and choose dates ? - How are the files deposited at TI? |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How does the TI communicate its agreement to hold a mobile court with all actors (posting of hearing dates)? - Can you describe the role of the President of the Tribunal? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - organises mobile court hearings, - delivers judgements (non-appeal and declaratory judgements) - Can you describe the procedure for organising hearings in detail? Who are the actors (civil status focal point, village chiefs, neighbourhood representatives and parents) - How are the costs covered ? |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is the role of MINAS in supporting families with preparing their dossiers and attending mobile courts ? - What is role of the health officers / medical doctors in giving "certificate of apparent age" ? |

| | |
|--|--|
| <i>suite</i> 2. Regularisation of pupils without birth certificates (five stages) | C. THE TRANSCRIPTION PHASE FOR REGISTRATION AUTHORISATIONS ON THE BIRTH REGISTERS |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is the “decision of non-appeal” required prior to the declaratory judgement ? - How are files (declaratory judgements) transferred from the Local Court (TI) to the Mayors ? Electronically ? |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How could the drafting of these three sections (3 volets) be made easier? (e.g. electronically) - How do Mayors ensure that there are enough registers (ex. BUNEC covers the provision of registers generally but has not necessarily budgeted for registers for Special Operations) - How is the relevant section (volet) given to the parents and schools ? |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Depending on the volume of birth certificates to be transcribed into the civil registers, what resources are available (ex. financial, logistics, IT)? Are other persons engaged to support ? |
| | D. THE BIRTH CERTIFICATE COLLECTION PHASE |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do families receive the birth certificate - Receipt of the birth certificates, handing over of the vouchers to the parents, filing in the pupil’s file: Role of the school and Civil Registry ? |
| 3. Regularisation phase for pupils excluded in previous phases? | E. THE DOCUMENT ARCHIVING AND SECURITY PHASE |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can you describe the role of the CR officer, who hands over sections 1 and a copy of the birth certificate, places the copy in the pupil’s file, enters the certificate number in the pupil’s identification form and records the birth certificate numbers in a national register? - Percentage of parents in possession of the birth certificate at the end of the procedure? - How are birth certificates scanned and shared with regional and central BUNEC levels ? |
| 4. Children educated in other ways (nomads, indigenous and Koranic schools)? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Specific issues have arisen for certain groups of children ? - Specific solutions ? |

APPENDIX

Appendix 2 – List of key informant interviews and focus groups

Remote meetings

1. 7/10/2024 - Ministry of Basic Education: Evelyne Ayukegba (Chair of the working group)
2. 10/10/2024 - Working group: Evelyne Ayukegba (MBE), Georges Alain Bissiongol Wakelak (UNICEF), Joseph Sylvain Endezoumou (PAREC), Karina Ivanova (NRC), Alexis Mayang (UNICEF),
3. 24/10/2024 - UNHCR : Aissa Helene Titi Mbas Ngan and Eliane Celestine Ayissi Belobo
4. 25/10/2024 - International Rescue Committee, Stéphane Lang
5. 24/10/2024 - UNICEF : Saly Diankon Mbaye (via email)
6. 30/10/2024 - Plan International: Dieudonné Cenctieu, Abel Vigna, Fabrice Youmbi,
7. 4/11/2024 - UNICEF: Mike Charley, Saly Diankon Mbaye and Alexis Mayang (child protection and emergency)
8. 5/11/2024 - CPAoR: Agnes Aguini, Pascal Anengbah, Doreen Aninyei, Godiva Al Notet, Sylvia Anyangwa, Mike Charley, Alix Derne, Saly Diankon Mbaye, Atim Evenye, Marcelle Gisekm Fomba Honorine, Zounedou Kout, Stephanie Lassieur, Alexis Mayang, Godiva Ndong, Boniface Ngoran, Eric Shu, Abbe Vennegus and Gloria Waithira
9. 6/11/2024 - Danish Refugee Council: Sylvia Anyangwa

Centre Region - Yaoundé

10. 7/11/2024 - UNICEF: Alexis Mayang (child protection) and Georges Alain Bissiongol Wakelak (education)
11. 7/11/2024 - UNICEF: Paul-Marie Petroch (social policy)
12. 7/11/2024 - UNICEF: Casimira Bengé (child protection)
13. 7/11/2024 - Working group: Evelyne Ayukegba (MBE), Georges Alain Bissiongol Wakelak (UNICEF), Donkep Chimero (BUNEC), Joseph Sylvain Endezoumou (PAREC), Ojong Erets (MINJUSTICE), Abariayez Youssoufa George (MBE), Ebela Jean Hyacinthe (BUNEC), Karina Ivanova (NRC), Alexis Mayang (UNICEF)
14. 7/11/2024 - FEICOM : Enoga Bebey Armand and FEICOM agent
15. 7/11/2024 - UNICEF : Roderick Ndikum Asana, Casimira Bengé, Doline Raisa Betdji, Fily Diallo Alexis Mayang (Headquarters, Buea and Bertoua UNICEF regional offices)
16. 8/11/2024 - UNICEF : Fily Diallo (Buea Regional Office)
17. 8/11/2024 - UNICEF : Joachim (Safety officer training)
18. 8/11/2024 - UNICEF : Martin Engoulou (Changing social behaviour)

Littoral Region - Douala

19. 10/11/2024 - Community child protection centre : M. Manga (ALVF Association de Lutte contre les Violences faites aux Femmes) ; Datchoua (Recope) , Bounomosango (Recope) , Mbe Jean Colt (Recope), HR (beneficiary), SR (beneficiary), BE (beneficiary), Toumba Bikai (ALVF), Djomou Sidonie (ALVF Recope), Djogo Caril (ALVF Recope), Mbouognong (ALVF Recope)
20. 11/11/2024 - Secondary CR centre : His majesty Ndeuh Griffion (Quarter Chief of “petit pays”, Makepe Missoke, Tsakem Zetsop Victorien (ALVF)
21. 11/11/2024 - Basic Education Regional Office : Moukoudi Mtome (LT) and Ymga Djamen (Delegate)
22. 11/11/2024 - Doula 5 Council: Fon Loueline and Nouck Caroline (civil status) and Atanane Georgey (ALVF)
23. 11/11/2024 - Doula Council5 : Njoya Aimee Sideri (social services)

South West Region - Buea

24. 12/11/2024 - Basic Education Regional Office : Elangwe Rose Bume (Regional Delegate)
25. 12/11/2024 - Meeting with over 100 school heads during their training session
26. 12/11/2024 - Focus group with six school headmasters : Enaka Tarhaxo, Emah Limange, Dieudonne Kang, Maingeh Godric, Fritz Ezemua and Mbeboh Micohme
27. 12/11/2024 - UNICEF : Idris (Head of Buea regional office)
28. 12/11/2024 - UNICEF : Amira (Head of Security)
29. 12/11/2024 - Regional BUNEC and representatives of the two councils, including the mayor of Tiko and the secretaries of Limbe : Anna Enongo, Ndzerem Walter, Aga Ngono Doris, KImeng Luarindim Rudolf and Ajanoh Marion
30. 12/11/2024 - Norwegian Regional Council (NRC), Nyanshi Icla
31. 13/11/2024 - UNICEF: Alexis Mayang (Child Protection)
32. 13/11/2024 - Buea City Council: David Mafani Namamge(Mayor)
33. 13/11/2024 - Regional conference of village chiefs attended by seven chiefs (names withheld)
34. 13/11/2024 - Basic Education Inspectorate City of Buea : Doris Foti Mbella Fale Espse Moloka (Inspector)
35. 13/11/2024 - Buea City Hall: Joan Lyonga (Head of the CRVS Office)
36. 13/11/2024 – Buea Hospital: Esther Efossi Vaïouna Mosuka (Collector and CRVS focal point)

Centre Region - Yaoundé

37. 15/11/2024 - Ministry of Basic Education : Andela Yves Placide (Deputy Director of Primary Schools)
38. 15/11/2024 - Yaoundé Ekounou Court of First Instance: Ndigui Marcek (President of the Court), Bouba Fadimatou (Judge No.1) and Ebl Berthe Flore (Judge No.6) Ms Mankentsop Sylvie (Judge No. 6 and Head of Monitoring)
39. 15/11/2024 - Ministry of Basic Education: Evelyn Ayukegba (focal point for the Special Operation and the working group)

Eastern Region - Abong Mbang

- 40. 12/11/2024 - Marcel Marigoh General Delegate, MINAS
- 41. 12/11/2024 - Yves Djenabia, Secretary, Council
- 42. 12/11/2024 - Moankouane, Secretary; Max Belinga, Head of Archives, Civil Status and Demography Unit, Council
- 43. 12/11/2024 - Grégoire Tigyo, Examining Magistrate; Jeannette Djuidja, Magistrate, Court of First Instance
- 44. 12/11/2024 - Serge Koundi, General Delegate MINDDEVEL; Edouard Guemeti, Secretary General, Argessys Council
- 45. 12/11/2024 - Joseph Bertrand Mache Njouonwet, Prefect of Abong Mbang
- 46. 12/11/2024 - Mimosette Mentom Abia, SASO Baka

East Region - Bertoua/Mandjou

- 47. 13/11/2024 - Josiane Nnanga, Headmistress, EPP School, Bindia
- 48. 13/11/2024 - Mireille Ntsana, Regional Delegate, DREB East, Bertoua
- 49. 14/11/2024 - RECOPE Tougou, Mandjou : Paul Temmbar, General Secretary ; Honorine Makoue, Entrepreneur ; A. Ngas, Secretary ; H. Mmazumuga, Adviser ; Hamidou K., Adviser ; Justine Bazza, REFUBE, CPC Foundation ; Jean Nana
- 50. 14/11/2024 - Georges Alain Bentep, Regional Delegate, Bertoua; Mireille Totepoung, Assistant, MINDDEVEL Regional Office
- 51. 14/11/2024 - BUNEC East Regional Office, Bertoua : Rose Ngono; Christophe Bilongo; Dieudonné Owona; Alphonse Evouna
- 52. 14/11/2024 - Floride Ekabana, President, Court of First Instance of Bertoua

Centre Region - Yaoundé

- 53. 15/11/2024 - Joseph Endouzoumou, PAREC, World Bank

Eastern Region - Gado Badzere - Garoua Boulai

- 54. 12/11/2024 - Boniface Godanga Boundar, Director of EPP Gado IIA and Jajal Docta, Director of EPP Gado I A
- 55. 12/11/2024 - Jean Batoure, Director of EPP Gado I B, and Honoré Ndanga, Director of EPP Gado II B
- 56. 12/11/2024 - Representatives and residents of the Gado refugee camp (names withheld), including Eric Ngam, camp management assistant
- 57. 12/11/2024 - Gbabso Dignack, registrar at Gado secondary school
- 58. 13/11/2024 - Moselle Kamgang, UNICEF focal point at Garoua-Boulai Council
- 59. 13/11/2024 - Venant Ngduma, Secretary General and Aristide Beloko, Head of the Civil Registry Office at Garoua-Boulai Council
- 60. 13/11/2024 - Wilfred Ngbolos, assistant to the sub-prefect at the Garoua-Boulai sub-prefecture
- 61. 13/11/2024 - Jemamuse Mefant, educational coordinator 2 at IAEB Garoua-Boulai
- 62. 13/11/2024 - Mukang Abdoukarimi, headmaster of the GBDS Sabongari English school
- 63. 13/11/2024 - Marka Kaltoume, Madeleine Essorgué, Agathe Maiparis, Danish Refugee Council

Eastern Region - Batouri and Bonis II

- 64. 15/11/2024 - Batouri CA: (Mr Avoui, CBEC, Mr Soulé, C/SAG; Ms Koussi, SEC; Ms Ngassa Nana, SEC; Ms Beloke, SEC)
- 65. 15/11/2024 - Batouri DDAS: (Mr Ze Salla, C/SASO)
- 66. 16/11/2024 - Bonis II chiefdom: (Mr Bitam, Ms Julienne, Ms Rebecca, Mr Amougou, all village residents)

Centre Region - Mefou and Akono, Mefou and Afamba, Mfoundi and Nyong and So'o

- 67. 19/11/2024: Ngoumou Prefecture: (Mrs Prefect)
- 68. 19/11/2024: Commune of Ngoumou: (SG, Head of Civil Status Office and Civil Status Secretary)
- 69. 19/11/2024: IAEB Ngoumou: (Mr Mvondo Mba, Inspector and Mrs Nga Owona, Nursery School Director)
- 70. 20/11/2024: IAEB Akono: (Mrs Bitomo, Inspector; Mrs Nsoudou, Director EP Akono II; Mr Onana Basile, CASCO and Mrs Mukong, Head Mistress GBPS Akono)
- 71. 20/11/2024: Akono Council: (Mr Ondoa, Mayor: Mr Mvondo Nty, Municipal Councillor)
- 72. 20/11/2024: Traditional Chiefdom 1st degree Akono : (Mme Ntsama Thérèse, Notable; SM Nkou Cécile, Traditional Chief; Mimche Abdou Spokesman for the Muslim community)
- 73. 21/11/2024: CA Yaoundé VI (Ms Mbang Marie, CADLCD, IOM partner)
- 74. 25/11/2024: CA Yaoundé III: (Ms Ashu, SG and Mr Nguefack Hervé, Head of CADL, IOM partner)
- 75. 26/11/2024 : CA Mbankomo : (Mrs Lolo Pascaline, C/SAASO, Mrs Bene Nathalie, SEC, Mrs Ntolo, SEC)
- 76. 26/11/2024 : IAEB Mbankomo (Mr Awono, Inspector)
- 77. 26/11/2024: EP Mbankomo: (Mr Bilongue, Director of EP Mbankomo 1)
- 78. 27/11/2024: DD MINEDUB of Mfou: (Mr Ndog, Ndog, DDEB-MAF/AB, Mr Beb à Don, DDEM/CA; Mr Ako'o Elle, DDEB-MAF/CA and Mr Nkolo, DDEB-MAF/CA)
- 79. 27/11/2024: DD MINPROFF: (Ms Abessolo, CA; Ms Matha Rachel/CA)
- 80. 28/11/2024: EP Mfou III: (Mrs Bilounga Ateba, Director)
- 81. 28/11/2024: Mfou Council:(Mrs Mbezele, A2 Mayor; Mrs Mbani Edwige, SEC)
- 82. 28/11/2024: DDAS Mfou: (Mrs Amougou, Social Centre Manager)
- 83. 29/11/2024: IAEB Mbalmayo: (M. Nkili, AP1; M. Eto Engolo)
- 84. 29/11/2024: EPPAO II: (Mr Ta'ama Yves, Director)
- 85. 29/22/2024: EPPIA Ngallan, Director)
- 86. 30/11/2024: Mbockoulou/Mbalmayo Traditional Chiefdom:(SM Amougou, Traditional Chief)
- 87. 30/11/2024: Traditional Chiefdom of Obeck/Mbalmayo: (SM Andegue Tabi, Traditional Chief)

88. 30/11/2024: EP Obeck II/Mbalmayo: (Mrs Manga, Director; Mr Fossono Serge, Deputy Director; Mr Balla, President of PTA)

North region - Garoua, Lagdo

- 89. 12/12/2024: DR MINUDUB: Mr EYOUN Roselin, C/B CSD
- 90. 13/12/2024: IAEB Garoua 1er: MM Abdoulaye W, Head of BAP/APPS; MBAIRANE Tychique, Director EP Garoua 2-A; ABEN Nico, Headmaster GBPS; Ousmanou Mal Néri, IAEB Garoua 1er
- 91. 14/12/2024: Arrahma Mosque: Mr Ousmanou Abdouraman, Imam; Mr Housseini Amadou, Imam
- 92. 15/12/2024: Lawanat of Souari: SM Mohamadou Yaya, Lawan; Mr Issa Adjoudji, Mr Irema Ibrahima, notable; Mr Arafat Ibrahim, notable; Mr Oumarou Amadou
- 93. 16/12/2024: BUNEC Nord Regional Branch: Mr Nassourou Moussa, Branch Manager; Mr Chetima, CSFS
- 94. 16/12/2024: DR MINDDEVEL: Mr Tiye Yima, C/SAG
- 95. 16/12/2024: Roumdé CSI: Mrs Mouda, Head of Centre; Mr Dinaba Joël, Civil Status Focal Point
- 96. 17/12/2024: Greenland CSO: Mr Hassoumi Abdoulaye, Coordinator
- 97. 17/12/2024 : OSC Jardin d'Eden : Mr Abdoulaye Mohamadou, Coordinator
- 98. 17/12/2024 : OSC AFECNO : Mrs Maïrama Souaïbou, Civil Status Focal Point
- 99. 17/12/2024: Commune of Garoua 1er : Ms Djanabou Bouba, C/SAGE; Ms Hadjara, SEC, Mr Boubakari, NASLA trainee
- 100. 18/12/2024: Commune of Lagdo: Mr Gao Dieudonné, A1 Mayor; Mr Djorwe Martin, SEC: Ms Abele Yomn VNU UNICEF
- 101. 18/12/2024: CSI Lagdo: Mr Hilaï, Transcribing Agent
- 102. 18/12/2024: IAEB Lagdo: Mr Noudjihigam, C/BAG; Mr Damra, CA; Mr Manga Yarambele, CA; Mr Souley Oumarou, CA; Ms Megne Nembot, CA; Mr Forabanmbe, Coordo/EPs; Mr Souley Oumarou, CA; Mr Pallou David, CA; Mr Arong Albert, CA

Far North region - Maroua I, Mokolo

- 103. 20/12/2024 : Commune d'Arrondissement de Maroua 1er : Mr Hamadou H, Mayor; Mr Aminou, SEC
- 104. 22/12/2024: OSDEL CSO: Mr Bouba, Chairman
- 105. 23/12/2024: Commune of Mokolo: Mr Moussa Jean, SEC
- 106. 23/12/2024: Sub-prefecture of Mokolo: Mr Amiya Blaise, Sub-prefect
- 107. 23/12/2024: DDAS: Mr Baldinwa Bidjo, MTC/CS Tourou
- 108. 23/12/2024: DDMINEDUB Mokolo: M/ Bandena Froma, Departmental Delegate

