



# People's Perspectives on ID and Civil Registration in Rwanda

## RESEARCH REPORT



WORLD BANK GROUP

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# Acronyms and Definitions

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| BC      | Birth Certificate  |
| CSOs    | Civil society organizations  |
| DPOs    | Disabled peoples organizations   |
| FGD     | Focus Group Discussion   |
| ID      | Identification Document  |
| ID4D    | Identification for Development Initiative                                    |
| IREMBO  | Web portal providing access to Rwandan government services                   |
| KII     | Key Informant Interview  |
| LODA    | Local Administrative Entities Development Agency                             |
| MINEMA  | Ministry in Charge of Emergency Management                                   |
| MINALOC | Ministry of Local Government   |
| MINEMA  | Ministry in Charge of Emergency Management                                   |
| MINICT  | Ministry of ICT & Innovation   |
| NIDA    | National Identification Agency   |
| NID     | National Identification Card   |
| NIN     | National Identification Number   |
| NGOs    | Non-governmental organizations   |
| NPR     | National Population Register   |
| RURA    | Rwanda Utilities Regulatory Authority  |
| RWF     | Rwandan Franc  |
| SDG     | Sustainable Development Goals  |
| SIM     | Subscriber Identification Module   |
| UBUDEHE | The National social protection system under the Ministry of Local Government |
| UNHCR   | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees                                |
| UN      | Refugee Agency   |
| USD     | United States Dollar   |

# Executive Summary

## BACKGROUND

Rwanda's electronic national population register (NPR) and ID project was first launched in 2008 and has since achieved impressive coverage. Today, the NPR captures the information of approximately 98 percent of the population. It is commonly considered to be one of the strongest foundational national identification (ID) systems in Africa.

The National Identification Agency (NIDA), has made concerted efforts over the years in the areas of policy, business process, communications, and support to ensure that all people in Rwanda are able to access IDs and register births and receive birth certificates. This has included initiatives like "CRVS week" in 2017 to encourage people to register the births of their children. It also includes nationwide communications campaigns to ensure equal access to IDs and the ability to use these to access services, with specific targeting for vulnerable groups like refugees.

In order to improve current processes, close the remaining two percent gap in ID coverage, and inform the roll out of the new digital birth registration, NIDA requested the World Bank to support qualitative research to understand experiences, attitudes, and behavior of Rwandans towards accessing and using the current national ID cards and birth certificates.

## METHODOLOGY

The Dalberg team, under the supervision of the World Bank's Identification for Development Initiative (ID4D) and NIDA, carried out this research in all five provinces of Rwanda during November 2019-January 2020. The research was based on qualitative data collected from focus group discussions, key informant interviews, user journeys, and personas composed of different groups of target participants—with a focus on those most likely to have difficulties accessing the system. A short demographic questionnaire was also administered to participants to understand coverage of IDs and birth certificates among this sample. A total of 313 people participated in focus groups and interviews for this study.

Given the purposive sampling methodology employed, **the findings of the study are not representative of any particular population group and cannot be generalized to the Rwandan population as a whole or to particular sub-groups.** Rather, the study presents a range of individual experiences which illustrate some issues that individuals have faced in accessing and using IDs and birth certificates. It therefore highlights opportunities for further enhancement of the enrollment processes and systems, with the aim to improve the overall experience when it comes to obtaining, updating and using IDs and birth certificates in Rwanda.

The study examined attitudes toward the national Identification Card (ID), Birth Registration (BR) and Birth Certificates (BCs), in addition to identifying the barriers Rwandan residents faced when either initially registering for these or when seeking an amendment or replacement. Careful attention was paid to the effect and impact on special groups such as refugees, orphans, persons with disabilities, women, and the poor.

# MAIN FINDINGS

## National Identification Card

**While the majority of participants understood the benefits of possessing a national ID card and appreciated the range of services it allowed them to access, they also described barriers that increased the amount of time and money they were required to spend to receive their IDs and to ensure that the information was accurate.** Participants cited costly delays in processing; an overly urban concentration of Sector and Cell offices (where NIDA registration takes place), which made it difficult and expensive to access from rural areas; weak mechanisms for ensuring the accuracy of the information before the IDs are printed; and insufficient communication, both about the overall process and the progress of individual applications.

## Birth Registration and Birth Certificates

**Currently, three types of BCs exist in Rwanda, and unlike the ID, uptake is low due to various barriers such as lack of documentation required for application, lack of access to registration points, lack of clarity between the types of BCs, and lack of incentives to obtain one.** Barriers such as the lack of supporting documentation affect orphans and refugees' ability to access BCs in particular. Time and cost to obtain a BC was cited as a key barrier as well. Both parents need to apply for BCs in person at the Sector office, or they have to present their IDs in the absence of physical appearance. This requires a day's absence from work and a trip to the Sector office, which is a costly excursion for most Rwandans. In addition, two witnesses are required. Many cannot fulfil this requirement, particularly those who are migrant workers and not in the same vicinity as their partner or single mothers who have not maintained contact with the father.

**A lack of incentives has resulted in low uptake in birth registration and birth certification over many years, creating problems for those trying to access national IDs when they come of age at 16 years old.** Lack of a birth certificate means many youth are not in NIDA's records and lack the necessary documents to prove their identity when it comes time to apply for a national ID card. This means they must make multiple trips and incur costs to find alternative documentation (such as baptism certificates or village coordinator's letters) that will enable them to register for IDs.

**NIDA is in the process of launching a digital birth registration system which would allow Rwandans to digitally register their babies after birth at the hospital or at the Cell office without the need for witnesses or additional documentation.** This new system is designed to address some of barriers noted above. Notably, where parents are not legally married, only the mother's name would appear on the birth certificate and fathers would still need to go to a Sector office to recognize the child as their own and have the birth record and BC rectified. Further, in both cases, whether registration occurs at the hospital or the Cell, the parent(s) will need to have the baby's name ready when they register the birth. This was a concern among study participants due to cultural beliefs that preclude naming a child before it is born. Participants felt that sufficient awareness raising about the new system would be required to ensure a smooth roll-out. However, overall, participants felt the new digital birth registration system was a positive development.

## Data Protection and Privacy

**A majority of participants generally trust government with their information but many expressed a few concerns about the private sector.** In general, participants felt comfortable sharing private information with the public sector. They viewed this as part of their civic duty and aiding national security. On the other hand, participants suggested that they did not trust the private sector's data privacy policies and suspected that their private information was being shared without their explicit permission.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

A full table of recommendations is available at the end of the report. Some key, high-level recommendations include:

To increase the uptake of IDs, birth registration, and BCs, the **government/NIDA should continue communicating the benefits of these**, particularly for special groups. All channels of communication should be used, such as radio, TV, community meetings, and others.

To minimize the cost and time of registering and replacing or updating an ID, participants offered these recommendations:

- **Simplifying the process** for new and replacement IDs to enable more people – especially those with limited resources – to successfully navigate the process and actually obtain the IDs.
- **Adjusting registration and replacement costs** to be commensurate with Ubudehe<sup>1</sup> categories or welfare ranking to allow for higher adoption rates among poorer citizens.
- **Targeting outreach to vulnerable populations** to sensitize them on the benefits of having an ID and on how best to navigate the application or replacement process to ensure higher adoption rates.

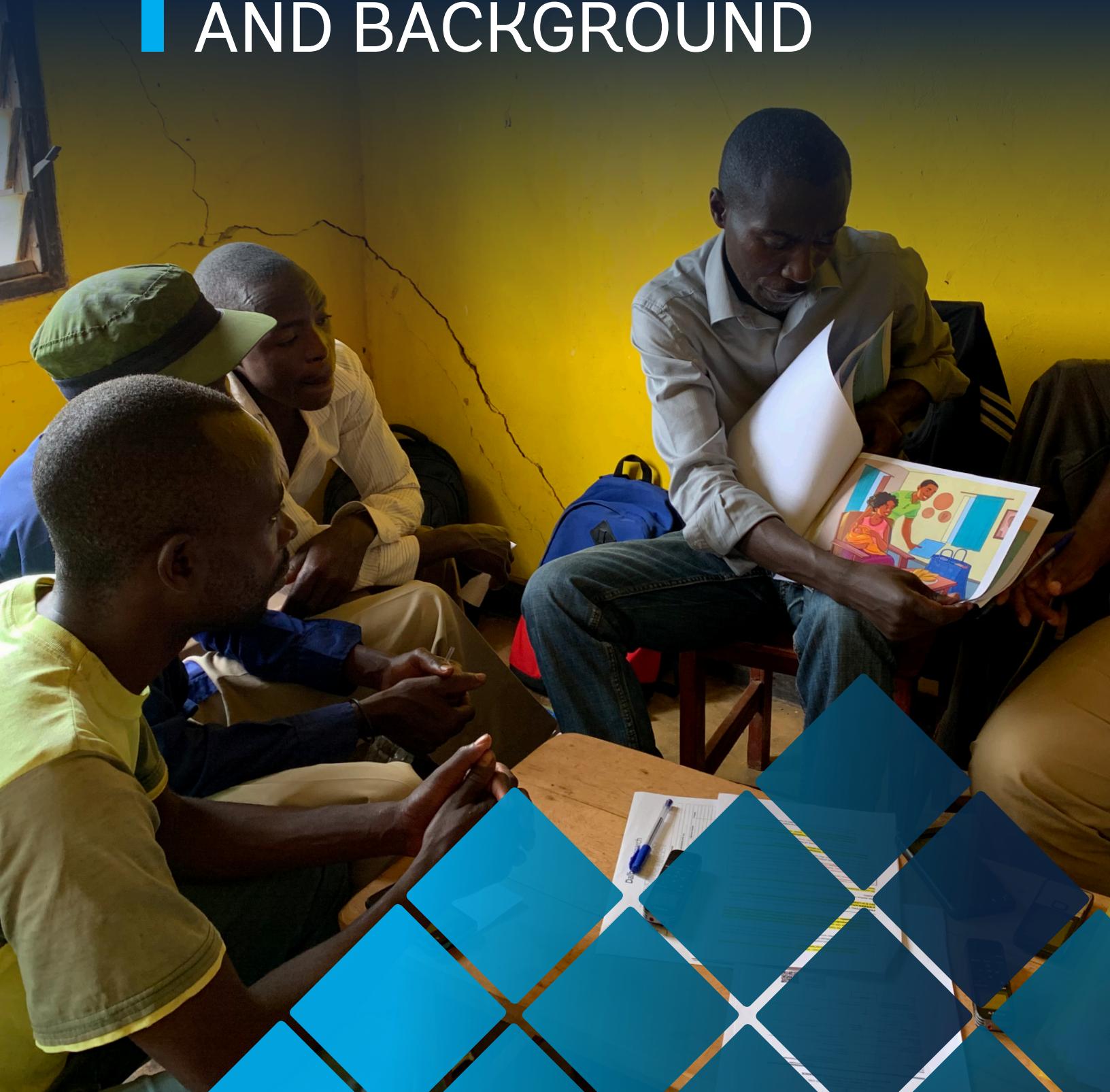
Participants had the following recommendations for improving the process of birth registration and acquiring BCs to increase accessibility:

- **Mobilizing and sensitizing community health workers and engaging local village leaders to spread the word about the new birth registration system.** These actors have relationships with new mothers and are trusted figures for supporting new mothers through the necessary processes.
- **Reducing the cost** of BCs for certain groups or making it commensurate with Ubudehe categories or welfare ranking to improve uptake.
- **Potentially waiving or lowering penalties to facilitate late registration.** This could be extended for a certain length of time (e.g. until the child turns one year old) or there could be periodic campaigns to suspend penalties and encourage late registration to take place.

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<sup>1</sup> Ubudehe, managed by the Local Administrative Entities Development Agency (LODA), is a program whereby households are classified by their community according to their level of poverty and assigned to one of four Ubudehe categories, with the first category representing the poorest members of society and the fourth category the wealthiest. Every household in Rwanda is classified and their Ubudehe category can be verified via the Irembo platform. Ubudehe categories are used to determine eligibility for government services such as the Community-Based Health Insurance (CBHI, Mutuelle de sante) and other social welfare schemes. The first Ubudehe category (1.5 million Rwandans) is composed of people with no means to own or rent homes of their own who can hardly put food on the table. The second category (3.1 million Rwandans) have part time small jobs and either own cheap houses or are able to pay rent. The third (and largest) category (5.8 million Rwandans) includes farmers, professionals, and business owners who do not need the support of Government for survival. The fourth category is made up of people deemed to be rich such as government officials from the level of director upwards and large business owners.

# 1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND



# 1. Introduction and Background

## 1.1 Overview of the Research

Inclusive and trusted identification systems are associated with advancing a range of rights and other development outcomes, including supporting comprehensive social safety nets, primary health and education services, streamlining public administration, fostering financial inclusion, and empowering women and girls. However, the introduction of next generation digital ID and digital birth registration requires an understanding of peoples' perspectives on critical services which require an ID and/ or birth certificate, obstacles faced in obtaining these documents or using them to access services, the privacy of their personal data when used to access services, and preferences for obtaining and using these documents by the various demographics. These perspectives will inform efforts to create a robust identity ecosystem aimed at improving the lives of people and enhancing human capital outcomes.

As the government of Rwanda embarks on a journey to introduce next generation digital ID and digital birth registration, the National Identification Agency (NIDA) requested the World Bank to carry out research to understand experiences, attitudes, and behavior of Rwandans towards accessing and using the current ID and BCs. This research was carried out to understand the current and expected obstacles in obtaining identity documents and people's ability to use them to access government services, particularly for the vulnerable communities in Rwanda. The findings of the research are also intended to inform the roll out of digital birth registration and associated public awareness campaigns to increase birth registration and uptake of BCs. The research and analysis was carried out by the Dalberg team, under the guidance of the ID4D team and NIDA, in Rwanda between October 2019 and April 2020.

## 1.2 Overview of Identification Ecosystem in Rwanda

### 1.2.1 National Identification (ID)

The NIDA is the permanent agency in Rwanda that is in charge of both the national ID and civil registration. NIDA accepts legacy (older) or current documents that can justify one's identity in order to issue a national ID. These include people's information in the civil registries kept at Sector offices, student IDs, the old paper-based ID, birth certificates, social security records, old passports, and academic records.

Each person in Rwanda is issued a 16-digit unique national identification number (NIN); biometrics (thumbprints) are collected during registration for the national ID card to ensure uniqueness. The card has a photo, signature and basic biographic data on the front; an unencrypted 2D barcode with biographic data and a single thumbprint minutia encoded are on the back. The card contains UV holograms and microprinting as security features. The first national ID card costs 500 RWF (about 50 US cents), and every replacement issued thereafter costs 1,500 RWF (about USD 1.5). NIDA estimates that over 98 percent of the eligible population have been issued a national ID card.

The national ID card and NIN are widely used by adults aged 16+. Both are required for accessing most services in Rwanda, including healthcare, higher education, taxation, pensions, social assistance, financial services, and SIM registration. The Rwanda national ID card is also accepted as a valid travel document by Kenya and Uganda, and vice versa, as part of the Northern Corridor Integration Projects. NIDA also issues ID cards to registered refugees (as valid as Rwandan IDs) and legal residents.

## 1.2.2 Birth registration and certificate

**Since 2016, civil registration<sup>2</sup> is done through NIDA, who receive birth and death data electronically for a record to be created or flagged in the National Population Register (NPR).** The official authority for enacting and monitoring registration of births is the Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC) through its Directorate General of Territorial Administration and Good Governance. According to the Demographic Health Survey 2014, 56 percent of children under 5 have had their births registered, while only 3 percent have birth certificates in Rwanda. By 2019, vital statistics showed that birth registration completeness was about 87 percent at the national level (and roughly equal for males and females), and 78 percent of completed birth registrations took place within the 30 day deadline.<sup>3</sup>

**It is a legal obligation to register every birth of a child within 30 days of giving birth and the registration can currently be done at the civil registrar offices at the Sector level or at Rwandan Embassies worldwide at no charge, including for late registration (those done after the 30 days deadline).** The requirement for birth registration is a medical birth notification issued by the health facility where the child was born. In case the child was not born in a health facility, birth registration requires a birth notification issued by a competent authority in the child's place of birth indicating the names of the child's parents and date of birth and in the presence of two witnesses 18 years or older. If for some reason the birth of a child is not registered within the 30 days, this is considered a late registration. In the future, a penalty in the form of administrative fine determined by an appropriate legal instrument may be imposed before the birth can be recorded. However, at present, no legal instrument has been enacted, therefore all births are recorded freely. The Rwandan government has also made concerted efforts to encourage birth registration. For example, in 2017, the Minister of Local Government issued a directive requiring all local government authorities to register all civil events, including late birth registration at no cost. A sensitization campaign was carried out countrywide during a "CRVS week" which called upon all citizens to register births including those that had not been registered for years.

**After the registration of birth, a birth certificate can be obtained immediately.** There are three forms of birth certificates that are currently offered in Rwanda: (1) the *Attestation de Naissance* (costs 500 RWF or about 50 US cents and expires after three months); (2) a summary (abridged) certificate, the *Extrait d'acte de Naissance* (costs 1,000 RWF or about one US dollar and does not expire); and a full (unabridged) birth certificate, and (3) *Acte de Naissance* (costs 2,000 RWF or about USD 2.0 and does not expire). At the time of data collection, the *Attestation* could be obtained from Irembo<sup>4</sup> while the *Extrait* and *Acte* were available through the Sector office. As of the time of publishing, all three are available through Irembo.

**A new digital birth registration system is about to be rolled out to allow for new births to be registered in the health centers or the Cell level<sup>5</sup>, eliminating the need for a trip to the Sector office for birth registration.** At the health center (Figure 1), the mother will check in to the health center with her national ID. When she gives birth, an authorized staff (data manager) will then input the info related to the birth (baby's weight, height, etc.) and send a birth notification to the Head Nurse. When the mother is being discharged, she or anyone who came with her to the health center (the father, an aunt, etc.) can then go to the Head Nurse and complete the registration of the birth. The Head nurse will already have the birth notification in the system, and she will then double check the information and complete the registration, issuing the baby with a NIN.<sup>6</sup> The NIN may be written on a piece of paper or otherwise shared (e.g. via SMS) with the person registering the birth so they can use Irembo (either on their phone or through an agent) to pay for and generate the digital birth certificate and/or receive a printed version of the birth certificate. If the birth occurs at the community level (Figure 2): after the mother gives birth either she or her representative (e.g. husband, aunt, community health worker) would get a letter from the village coordinator attesting that the mother gave birth in that community and including her national ID number. The mother or the person acting on her behalf would then take this letter to the Cell

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2 Rwanda records a number of vital events in the civil registration, such as births, deaths, marriages, etc. This report deals only with birth registration.

3 National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR), May 2020, Rwanda Vital Statistics Report 2019.

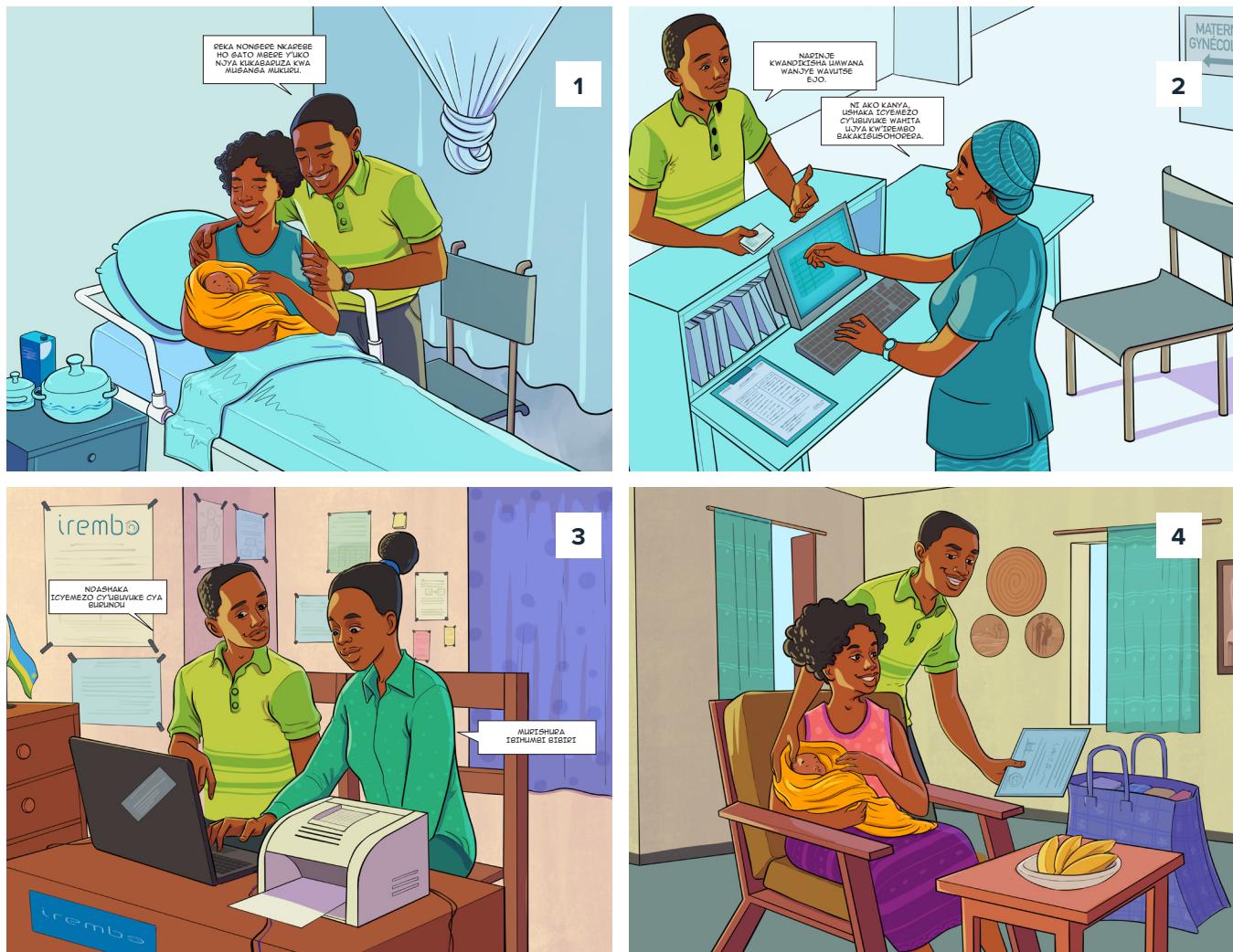
4 An agency providing government services and information in Rwanda.

5 The Republic of Rwanda is organized in four Provinces in addition to the Kigali city, 30 Districts, 416 Sectors, 2,148 Cells and 14,837 Villages.

6 The registrant will not need to provide any form of ID or sign any documents to complete the registration; the process is paperless. In order to record the father's name in the baby's birth record at the health center, he and the mother will have to be officially married and have had their marriage recorded with Government in the NPR. Where a couple is not officially married, only the mother's details will be added to the birth record and the father will need to go to a Sector office to recognize the child as his own and have the birth record amended.

to register the birth. A NIN would be issued for the child at the Cell level and then the mother or the person acting on her behalf will receive the NIN via SMS and can use Irembo (either on the phone or through an agent) to pay for and get a digital birth certificate and/or a printed version of the birth certificate.

**Figure 1. Digital Birth Registration Process at Hospital**



## Kinyarwanda Illustrations of Digital Birth Registration in Hospitals

**Step 1:** Mother gives birth at hospital, baby's data automatically entered in system

**Step 2:** Father or another authorized person or guardian completes registration digitally at hospital without needing any documentation

**Step 3:** Father or another authorized or guardian goes to IREMBO to pay for and print a birth certificate

**Step 4:** Father or another authorized person or guardian returns home with birth certificate

Source: Illustration developed for this study.

**Figure 2. Digital Birth Registration Process at Cell Level**



### Kinyarwanda Illustrations of Digital Birth Registration at Cell Level

**Step 1:** Mother gives birth at home

**Step 2:** Aunty (or another authorized person) goes to village coordinator for letter certifying the home birth, child's information, and mother's national ID information

**Step 3:** Aunty (or another authorized person) goes to register the birth at the Cell office

**Step 4:** Aunty (or another authorized person) pays via mobile on Irembo to receive digital birth certificate and pays to have it printed at a local shop

**Step 5:** Mother, Aunty (or another authorized person) returns home with the birth certificate

Source: Illustration developed for this study.

## 1.3 Methodology

### Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. **Access to and use of the current national ID and birth certificates:** What are people's views on the existing processes for accessing the national ID, birth registration, and BCs? What are people's views on the use of the national ID card and BCs to access public and private sector services? What obstacles do people currently experience? What are people's preferences for the evolution of the ID and birth registration system?
2. **Differences in attitudes or experience between genders, age groups, socio-economic groups, and among special groups:** How do perceptions and experiences on access to and use of IDs and BCs differ between men and women, between different age groups, between different socio-economic groups (Ubudehe categories), and among key vulnerable populations (e.g. special groups such as orphans, refugees, and persons with disabilities)?
3. **Perception of next generation digital birth registration:** How do people feel about the new digital birth registration system to be rolled out? Based on presenting scenarios of the potential next generation digital birth registration and digital BCs, what is people's feedback and preferences, as well as potential barriers, challenges, and opportunities from a local perspective?
4. **Privacy concerns and preferences about the use of personal data:** What are people's views and preferences on how personal data is maintained or used by public and private sector entities, particularly for accessing services that require the national ID or a BC?

### Methods

The research team used a mixed qualitative approach to data collection. Different qualitative interviewing tools and techniques were used for data collection, which included focus group discussions (FGDs, 47), key informant interviews (KII, 34), user journeys (UJs, 25) and individual persona interviews (47). A short demographic questionnaire was also administered to the FGD and KII participants to understand the level of coverage of birth certificates and IDs among the study sample, and to provide basic demographic information such as age, gender, and socioeconomic status.

For FGDs on the future digital birth registration system, custom illustration of the process were commissioned for use in this study and validated by NIDA for accuracy (see Figures 1 and 2).

FGDs and interviews were audio recorded with the consent of the participants, translated and transcribed into English, and coded using the Dedoose software. Detailed field notes were also drafted for each FGD to enable spot checking during the course of field work. Data was anonymized, with participant names kept separately of all notes and transcripts, and transcripts were coded using Dedoose.

### Consent

Informed consent was received from every participant in the study. The study was explained in detail verbally to all participants by the study moderators, and a printed consent form was read by every participant as well as read aloud by moderators as necessary. Each participant signed a two-part consent form which explicitly asked their consent to (a) participate in the study and (b) have their picture taken as part of the study. Participants were free to consent to participating in the study but not have their picture taken. In cases when any one participant in any Focus Group Discussion (FGD) declined to give consent to be photographed, the FGD as a whole was not photographed. Signed consent forms are archived and secured with the Dalberg research team.

## Timeline

Field work took place between November 2019 and January 2020, while transcription, coding in Dedoose, and analysis took place between February and April 2020.

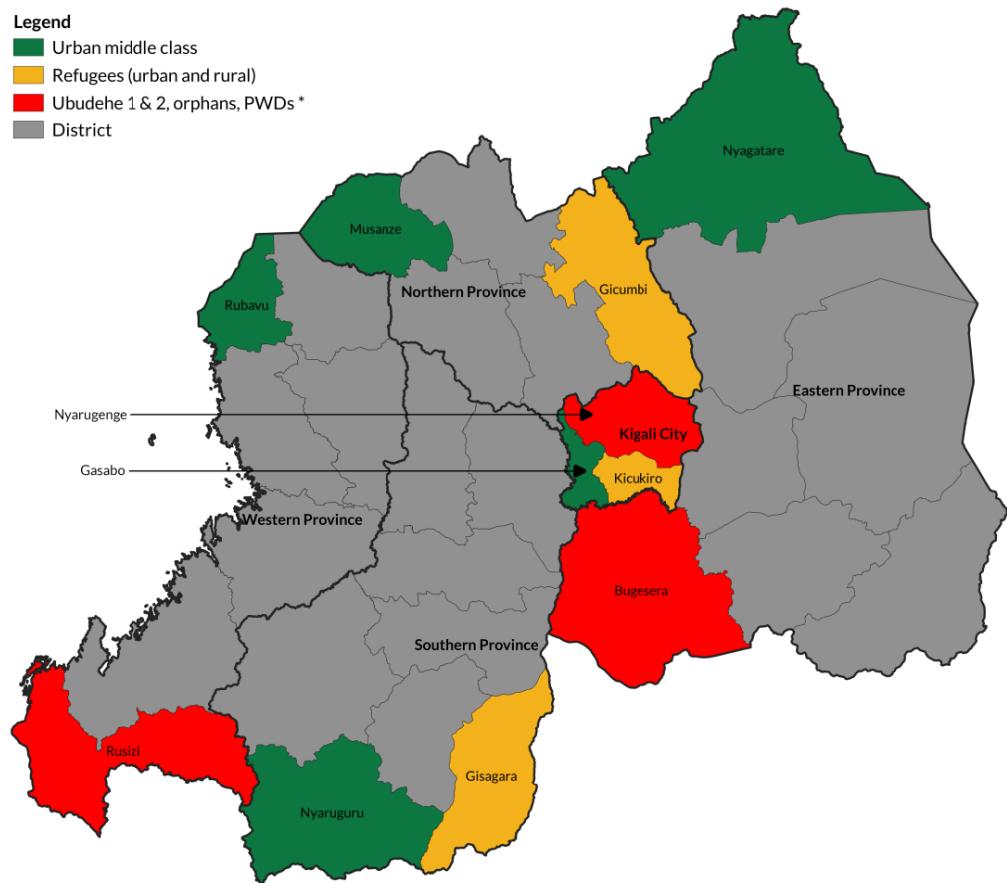
## Survey Locations

The participants for the study were drawn from all five provinces of Rwanda (Kigali, Northern, Eastern, Western, and Southern) and eleven districts (Nyarugenge, Gasabo, Kicukiro, Musanze, Gicumbi, Gisagara, Nyaruguru, Nyagatare, Bugesera, Rubavu, and Rusizi). Districts and communities chosen for the study were selected on the basis of:

- Prevalence of people in the Ubudehe categories targeted for the study (Ubudehe 1, Ubudehe 2, and Ubudehe 3 categories were targeted to ensure a mix of poor (U1+2) and better off (U3) participants)
- Ensuring a mix of urban and rural locations
- Presence of refugee camps (two districts with refugee camps were selected)

Figure 3 shows which groups were targeted in which District of Rwanda.

**Figure 3: Map of groups targeted by study district**



## Study Participants

A total of 313 people participated in the study (72 participants for personas and journey maps were selected from the FGDs). A breakdown of the participants is provided in Table 1.

**Table 1. Summary of study participants**

| Province                        | No of female FGDs    | No of male FGDs | Special Groups FGDs* | No of KIIs | No of Personas | No of Journey maps |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|----------------------|------------|----------------|--------------------|
| <b>Kigali</b>                   | 4 groups (27 people) | 4 (24)          | 5 (24)               | 9          | 13             | 8                  |
| <b>North</b>                    | 4 (24)               | 4 (23)          | 2 (12)               | 5          | 10             | 5                  |
| <b>South</b>                    | 4 (24)               | 4 (24)          | 0                    | 6          | 8              | 4                  |
| <b>East</b>                     | 4 (24)               | 4 (24)          | 0                    | 7          | 8              | 4                  |
| <b>West</b>                     | 4 (25)               | 4 (24)          | 0                    | 7          | 8              | 4                  |
| <b>Total = 313 participants</b> | <b>20 (124)</b>      | <b>20 (119)</b> | <b>7 (36)</b>        | <b>34</b>  | <b>47</b>      | <b>25</b>          |

\*Special groups include persons with disabilities, refugees, and orphans.

The following guidelines were used to develop the screener questionnaire for the selection of participants:

- **Ubudehe category** (income levels): Both urban middle-income class (Ubudehe 3) and rural lower income class (Ubudehe 1 and 2) participants were targeted.
- **Age:** Participants 16 years or older were included.
- **Gender:** Discussions/interviews with male and female participants were separate to understand gender dynamics.
- **People with Disabilities:** Separate discussions were held to understand unique challenges faced by people living with different types of disabilities.
- **Refugees:** Both refugees in camps as well as urban refugees who are not in camps were interviewed.
- **Orphans:** This sub-group was included to understand specific challenges that orphans face in acquiring any of the documents.

FGDs were broken down according to gender (male/female) and age group (youth 16-25 years old and adults 26 years and older). For special group FGDs, age groups were sometimes mixed due to a low number of available participants.

For the FGDs, villages within the selected Sectors were identified through the assistance of the Sector statistics officers. A team of recruiters administered a short screening questionnaire to community members within the selected villages in an effort to identify eligible participants for the FGDs. The recruiters and moderators reviewed the completed screening questionnaires and made final selection of participants for FGDs. An additional factor considered in the recruitment was the occupation of the participants, with an aim to have participants with different occupations represented in the FGDs. Purposive sampling was used to select participants, including an emphasis on people who had experienced barriers or exclusion in accessing IDs and BCs. As this was not a random sample of participants, the findings of the study are not representative of any particular population group and cannot be generalized to the Rwandan population as a whole or to particular sub-groups. Rather, the study presents a range of individual experiences which illustrate some issues and highlights opportunities.

KIIs were conducted with Digital Ambassadors<sup>7</sup>, community leaders, IREMBO agents and Sector agents. Digital Ambassadors were selected from a list provided by the Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC) in order to provide feedback on the level of digital literacy among the population and inform a way forward towards paperless and presenceless service delivery. The other KII participants were selected from the Sectors, camps, and villages visited.

User journey and persona interview participants were identified during the FGDs. These were individuals who lacked IDs or BCs or had a different or particularly difficult experience in obtaining these.

## Study Limitations

The findings for this study cannot be generalized to represent overall views of certain groups or of all Rwandans. Rather, they give an indication of the range of experiences and preferences and surface issues of importance among key groups, namely middle and lower socio-economic classes, as well as vulnerable populations (Persons With Disabilities, refugees and orphans), and people who did not have IDs or BCs.

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7 The Digital Ambassador Program is a national program, led by MINICT to increase the digital literacy of five million Rwandan citizens. Digital Ambassadors (DAs) are recruited from among young social innovators and are deployed in communities throughout the country in order to directly train citizens in accessing e-Government and other digital and mobile services through Irembo Platform.

# 2 RESEARCH FINDINGS



## 2. Research Findings

### 2.1 National Identification Card

#### 2.1.1 Attitudes toward National IDs

**Study participants almost universally agreed on the importance of possessing a national ID, whether they themselves had it or not.** In discussing the importance of the ID, participants most frequently cited the ability to access services and opportunities and the sense of pride the Rwandan national identity the card itself conveys.

**Table 2. Breakdown of main uses of National ID card listed in a descending order based on the frequency of mentions during focus group discussions.**

- |   |
|---|
| 1. Travel   |
| 2. Employment   |
| 3. Bank   |
| 4. Medical  |
| 5. Education  |
| 6. Driving License  |
| 7. SIM Registration   |
| 8. Land Registration  |
| 9. Civil Registration                                       |
| 10. Ubudehe Registration                                    |
| 11. Business  |
| 12. Refugee Benefits (including food and living allowances) |
| 13. Other   |

**While the main uses cited were enabling domestic and international travel and seeking employment, participants also discussed the ability to access both private services (like banking and telecom), as well as public services (i.e., healthcare, education, land and marriage registration).** Participants also frequently cited the importance of being able to prove Rwandan identity and the security that it can offer by enabling people to travel the country freely. Participants frequently mentioned the benefits of possessing a national ID over other types of identification, with many discussing the requirement to provide the national ID in order to apply for jobs.

Finally, many participants displayed suspicion towards those who either do not have or do not want to have national ID cards, citing either impoverishment or a desire to hide from legal authorities as the reasons someone would be unable or unwilling to register for a national ID.

**Figure 4. Persona interview of a male registering for ID in Rubavu**

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| <b>Experience</b> | <p>"I went to register for my ID because I needed it urgently to apply for a job. I couldn't wait so <b>I had to go myself to NIDA headquarters to try and get it from there.</b> I could see that it would take a lot of time [to apply at the Sector]. I needed it in my daily life because it is very important to access many other services and I could feel that living [without an ID] was making me uncomfortable."</p> |
|-------------------|---|

## Benefits of possessing a National ID

**Of those participants who had national ID cards, they cited a wide variety of benefits to having it:**

- Ability to work because most employers require national IDs;
- Ease of domestic and international travel without worrying about being able to prove one's identity;
- Acquiring a driver's license;
- Purchasing and registering land and other assets;
- Seeking medical care;
- Being able to register a marriage;
- Ability to access children's or dependents' documentation;
- Opening a bank account and conducting financial transactions

Most participants said it was equally important for men and women of all ages to have national ID cards, citing gender equality in society as a reason for everyone to have one. Several participants emphasized the importance of every member of a family having their own national ID, so that husbands and wives would not be dependent on one another to access necessary services. In addition, for several participants, the national ID card confers a sense of national identity and pride.

*"Possessing an ID card is good because you are a Rwandan, and you have a place to be identified from."*

- Female, Rusizi

**Figure 5. Persona interview of an urban female youth registering for ID in Nyagatare**

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| <b>Experience</b> | <p>"When the current national ID was introduced there were <b>massive mobilizing campaigns that called for each and every child from 16 years old to register for their own IDs,</b> that is how I got my ID when I was 17 years old."</p> |
| <b>Attitude</b>   | <p>"The reason why it was important to have an ID for myself is so that <b>I can be considered as a national and who has complete freedom.</b>"</p>  |

## Reasons for not having a National ID card

**Participants cited a variety of reasons why someone might not have a national ID card,** most of which were either reasons why someone would be unable to register for a national ID or reasons why someone might not want to register for a national ID.

**Participants discussed financial barriers or the inability to present oneself to be registered for a national ID.** Participants cited challenges with finding the right documentation necessary to register (which can be a major challenge for orphans in particular), the difficulty in accessing sector offices, or social stigma around having waited too long after having been eligible at age 16. In addition, several participants mentioned that homeless people without a fixed address were unable to register for one.

*"There are those groups who might be having the capacity to go get registered to have national IDs. For example, homeless people who are even orphans whose parents didn't register them at the Cell level. Those people don't have documents identifying them those are the groups you find that don't have documents which verify them."*

- Male, Rubavu

Furthermore, according to some participants, people with severe disabilities who may not be independent and thus may not need a national ID because they would be listed as a dependent on their caretaker's ID instead.

**When discussing people who might not want a national ID,** some participants pointed to ignorance or a lack of understanding of the benefits as the primary reason someone would not register for a national ID card, saying, as one participant did,

*"Often they have not yet discovered themselves and others didn't get information that is sufficient so that they can know the value of the identification card and how it is used."*

- Male (orphan), Gasabo

Another commonly cited reason is that there are some religions or congregations that discourage congregants from registering for national ID cards. As one participant described it:

*"I think there are also religious beliefs, where there are people with specific beliefs in a given religion which cannot allow them ... to have identity cards. So, I think that religious beliefs may be a reason which cannot allow a person to have identity card; they say some of these cards in a way are related to satanism."*

- Male, Musanze

Many participants believed that the other reason for not having a national ID card is because that person is engaged in criminal or illegal activities and would want to avoid detection. Several participants alluded to those who had participated in the genocide or other criminal activities as not wanting to possess national IDs.

*"The reason for a person to live without an Identity card is when he/she has another agenda. A person who doesn't want to be recognized or identified is either a thief or a terrorist. For every Rwandan, who is patriotic and honest will take an identity card when it is time to get one."*

- Female, Musanze

## Other forms of identification used in lieu of a National ID card

In place of a national ID, participants mentioned using a variety of documents instead, including passports, student IDs, laissez-passers, birth certificates, Mutuelle de Santé cards, driver's licenses, and baptism cards. However, most participants discussed that these other forms of documentation did not provide the same access to services and opportunities that national IDs did, particularly when applying for jobs.

## Limitations of refugee IDs

Refugees were vocal about wanting an ID that would give similar privileges as the national ID, and cited activities they were unable to do with a refugee ID, also issued by NIDA. While the refugee ID is supposed to confer access to many of the same services as a national ID, many participants cited experiences where that was not the case (e.g. SIM registration), likely due to poor implementation of policy by individual officers or employees. Several refugee participants also cited challenges with registering for IDs in general, mentioning challenges furnishing documentation, lengthy timelines, and difficulties in getting replacement IDs when necessary. In addition, some refugees objected to the name of the ID, claiming that the term "refugee ID" stigmatized the cardholders unnecessarily. One participant proposed the term "ID for refugees" as being preferable.

*"I lost my sim card. When I went back to buy a new one, they denied [me], and they said that unless I have a National ID, they cannot subscribe me on a refugee ID."*

- Female (refugee), Gisagara

### 2.1.2 Barriers to accessing IDs (initial registration)

To be eligible to register for a national ID, a Rwandan citizen living in Rwanda must be at least 16 years old. Once they have the necessary documentation in order, they present it to the nearest Sector office and receive their application code. They then use their application code to have their photograph taken and biometric data collected at the sector office equipped with Biometric Data Collection Kits and pays the required 500 RWF application fee (about 50 US cents) at any Irembo agent nearby or via phone. According to the official process, they should then receive their national ID card, but as is illustrated in the user journey below, the process does not always happen this way, with unforeseen delays and often requiring multiple trips.

Study participants cited four commonly encountered barriers in registering for a national ID for the first time: (i) delays in ID application processing times; (ii) concentration of NIDA centers in urban areas; (iii) weak mechanisms for ensuring accuracy of information; and (iv) insufficient information communication and sensitization.

## Delays in ID application processing times

While the NIDA website lays out a one-month processing time between a citizen giving their biometric data and receiving their national ID card<sup>8</sup>, participants reported much longer processing times, often requiring multiple visits to sub-offices. Some reported wait times of three months, while others claimed to have waited up to a year and, in some cases, two years to receive their national ID. The variability in waiting times is also difficult to predict. Because an applicant often has to go to the sub-office to find out about these changes in timing, these delays also end up costing an applicant additional transportation fees or lost wages from having to take time off to visit the sub-office. In addition, because the Sector office and the sub-office are often in different locations, transport between the two can require additional time and money from the applicant that may make the process untenable. Once the applicant receives her card, errors in the information may require even more time – and thus even more of the applicant's resources – to be corrected.

*"The problem is that you can wait for 2 years to get an ID. So, the waiting period is difficult since you need an ID for different purposes. If you are lucky, you may get it few months later after taking a photograph."*

- Female, Gicumbi

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<sup>8</sup> IREMBO webpage.

## Concentration of NIDA centers in urban areas or business centers

**Many of the participants cited the distance to the Sector offices as a major barrier to registering for national IDs.** Because transportation costs for multiple round trips to and from the nearest Sector office are often prohibitively expensive, many of the participants said it was not feasible for them either to begin the registration process or to continue visiting the office as frequently as was necessary to check on the status of the application. Time and again, participants mentioned the cost of transport either to the nearest Sector or Cell office as a barrier, and especially in those cases where applicants were required to travel to Kigali to resolve a particular issue (e.g. change of information on the ID), the cost of getting to the capital was a significant consideration.

*"An ID is expensive. There are people for whom eating is hard because they cannot afford food, so for such people going to the village elder for a letter then going to the Cell and then to the Sector office is very expensive for them."*

- Female, Bugesera

## Weak mechanisms for ensuring accuracy of information

**Many of the participants highlighted cases in which the information on their national ID was incorrect.** The current process has few mechanisms for applicants to review and verify information before it is printed, and once the card has been made, the recipient often has little choice but to start the process and pay the application fee over again. The process of replacing and updating IDs is laid out in more detail in section 2.1.3 below.

*"Sometimes you might be needing to change that ID. Then you go to the Cell office, and they tell you that you have to start from the village level, to the person in charge of security at the village level, and other places. Sometimes it requires you to give back that ID they gave you, yet you still need an ID when seeking for a job or in other activities. And when you give it back, it might take longer to get the corrected ID than you waited the first time."*

- Male, Rubavu

## Insufficient information communication and sensitization

**Finally, many people cited insufficient information and poor communication about the application process in general and about updates for individual applicants as an issue.** The issues with communication about the national ID application process are twofold: first, the channels used, and second, the type and amount of information conveyed about the application process. In terms of channels, most of the information about the registration process is communicated via radio, but participants also suggested print campaigns using posters and distributed flyers for residents to be able to synthesize all the necessary information.

*"My suggestion is that we receive SMSs or WhatsApp messages from MTN, NIDA to confirm that one's identification is correct before printing the ID."*

- Male (refugee), Kicukiro

As for content, many participants find the process opaque, and they would like to better understand anticipated costs and deadlines. While most understand that paying 500 RWF should be sufficient to receive the national ID card, many are not considering the cost of transportation, or the potential need to make several trips to the Sector office, and many participants were unaware of how long the process would take and were not told the reasons for potential delays. In addition, vulnerable populations were especially affected by the lack of clear communication around the process, and many participants suggested targeted sensitization efforts to help vulnerable populations better understand how best to navigate the registration process.

Furthermore, while NIDA plans to use SMS and WhatsApp alerts to communicate progress of current applications, many members of vulnerable populations do not have phones or are otherwise unable to receive these text alerts, so phone calls or outreach through another method – perhaps a designated point person – should also be considered. It was also suggested that NIDA could use their message outreach more effectively to verify individuals' information. This could cut down on the number of ID cards bearing incorrect information once they are printed.

## Effects of these barriers on various populations

### Youth

**With a youth unemployment rate of around 19.5 percent in 20199, youth are especially in need of job opportunities. Because a national ID is often required in order to seek formal employment, youth are especially negatively affected by the barriers that applicants face in seeking national IDs.** The factors of lengthy processing time, complicated procedures, and far distances most applicants must travel to go to the Sector offices, as well as the difficulty in correcting false information on the cards, all negatively impact youth, many of whom are newly eligible to receive national IDs and are often urgently in need of valid identification to seek jobs. In addition, youth registering for the first time sometimes find that there were errors in previously registered records, or that they were only registered to one parent, which can further delay their initial registration process. Figure 6 illustrates the journey of a female youth.

### Rural poor

**Rural residents are more adversely affected by location of Sector offices because they have to spend more time and money to travel to the offices, and some rural participants mentioned having to stay in town for up to several days in order to handle whatever business they needed to manage at the NIDA offices.** The ramifications of this distance are further compounded by the other barriers: uncertain processing times, few mechanisms for ensuring accuracy of information, and poor communication about the application process can all require more in-person visits to the NIDA offices than might otherwise be necessary. Many rural participants discussed spending much more on transportation alone than on the application fee or fees.

*"Most of the money spent was on the transport and living facilities. It cost him 1500 Rwf instead of being 500 Rwf as others do."*

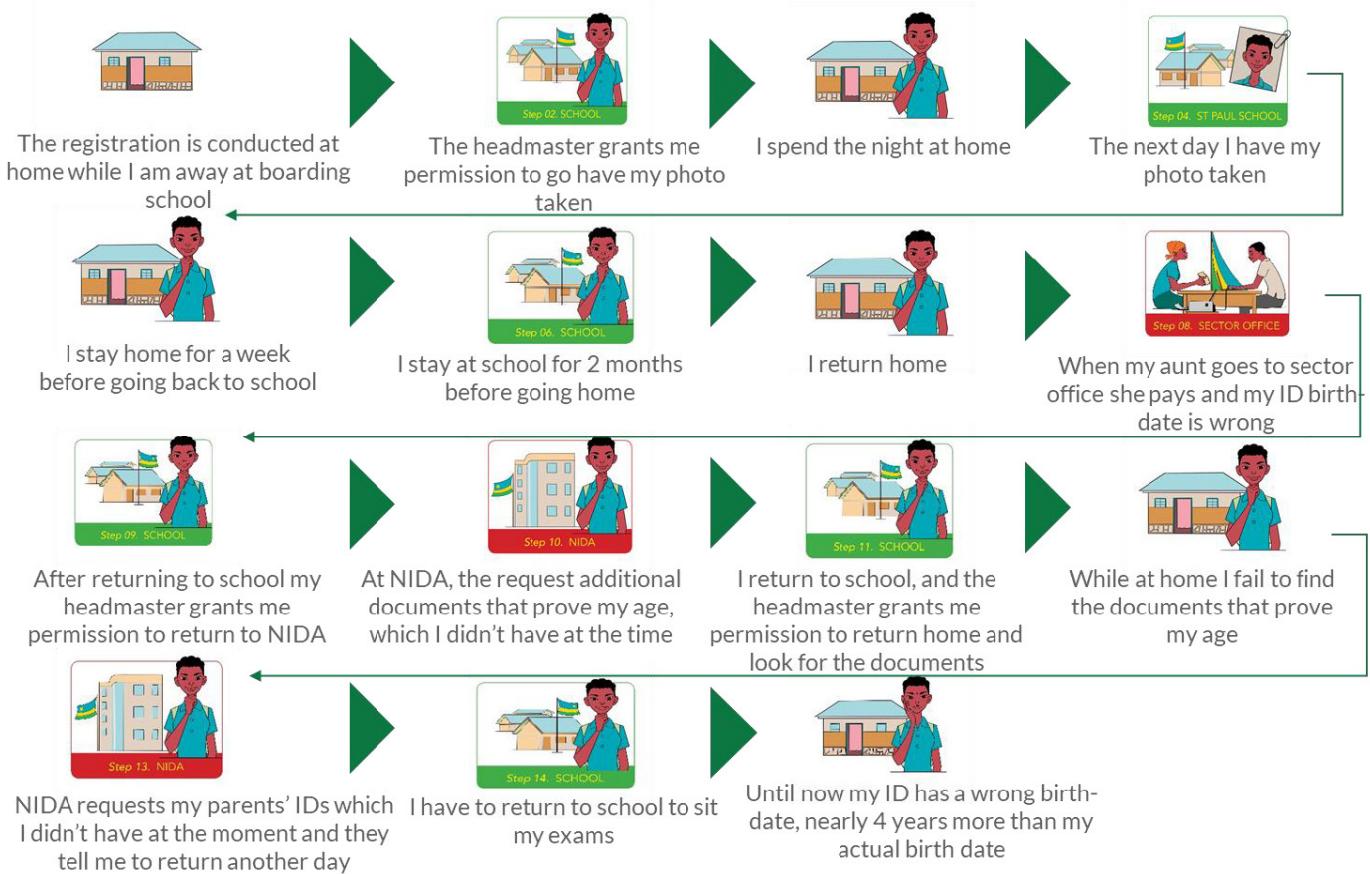
- Male, Bugesera

**Many of these barriers create inefficiencies in the ID application process and the cost of these inefficiencies is most often borne by the applicant in transportation fees and lost wages.** Therefore, in addition to the opportunity cost of their own time, Rwandans in lower Ubudehe categories are less likely to be able to afford a process that may end up costing them thousands of Rwandan Francs, if not more. Wealthier residents both are already more likely to live in urban areas or in business centers in closer proximity to NIDA processing locations and have a higher threshold for the money and time they are willing and able to dedicate to acquiring a national ID.

*"About the price, it might be a challenge for the marginalized people. If possible, the cost of getting an ID should be based on Ubudehe categories. They can reduce that price depending on your category. You might find someone who is not able to get that 500 rwf."*

- Youth Male, Rubavu

**Figure 6. User journey map of an urban female student registering for a National ID reconstructed based on the interviews**



## Women

**The length and cost of the current application process hinder women's ability to apply for ID cards.** Participants most frequently cited household chores, childcare, and financial barriers as reasons women would not undertake the application process, underscoring the amount of time and financial burden the current barriers add to the process.

*"Women have got a lot of work to do, and that process takes a long period of time which women cannot find easily as men."*

- Female, Gicumbi

A more decentralized, more predictable, more efficient process, with clearer communication to applicants would reduce the barriers for women in applying for their national ID cards and in seeing the process through to completion.

## Refugees

**Some refugees consulted in the study reported experiencing delays in the issuance or replacement of their refugee ID cards after registration.** NIDA, UNCHR, and MINEMA regularly organize communications campaigns and registration drives for refugees in both camps and urban areas. Camp-based refugees consulted in this research confirmed taking part in those enrollment drives. Many participants in the study reported waiting long periods for the issuance of their refugee ID, with some choosing to travel to Sector offices to follow up on their application status. In a few instances, some refugees who previously had a refugee ID which expired claimed to have not received a replacement and were unaware of how to go about seeking a replacement (see Figure 7).

*"You get a challenge when the ID is delayed [...]. For example, this man said that for one year he didn't get his ID."*

- Male, Gicumbi

#### Figure 7. Persona interview of a female youth refugee without an ID in Gicumbi District

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| Experience | <p><i>"We used to have Refugee IDs then after five years, they expired, and they requested us to return them to the authorities. After giving them back, there are some who haven't gotten them back, including myself. We don't know the reason why we haven't gotten our IDs back."</i></p> |
| Attitude   | <p><i>"The barriers I see is that they don't give the issue a big value and myself living without a document there is no service that I can be given when I don't have a document, like looking for a job you have to go and look when you have a document."</i></p>                          |

#### Orphans

**Participants mentioned several barriers in the registration process that may be unique to orphans, the two most critical being challenges producing the necessary documents to register for a national ID and the higher likelihood that an orphan may be homeless or may not have a permanent address with which to register his or her ID card.** As illustrated in Figure 8, if an orphan does not have a birth certificate or proof of his or her parents' citizenship, other documentation, such as a letter from a sponsoring organization, must be provided. Similarly, a 16- or 18-year-old orphan applying for an ID card for the first time may not yet have a permanent address, which is necessary information in order to register for a national ID. The participants in the study who were themselves orphans were affiliated with SOS Children's Villages International, a sponsoring organization, but many participants referenced orphans who had no fixed address and thus were unable to register at all.

*"Orphans are very likely to face barriers, like if they lose parents at an early age and they do not find someone to take care of them it becomes difficult when they are to obtain NID, since they are recorded nowhere and under no parent."*

- Female, Rubavu

*"A child living on the street, who doesn't know their parents, who grew up finding themselves on the streets.... It might be difficult for them to get the national ID because they don't know their identity, place of birth, parents."*

- Youth Male, Rubavu

#### Persons with Disabilities

**Participants differed in their descriptions of the barriers persons with disabilities faced in initially registering for national IDs.** Some described the reasons for which persons with disabilities may not be perceived as needing or being eligible for national IDs (for instance, intellectual disability or being dependent on the care of others). One important challenge for persons with disabilities is variation in accommodation and service delivery, leaving them uncertain about how much support they may need to navigate the process. While most urban persons with disabilities described NIDA locations with designated and expedited processes for persons with disabilities, rural participants described offices where no accommodations were made for persons with disabilities, especially those whose communication abilities may be impaired by blindness or hearing loss.

*"The first time I went to be photographed they told us to join the lines but forgot that there existed people with disabilities, also [applicants who are] deaf and [mute] are uncomfortable because they are not able to decode what is being spoken."*

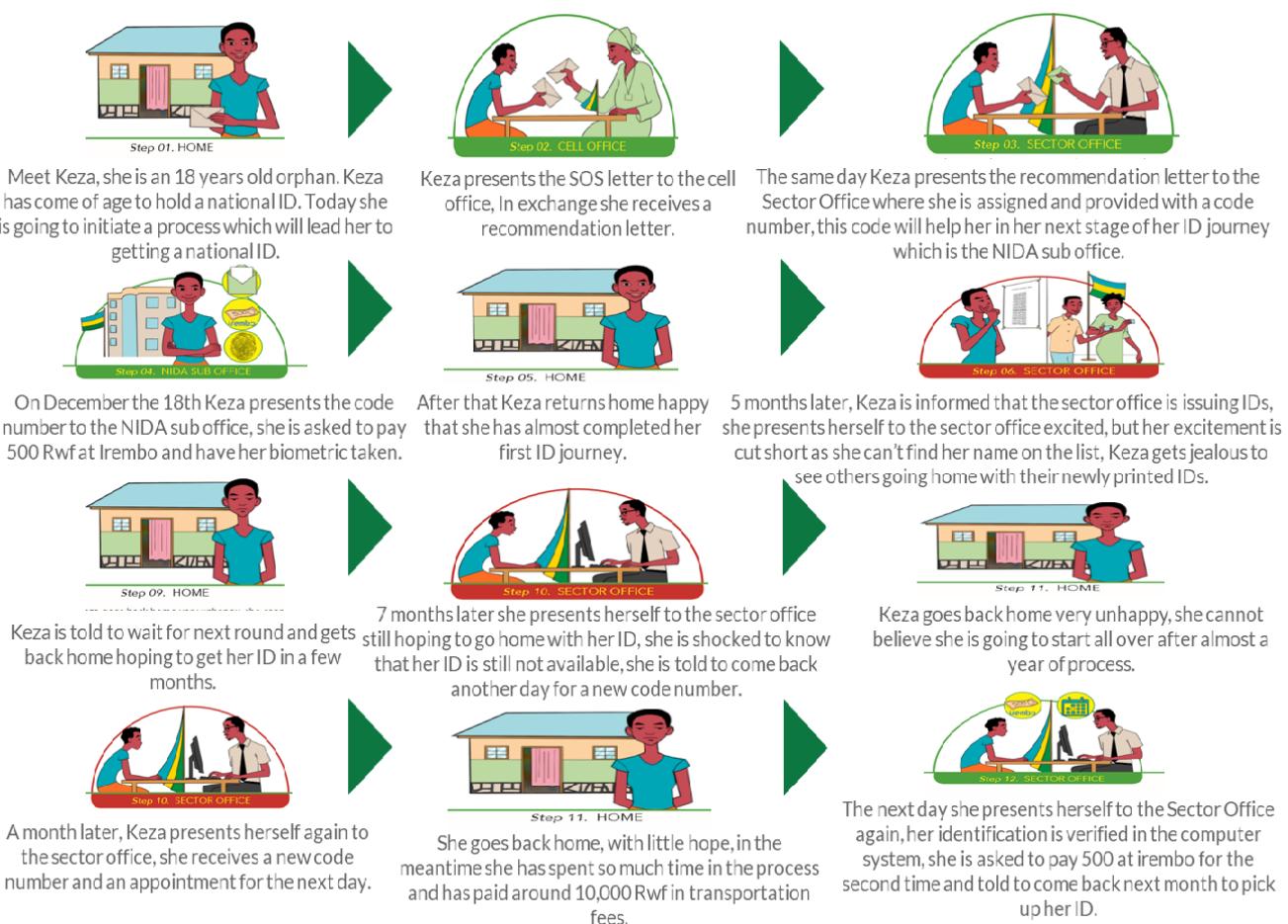
- Male participant with disabilities, Kicukiro

Persons with disabilities also described experiences of being stigmatized and discriminated against which deter them from seeking access to services such as IDs.

*"As humans we think differently, looking at our subject of discussion, searching on what services the national ID card has, especially like us disabled people you can even go to our leaders offices asking for services to get national ID and there are times you are discriminated against. When that happens in the thoughts of a human being there are those that will give up and leave with a notion that they don't need a national ID. It is important such people are shown the importance of having an ID by explaining what services they can access using the IDs and general importance of IDs."*

- Male (person with disabilities), Musanze

**Figure 8: User journey map for an 18-year old orphan registering for an ID in Gasabo**



## 2.1.3 Replacement and updating of IDs

**Many participants mentioned barriers in relation to updating or replacing their IDs.** While the journey map in Figure 9 describes how someone would replace a lost ID, needing to update incorrect information was just as commonly mentioned in the focus group discussions (see Figure 10). Replacing a lost ID for some participants required proof from local police of the loss of the document, certified by NIDA. Some presented copies of radio adverts as demonstration of a good-faith effort to retrieve it, as in the radio ad taken out in the case in Figure 9.<sup>10</sup> Once the cardholder has paid the replacement fee, after a two-month wait, they received her new ID.

### Issues faced in replacing or updating IDs

**As mentioned in Section 2.1.2 above, the mechanisms for ensuring the accuracy of information before the national ID card is printed are weak, and many participants discussed the need to change information on their new card immediately upon receipt.** Commonly cited issues in updating incorrect information on IDs or replacing lost IDs are the opacity and complexity of the process, the time it takes, and the cost. Many participants mentioned how complicated the process was and how little guidance there was on how best to navigate it, so any replacement or updating might require visits to multiple offices and multiple payments because there is little knowledge of the set procedure, or whether there even is a single procedure nation-wide. Another finding was the variation in times cited to receive corrected IDs; some people said it took them only one or two months, others mentioned waiting almost a year or more. Some participants mentioned NIDA officials dissuading them from attempting to correct erroneous information because it was less relevant and would take a long time. Many participants cited expense as a factor, but few discussed how much replacing or updating an ID had actually cost them. There can also be a trade-off between time and expense: some participants discussed the possibility of being able to travel to Kigali for speedier corrections, but that adds expense to an already pricy endeavor.

*"It [changing my ID] took about three months and even money was involved. Going to a ministry that I don't know, changing things at the Cell. It was hectic."*

- Rusizi, Male

*"I wasn't very happy about it [replacing my ID] because it takes long. Most of the times you go to look for it when you really need it and it is difficult to get it."*

- Male youth, Nyarugenge

### The most common errors on IDs

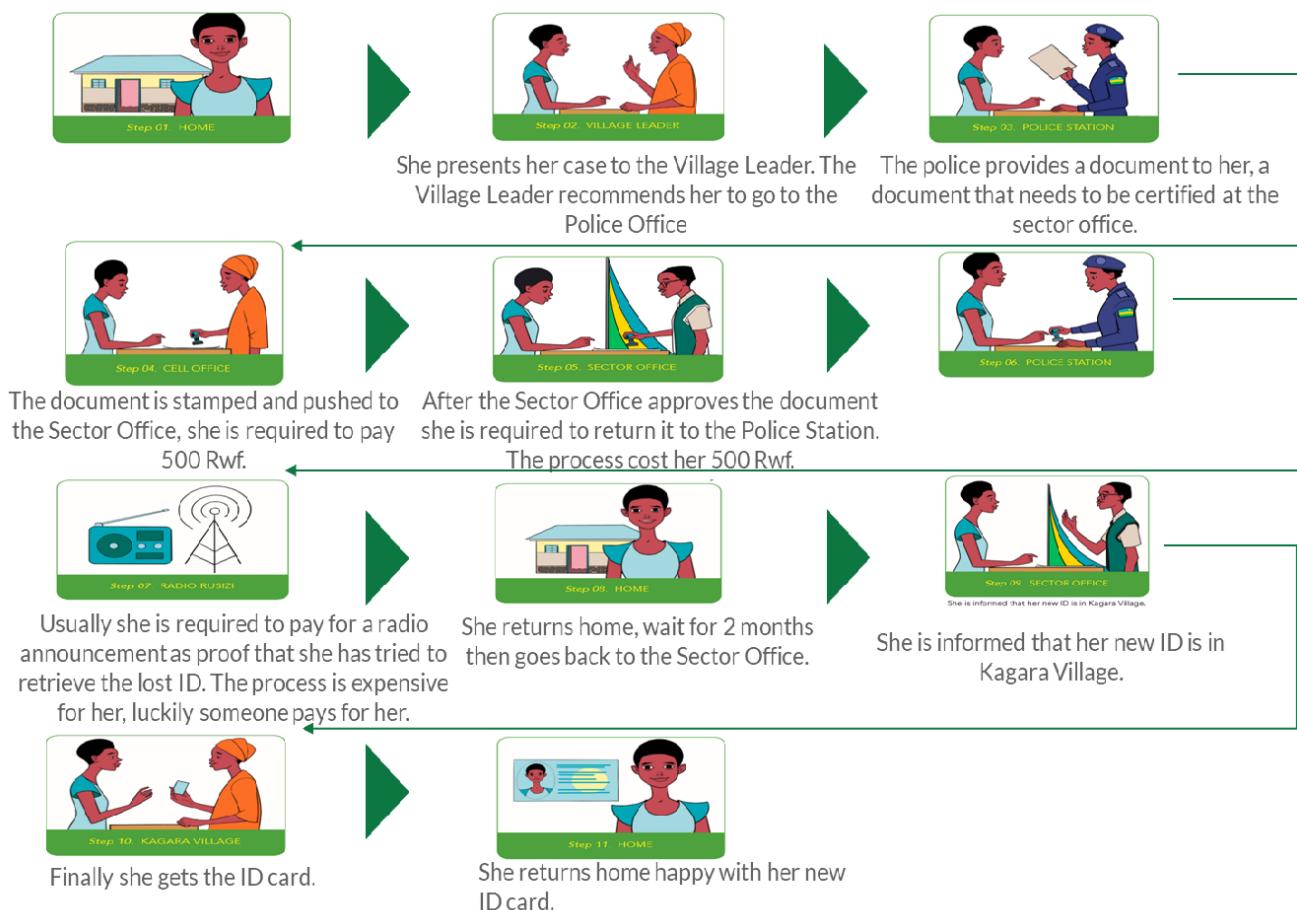
**The fields most frequently mentioned as needing correction are name, gender, birth date, and signature.** According to some participants, some of these errors were only typos (for instance, typing an M instead of an N), but for others, entire names were changed completely, left off, or inverted. In addition, even when the applicant had provided their true birth date and month, the default "1 January" often appeared as the birth date on ID cards. Having the incorrect name, birth date, and gender seemed to be the most problematic for cardholders; one participant told the story of her neighbor, who was refused care at the hospital because the name on her national ID card did not match what was on her Mutuelle de Santé card.

*"I thought of changing the mistake on my ID card about birthdate, but I got discouraged by an official at the office telling me that it takes long time and birthdate doesn't matter, what matters are only names."*

- Female, Musanze

<sup>10</sup> NIDA has clarified that taking out a radio advertisement has never been a required part of the replacement process. This person's experience demonstrates the lack of clarity around what the process requires.

**Figure 9: User journey map of an adult female replacing an ID in Rusizi**



## Difficulties updating or replacing IDs

**Many of the same barriers are experienced when replacing and updating IDs, as registering for an ID.** However, the following unique barriers exist when replacing and updating IDs:

**Some cardholders consulted in this study had resigned themselves to carrying ID cards with incorrect information, while others reported paying more than is necessary for documents to prove the necessity of changes.** Given the importance of these national IDs, people with incorrect information often have trouble accessing services, so having an incorrect ID can be tantamount to not having an ID at all. These experiences suggest that, occasionally, at an individual officer level, there may be deviation from NIDA's agreed business processes and policies, highlighting the need for occasional retraining and performance monitoring. A channel for NIDA to receive this feedback from individuals experiencing difficulties (e.g. a grievance redress mechanism) would also help address such isolated incidents.

In the case of a lost ID, some participants recounted being required to prove a good-faith effort to recover it (for example, taking out a radio ad, as in the user journey in Figure 9; seeking a court attestation; or filing a police report). This has never been officially part of the policies and procedures for replacement of lost IDs, suggesting there is some variation in how policy has been applied at different Sector and Cell levels by individual officers over time. Replacing a lost ID does officially require furnishing another type of identification, like a birth certificate, which is often difficult to get for people who have relied on their national ID for a long time.

*"I was then told to go and bring my baptism card, and I had to take a bus from Nyanza to come and look for it. It was difficult. It was costing me much money. So, I had to leave it. Now I left it."*

- Female, Nyaruguru

**Lengthy and unknown timelines to update or replace IDs** often deterred participants from correcting errors on their IDs. Many people seeking to update their IDs had to give up midway through the process because of the length of time it was taking. At times, even after waiting a long time to receive updated documents, the original errors had not even been corrected.

**Based on participants' experiences, the process for updating or replacing an ID appears to be less standardized than the initial registration process, so the barriers enumerated above are amplified for those attempting to update or replace their national ID.** Confusion around how best to navigate the process at the Sector-office level means that residents frequently need to travel to Kigali to resolve issues instead of being able to address them as locally as possible. Often, citizens seek support from village leaders to help navigate the process, which was not as frequently mentioned in discussions of the initial registration process.

**Figure 10. Persona interview of a male adult with incorrect ID in Nyagatare**

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| <b>Experience</b> | <p><i>"My ID was released when the personal details where wrong the names where written wrongly and the age was wrong too and I was supposed to use it and it was difficult because I was in advanced level secondary school and I was studying by then and the way to get it I had to go and correct the errors then they told me that what was printed is the right information and I could tell them it's not the right one, then it became very difficult and I had no choice to accept the details that were on the ID."</i></p> |
|-------------------|---|

## 2.2 Birth registration and certification

**Birth registration currently takes place at the Sector offices.** A child must have been registered within 30 days of birth. Though late registration fees are not currently legally in force, some participants recounted having to pay fees in the past, likely for a jugement supplétif from a court which is sometimes required as a supporting document for late birth registration. Birth registration requires a birth notification issued by the health facility where the child was born. In case the child was not born in a health facility, registration requires a birth notification issued by a competent authority in the child's place of birth indicating the names of the child's parents and date of birth and in the presence of two witnesses 18 years or older. Registering a birth is free, but acquiring a birth certificate incurs a fee ranging from 500 to 2,000 RWF, depending on the type of certificate requested.

**As noted earlier, a new digital birth registration service is planned, which will allow children born in Rwanda to be registered after birth at the hospital or at the Cell level.** The new process is designed to make it more convenient for parents and will address many of the shortcomings in the current process, such as the time, documentary, transport fees, and witness requirements. The same types of BCs, and associated fees, will remain under the new digital birth registration system.

**Roughly 80% of the 313 study participants did not have a BC, an inverse of the number who had the national ID.<sup>11</sup>** This was consistent across male and female participants. BC ownership was lowest among participants who were orphans, members of special groups, or in the Ubudehe-3 category.

<sup>11</sup> Due to the non-random sample in this study, these results are not representative of all Rwandans or subgroups.

**As discussed above, there are three types of BCs issued in Rwanda:** the full BC (Acte de Naissance), the abridged BC (Extrait d'acte de Naissance), and the attestation of birth (Attestation de Naissance). These are currently issued by the Civil Registrar office at the Sector in the presence of the certificate seeker or delegate, in the case of the Acte and the Extrait, and by Civil Registrar through IREMBO in the case of the Attestation. An individual may choose which one they want to obtain depending on what it will be used for and on institutional requirements (some transactions may require the Attestation whereas others may require the Acte or Extrait).

**Table 3: Birth certification documents used in Rwanda**

| Document   | Description  |
|--|--|
| <b>Birth Certificate</b><br>(Acte de Naissance)                    | This is a legal document, valid for life. It costs 2,000 RWF and is obtained at the Sector office and, as of the time of publishing, also via Irembo.  |
| <b>Abridged Birth Certificate</b><br>(Extrait d'acte de Naissance) | This is an abridged birth certificate. It costs 1,000 RWF. It does not expire. It is obtained at the Sector office and, as at the time of publishing, also via Irembo.   |
| <b>Attestation of Birth</b><br>(Attestation de Naissance)          | This is an administrative document, valid for 90 days. It costs 500 RWF. It can be used to validate the birth information but requires a court judgement to become a legal document. Very few Rwandans go on to legally validate the document, thus it becomes null and void. It is obtained through Irembo. |

**Of the minority of participants (20 percent) that had some form of BC, most had the cheaper but less permanent Attestation.** Participants reported using their BCs when changing the personal information on their pension funds or health insurance scheme, for access to healthcare itself (Mutuelle de Santé), for education and exams, for marriage registration, and even for applying for a loan. Few participants thought the BC was essential to accessing public services, which may be a reason for its low uptake.

**Half of the participants with BCs who are parents have not obtained them for their children. However, the majority of parents that have BCs for their children did not have BCs for themselves.** Mostly, parents reported waiting to get one for their child until absolutely necessary; for example, when their child needs it for Mutuelle de Santé, registration for national exams or when applying for a child's passport. However, participants recognized that registering their children immediately at birth is important.

## 2.2.1 Attitudes toward birth registration and birth certificates

### Birth Registration

**Participants seemed generally aware of the need to register births and had a vague understanding of the process, but did not always know what was required to register a birth.** Most participants knew that birth registration was done at the Sector office, though many did not know what documentation, etc. was required until they arrived at the Sector office, leading to multiple trips. For those who undertook late registration, there was general awareness of the need to start from the village level to gather documentation, which was seen as a barrier. Some participants thought that the birth notification received at the hospital was in fact a birth certificate, therefore it is likely that they did not complete the registration of their children's births.

**Birth registration was seen as particularly important for children so that they could get a BC and access services before they were of age (i.e. 16 years old) to get the national ID.**

**The majority of participants felt positive and excited about the new digital birth registration process and claim that bringing the service closer to them will make the process smoother.** The digital service has the potential to make birth registration more accessible and less onerous by removing the need to travel to the Sector office to

complete the birth registration. Participant believed that being able to register either at the hospital immediately after the birth or at the Cell level soon thereafter would encourage more people to register their children as soon as they are delivered.

*"I find it very interesting since it provides facility by which someone who delivered at home can easily register her child."*

- Female, Rusizi

**Regarding registration at the Cell level, some participants recounted that not all people are always known to the village coordinator, so it may be harder for those people to get the necessary documents.**

**Another concern was raised around cultural beliefs on naming a child and how the new system addresses this.** Some Rwandese parents believe naming or speaking a child's name before birth brings bad luck. This same group of parents felt the design of the future digital birth registration system will require parents to name a child before birth. This misconception will likely contribute to low uptake and resistance amongst traditional families holding these cultural beliefs.

*"According to our culture, you can name a child before birth and the child can die even before they are born so we cannot even plan for a child's name before a child is born. This is an aspect that can make many people resist this new process. Do you have a plan to help with this?"*

- Male, Rubavu

**Refugees in particular expressed confusion about the new system and whether it would require refugee mothers give birth at a refugee camp.** Some refugees expressed a concern about how this would affect those with refugee status who wanted to give birth outside the camps.

## Birth Certificates

**Since accessing broader government and civic services is not conditional on having a BC, adults without BCs report little motivation to obtain one, seeing little utility.** There are fewer incentives to get one as national IDs can be used for most civic processes (applying for a loan, writing national exams, travel, employment), and most participants have not experienced any difficulties from not having a BC.

*"I didn't need it but there is [a child] I requested it for. I first asked the village coordinator, 'this requested certificate how is it found?' He didn't know it. I went to the Cell's executive secretary and he told me that 'it's a long process you can't understand it even if I explain [it]' He told me to go to the Sector's office to have it explained. From home to the Sector's office it's very far [requiring] a motor bike [trip] of at least 2000rwf. On reaching the office I asked the executive secretary and he oriented me to the civil registration Officer who asked if I had the necessary documents with me. Since I didn't know what I was supposed to carry with me, he told me to look for the priest to get the baptism certificate, but also he told me to go to the village to bring anything that shows that the child is Rwandese. I went to get the baptism certificate and the coordinator also rushed and wrote a letter for me showing the child was Rwandese which the Cell executive stamped for me."*

- Male, Nyagatare

*"The reason that I don't have a birth certificate is because I have never had to use it at all and I didn't even know the importance of having it. No one has ever told me the reasons to have a birth certificate."*

- Female youth, Nyagatare

A secondary reason why someone might choose not to have a birth certificate was linked to minority religious beliefs that prohibit registration with government (similar to the ID).

**However, participants typically saw BCs as more important for children, because there are several instances when a BC is required for a child to access a service.** When joining school or registering for national exams, applying for passport, or claiming an inheritance, a birth certificate has to be provided. This explains why some study participants had BCs for their children, but not for themselves. Participants also mentioned not seeking BCs for their children until they were absolutely necessary, which was sometimes too late.

*"I think it is very important for the children because sometimes they ask for them at school. So, if you have them, it is very easy".*

- Female, Nyarugenge

*"Going to the health facility for the child's care, I was requested to bring a birth certificate, but then birth certificate may take long time when the child's care is an emergency."*

- Female, Nyaruguru

**Among those who had birth certificates, the services they accessed with them included:** education and exams, marriage registration, banking and other financial services, registering for RSSB or other government or NGO services, employment, administrative documents, inheritance and property ownership, and applying for a passport. Some women also reported using their birth certificates to register the births of their children under the existing method of birth registration.

## 2.2.2 Barriers to birth registration and birth certificates

### Lack of awareness and complicated processes

**Birth registration currently can be an opaque process for Rwandese with onerous steps.** Participants cited missing and unhelpful staff at Sector offices as some reasons for not applying. Some mentioned that they would attempt to register the birth but received conflicting information from village leaders on how to and where, which did not motivate them to continue the process. Sometimes village leaders provide incorrect information or withhold acknowledgment of the applicant altogether, which impedes the applicant from accessing the Sector level services for birth registration, which are only accessible after consultation with the village leader.

**Figure 11. Persona interview of a female urban youth without a birth certificate in Nyagatare**

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>Experience:</b> | <p><i>"The reason I don't have a birth certificate it's because I have never had to use it at all and I didn't know even the importance of having it."</i></p> <p><i>"There is a time I went to look for it by that time I wanted to a permission to go abroad but when I looked it to it was a long distance to travel to get to the sector, so I decided to leave it."</i></p>  |
| <b>Barriers:</b>   | <p><i>"My workplace only gave me two days to look for the document, and when I went to look for the birth certificate they told me that I first have to go to the chief of village, comma, then I went to see him, and from there I had to go to the cell office and I wasn't able to get the officials they weren't available so I had to stop the process because it was really hard in order to get the document."</i></p> |

**Participants also cited limited awareness about the differences between various BCs vis-à-vis each other.** Many were not aware that there were three types, and most did not know what the difference between them was. Most participants report knowing that the Attestation, was cheaper than the Acte. Only after the differences between the three types of BCs were explained during the course of the FGDs (e.g., time period of validity and various applicable uses), did participants demonstrate a greater interest in the Acte over the others.

## Time and Cost

### **Universally, participants cited time and cost as key barriers to accessing birth registration and birth certificates.**

The lengthy process of going to the Sector office, coupled with lack of information about necessary paperwork, meant a greater time burden for participants and cost in the form of transportation and lost wages or income. The current birth registration also demands the time and travel of a parent and two witnesses. Here the new digital birth registration process will help to ease the process, particularly for those in remote areas and giving birth at home.

**The cost of the BCs themselves can be prohibitive.** Despite higher uptake of the BCs among Ubedehe-1 participants, the unabridged birth certificate (Acte de naissance) is expensive for the average Rwandese and, in fact, most Rwandese do not have this type of BC. The 2,000+ RWF cost, which is about US\$2.0 (for the actual document and transport) is prohibitive for households in extreme poverty.

*“Another thing is that 1000 RWF is much money regarding to the financial capacity of many Rwandans the price should be reduced.”*

- Male, Nyaruguru

*“I also think that it could be better if they can link birth certificate with Ubudehe category so that they may help those people from Ubudehe first category to have it without paying anything as they are poor.”*

- Female, Gasabo

**Fees associated with the late registration of births, such as court fees for the issuance of a judgement suppletif fees, at times deterred individuals from pursuing late registration.** Participants reported choosing to wait for grace periods, such as the Government’s “CRVS week”, where late registration was made easier to access. Those who reported having paid any type of fee for documents or processes related to the late registration of a birth, reported paying between 5,000 - 15,000 RWF (which is approximately 5-15 US dollars). Refugee participants in particular reported paying a penalty of 15,000.

*“I did go to register my child’s birth during the promotion period when the costs had been waived, because before I was asked to pay penalties of 5000 francs.”*

- Female, Musanze

## Informal Fees

**A number of participants reported experiencing informal fees during the birth registration process and when trying to get a birth certificate.** Some had to pay to be attended to during busy period or at crowded offices, while others were asked to pay informal fees during registration. Others waited so long to get a birth certificate that they paid to speed the process along. Participants noted the need to continue to raise awareness that birth registration is free.

*“I knew that the cost of a BC is 1000 RWF but when I went to register for a Birth certificate the process was very hard it took a period of 12 months and I was even obliged to pay bribe to have it.”*

- Male, South Nyaruguru

*"I did go to register my child's birth, I was chased away and asked to bring the vaccination card, so my husband had to pay a bribe."*

- Female, Musanze

**Some participants also reported paying informal fees or bringing gifts to the village coordinator in order to get the necessary documentation to secure a birth certificate.** Others reported that village coordinators would not issue paperwork for people that were not known to them.

*"In rural area, if you do not buy something for the local leader you cannot, have any identification document. I once went to request for a document to proof that I was born in this village, I had to buy beer for three people—the village leader included."*

- Musanze, Female

## Lengthy issuance times

**Participants also complained of waiting long periods to receive the birth certificate.** This ranged from a couple of days to three months, in the case of one refugee participant.

*"It took me more than three consecutive days to get a birth certificate for my child, which I was asked for her care, so I took a decision of caring for her on 100% [without using Mutuelle]."*

- Female

*"It was hard, it took me a long time, I was always appointed to the next day, I had to look myself in the civil registrar book where I was registered. The person in charge was a woman who had no customer care, it took me many days, like 30 days in total, for getting a birth certificate."*

- Female, Nyagatare

## Effects of Barriers on Vulnerable Populations

### Orphans and Youth

**Lack of the right documentation, such as records of their parents' citizenship or their place of birth, were key reasons why the participants who were orphans did not get a BC.** Participants cited incidents of elder orphans who have no family and had failed to get a BC. The paucity of information around their origins meant that they were not even registered in the civil registry. Participants suggested that these orphans miss out on a feeling of belonging, which a BC gives. For younger orphans, not having a BC also impacts their ability to get a national ID later on in life. Lack of BCs also presented challenges accessing services and, in particular, claiming inheritances.

*"Children that survived during the genocide, orphans, for them it becomes difficult to even get inheritance from their parents since the parents never registered them and so no proof that they are the rightful heirs for their parents."*

- Female, Musanze

*"The obstacle I got is that I still have the old ID but these IDs don't contain some information like parents' names and birth dates. They may tell you to bring your parents' birth certificates. I'm saying this because it was a challenge to me because I am an orphan. Since I don't know where they were registered telling me to look for my parent's ID is difficult."*

- Female, Rubavu

**Youth whose parents didn't register them as children can also struggle with accessing BCs (and subsequently sometimes IDs).** This becomes especially difficult for youth who have left their families and do not have access to the necessary information.

*"When your parents didn't get you a birth certificate in your childhood it is hard because when you go to get a birth certificate later there are some information that you are obliged to have to register which you even don't know."*

- Male, Bugesera

## Refugees

**Community leaders cited a lack of documentation as a reason why younger refugees do not have BCs, and participants further cited a lack of confidence and awareness of the BC application process as one reason why refugees do not apply for BCs for themselves or their children.** UNHCR and MINEMA have put in place various support systems to ensure that all births are registered and birth certificates are issued in refugee camps, in a timely manner.

## Persons with disabilities

**Accessibility to official offices and lack of awareness are barriers for persons with disabilities, as is poor treatment by officers.** They cited challenges to accessing Sector offices with wheelchairs, or inability to understand processes because instructions were not in braille or officials could not communicate with deaf applicants. The new digital birth registration may ameliorate the physical challenge for disabled parents wishing to register their child; but the challenge would still stand for disabled adults wishing to obtain/replace their own BCs, which can only be done in-person. Accessibility to official offices and lack of awareness makes the process of obtaining BCs very expensive.

*"The first challenge is when you go to the Sector and you find the birth certificates aren't there and you go home and you will need to come back and those are tickets that are lost."*

- Female (person with disabilities), Kicukiro

**Participants with disabilities had limited awareness of birth certificates, resulting in lower uptake.** Participants claimed that no one has requested the BC when they were trying to access services. As such, they did not think the document was particularly important. Like the general population, persons with disabilities seemed to seek out BCs only when need for a specific reason such as marriage registration.

*"I don't think it is important because it is not usually needed in every day's life. There is no where you can be walking and they ask you for it and they don't allow you to pass, and those who needs it you find that they need it for a specific reasons like getting married or a different important reason."*

- Female (person with disabilities), Kicukiro.

**Figure 12. Persona interview of a female with a disability without a birth certificate in Gasabo**

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| <b>Experience</b> | <p><b><i>"I don't have a birth certificate because I have never looked for it mostly because I didn't have news that it may be needed at all.</i></b> I can say I don't know if it's a chance, but the services I went for no one asking they never requested me for it but they did, I would have known by then if it is needed or if it even exists."</p> |
|-------------------|---|

## Women

**Women faced slightly larger obstacles to birth registration according to some participants because they lack time and money, and are culturally expected to leave “difficult” things like birth registration to their husbands.** This also meant women faced mistreatment when they did undertake the process.

*“Based on our culture many people think that the role of a woman is to take care of children for that reason she doesn't take time to register for a BC.”*

- Female

*“Men are respected more than women, women sometimes are asked to pay bribes or experience sexual harassment before getting services.”*

- Female, Nyagatare

**Single mothers can face particular difficulty in the current process of birth registration and obtaining BCs for their children.** Participants described cases when fathers refuse to accept responsibility of the child, which negatively affects single mothers and leaves a child with low chance to ever obtain a BC, as the mother avoids birth registration due to fear of stigma when presenting alone.

*“When you are a lady and you give birth while still at home [unmarried], you may go for child registration, and they refuse to register him because it requires you to be with the child's father, and sometimes he is the one who doesn't agree that the child belongs to him.”*

- Older female participant in Ubudehe category 1 or 2

**Some married women were able to show a national ID for their husband, as per current requirements, but were still unable to register the baby.** In some cases, women give birth in one village whilst their husband is in another city/village and they cannot register the birth within 30 days, which could mean an administrative penalty. In these cases, they need multiple layers of justification to confirm the identity of the father and reason for his absence. Despite trying, many female participants were confused about how to register a birth without the presence of the father or their husband in the current birth registration system.

*“I went to register a child alone and he [the father] wasn't around, they said I will need a justification from the village. Then I went to the Sector they said it wasn't necessary and asked for an ID copy. I brought it, it wasn't enough and they requested four people to verify it, I didn't succeed and the 15 days lapsed and I had to pay fines thus leading to many people waiting for promotions, that was the challenge I got. My question is, is there any means of registering a child in absence of husband.”*

- Female, Nyarugenge

## 2.2.3 Rectifying birth records and replacing birth certificates

**Rectifying or updating birth records and birth certificates was also challenging for many.** Most rectifications to birth registration records and BCs are name or gender changes. Usually, incorrect information has been negligently input by officials. Participants claim that changes are difficult to make and that officials are usually not helpful in this instance. The changes requested are often not made. As a result, many participants leave incorrect information unchanged, and their BCs are inaccurate. Some participants are required to go all the way to the courts to certify the changes they are requesting.

*“They had put wrong names for the father of my kid and I was asked to pay again and it took longer than 3 days but finally I got a correct one.”*

- Female

**Replacing a lost BC is also challenging.** Participants cite incidents of being interrogated by officials when they re-apply. Most participants thought they had to return to the village coordinators or local authorities to reapply for the BC again, which they found to be onerous. Many participants commented on the difficulty of the process of obtaining a new BC if lost, suggesting that few would replace a lost one.

*“The barrier could be when you have that one that has an expiry date and when it is lost and you find you are required to go in all that process, from the village, the Cell and then Sector... getting messed up. They should provide that one that does not expire, if lost, then we go back to the Sector alone without going through the whole process, passing here and there and without asking another payment for it. I would seek another but as long as there is not that barrier of paying money.”*

- Male, Rusizi

## 2.3 Attitudes toward data protection and privacy

**In general, participants trusted the government and felt comfortable sharing private information with the public sector.** They viewed this as part of their civic duty and aiding national security. Participants also felt that any misuse of data from public sector officials was traceable, as Irembo officials, for example, had to use their employee login when conducting their duties. Therefore, government officials could be held accountable for misuse. However, Sector office officials suggested that citizens trust NIDA and banks – which have a strong reputation for confidentiality – and that they have slightly lower trust in Irembo.

*“While telling them my information I feel they are the right people to know it and the reason I feel comfortable is that mostly when I accept owning an ID It is because I have trust in the government as we are the ones who played a role to set it in position. So, no doubt in giving the government information because we have a role in making it.”*

- Male (person with disability), Kicukiro

**Participants requested more information about the collection of their biometric data and how it would be used.** A few participants expressed concerns around what the biometric data will be used for and the potential for identify theft. Continuing to clearly communicate the purpose of biometric data collection before, during, and after enrollment is needed to instill greater awareness and confidence in terms of data protection and privacy.

*"It is true that we give our detailed information, then they give us IDs but we are curious to know where all that information we provide goes to- because it doesn't all appear on the ID and this is information that has some meaning to us."*

- Urban refugee, Kigali

**Participants suggested that they did not trust the private sector's data privacy policies and suspected that their private information was being shared without permission.** Some cited concerns that copies of their national ID left behind with mobile telcos were being used to fraudulently register other SIM cards. Widespread telemarketing has also ingrained distrust in mobile telecom firms. Participants felt that their data was being shared for marketing purposes by these firms. Banks are seen as more trustworthy and efficient. However, refugee participants cited some concerns around cybersecurity and theft of funds in personal bank accounts and seemed less trusting of the financial services sector than other participants.

*"I've said it before these copies must be removed for instance when you're going to buy a sim card those agents ask you a copy of ID but you never know after that whether it cannot be used in other issues, that's why I suggest to give them the ID number only then remove those issues of copies."*

- Male (person with disability), Kicukiro

**The overall positive sentiments around data protection and privacy are consistent with the early stage of Rwanda's digital ID and BC journey.** As the government moves to provide efficient, transparent and targeted delivery of broader welfare services to the population—and the use of digital identification is expanded to private service provision—including mobile communication and banking services, more questions may be raised around data privacy, security, and more broadly around what it means for residents of Rwanda to have a digital identity.

# 3 RECOMMENDATIONS



## Recommendations

| Issue   | Recommendation  | Responsible  |
|---|---|--|
| <b>CROSS-CUTTING recommendations</b>  |   |  |
| <b>Need for more focused communication and sensitization about IDs, birth registration, and BCs</b> | <p><b>Communication is key to increase uptake of national ID cards, as well as birth registration and certification.</b> The government, particularly NIDA, and other relevant stakeholders should continue communicating the benefits of having IDs and BCs and registering births on time, particularly for special groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>National IDs messaging: Clarifying key processes through new communications messages.</b> These include details on the process for applying for a new ID (including why biometrics are collected and how they are safeguarded and a list of breeder documents), the process for replacing a lost or expired ID, and the process for updating incorrect information on an ID.</li> <li>• <b>Birth registration and BCs messaging:</b> Communications messages need to center clearly on the introduction of the new digital birth registration system and explaining the difference between the three types of BCs and the advantages of getting a BC for all children when they are registered. There is also a need to sensitize parents to decide on a name before the birth, so that the birth can be registered at the health center. Sensitization could be done as part of the ANC and CHWs visits for example. In addition, communications campaigns should include information about late registration of births and highlight that there are currently no fees for late registration.</li> </ul> <p>All channels of communication should be used. These included spreading information via word of mouth through local leaders and community health workers, as well as spreading messages via radio, TV, churches, SMS, banners, and at umuganda (community) gatherings.</p> <p><i>"It is essential that awareness takes place, perhaps in the Umuganda(Community work) where the citizens tend to meet, on the radio's and television to those that have them" - Female, Kicukiro</i></p> <p><b>Communication should be inclusive, utilizing different modes of communication to ensure that everyone receives the necessary information, including special groups with communication difficulties such as persons with disabilities.</b> Targeting outreach to vulnerable populations via all communication channels (noted above) to sensitize them on the benefits of having a national ID or BC and on how best to navigate the application, amendment or replacement process would ensure that more orphans, persons with disabilities, and refugees are able to acquire IDs and BCs as seamlessly as possible.</p> | NIDA with<br>community leaders<br>MINEMA<br>UNHCR<br>Irembo<br>CSOs and NGOs |

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>Need for more focused communication and sensitization about IDs, birth registration, and BCs</b> | <p><i>"Mostly what is important is that they should plan to communicate in a way that is good and comfortable for everyone. If it is the deaf, they should have a sign language interpretation and those that are blind should consider using a font they can read or type of writing that they can understand for them to have a chance to get all the information that is necessary." - Female, Kicukiro</i></p> <p>In addition, it is recommended that NIDA makes use of visuals to ensure the process is clear to people who are unable to read. Such visuals could be placed on the walls at the health clinics or printed on the brochures for distribution to expecting moms.</p> <p><b>NIDA should set and publish service standards for the issuance of national IDs and BCs, and completion of birth registration.</b> Rwandans should be aware of the steps, time, and cost required to register births and/or receive IDs and BCs. They should be further made aware of complaint mechanisms available at NIDA.</p> | NIDA with community leaders<br>MINEMA<br>UNHCR<br>Irembo<br>CSOs and NGOs |
|---|---|---|

#### NATIONAL ID RECOMMENDATIONS

|   |  |                |
|---|--|----------------|
| <b>Location of Sector and Cell offices in urban areas or business centers</b>                                     | <p><b>Bring services closer to the people.</b> This was a general request from everyone, but is especially important for persons with disabilities and others who are not able to travel long distances to be photographed and apply for their ID.</p> <p><i>"I wish they could come to take pictures on the village level because village office is not like on the sector. I think this will be so easier for even those old women and orphans." - Female, Gasabo</i></p> <p><b>This could be achieved by bringing more services to the Cell level and by making it possible to complete most of the application online via mobile phone (e.g. online pre-enrollment forms).</b> This is especially important while dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic in order to minimize physical interactions.</p>   | NIDA<br>Irembo |
| <b>Lengthy processing times for first time applications and replacement IDs and other service delivery issues</b> | <p><b>Eliminate multiple step procedures and bring more aspects of new and replacement ID registration online to enable more people—especially those with limited resources—to successfully navigate the process and leave with IDs in hand.</b> This could include revisiting business processes to identify bottlenecks and streamline application processing, including eliminating multiple unnecessary steps. Greater communication and sensitization about the process for application and replacement, including the relevant timelines, would also go a long way toward addressing this issue.</p> <p><b>Increase the number of staff to speed up services at Government offices to shorten lengthy timelines.</b></p> <p><i>"They should increase the number of employees who take the photos, of Irembo because when you go for the picture and there are many people you get discouraged and there are many employees and like 5 people finish at once it makes it quick." - Male, Orphan</i></p> <p><b>Put in place an SMS-based mechanism of notification about application processing and for applicants to request updates.</b></p> | NIDA           |

|                                    |  |  |
|------------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Cost of IDs</b>                 | <p><b>Adjust registration and replacement costs to be commensurate with Ubudehe categories to allow for higher adoption rates among poorer citizens.</b> Cost of IDs and their replacement should also be revised for key vulnerable groups, such as orphans, who may not have the resources to pay the full registration fee.</p> <p><i>“Another thing is that they should based on 500 RWF that we give. People from the 3 Ubudehe category can afford to give that 500 RWF; but poor people from the 1 ubudehe category would get it for free. That would encourage everyone to get their IDs. Because it’s not everyone who can afford to pay that 500 RWF.” - Male, Rubavu</i></p>  | NIDA                                       |
| <b>Incorrect information on ID</b> | <p><b>Change business processes to ensure accuracy of personal data before ID issuance.</b> NIDA should introduce a rule that an officer needs to confirm the details as entered into the system by reading it back to the applicant before completing the process of submitting the ID application. The registration should not be completed before confirming that the information entered is correct. This will reduce the time taken and expenses incurred in correcting any possible mistakes upon registration.</p>  | NIDA                                       |
| <b>Barriers faced by refugees</b>  | <p><b>Increase the number and frequency of enrollment drives at refugee camps and in urban areas to ensure that every eligible refugee has a NIDA-issued refugee ID.</b> This includes clarifying and facilitating the process to ensure that new refugees and newly-eligible 16 year old refugees are able to access the refugee ID in a timely fashion. <b>Consider putting in place a more permanent, continuous registration process for refugees to enable newly eligible people to access refugee IDs in a timely fashion.</b></p> <p><b>Raise awareness among service providers and refugees of the validity of the refugee ID as a government issued ID to access services.</b> Many refugees shared experiences of discrimination when trying to access a service (e.g. banking, telcos) with their refugee ID and thus expressed a desire to have the national ID which they considered “more valid” for accessing services. It will be important to raise awareness generally on what services can and cannot be accessed by refugees using the refugee ID.</p> <p><b>Refugees should be made aware of complaints mechanism for NIDA in order to be able to report issues with refugee IDs or discrimination in service delivery.</b></p> | NIDA<br>MINEMA<br>UNHCR                    |
| <b>Barriers faced by orphans</b>   | <p><b>Relax documentary requirements for orphans applying for national IDs.</b></p> <p><b>Clarify the process via which orphans and youth without documents can present alternative evidence (e.g. from adoptive families or orphanages) to meet documentary requirements. Sensitize and train the registration personnel accordingly.</b></p>   | NIDA<br>CSOs and NGOs working with orphans |

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| <b>Barriers faced by persons with disabilities</b> | <p><b>NIDA and other government offices involved in ID registration should be made accessible to persons with disabilities to enable them to register.</b> NIDA could further consider home-based registration for certain persons with disabilities who are unable to travel to NIDA offices or Irembo agents to apply for an ID. DPOs could be mobilized to support NIDA in identifying and reaching persons with disabilities.</p> <p><b>Some participants with disabilities further requested the ID to include disability information to avoid carrying two IDs, as well as the issuance of special cards in braille for people with visual impairment.</b> NIDA could alternatively consider how to best link its API to the existing disability card to enable services to be delivered with either card.</p> <p><i>"Because I wished that the national ID card can be joined with the disability card, I think that the services for the disabled they can start looking at the national ID card to know if you have disabilities and what services you need, because since they gave us the card for the disabled the value it has or how they plan to do it better, but if it is shown on the national ID card because to have two identification card to keep is difficult" - Male (person with disabilities), Musanze</i></p> | NIDA<br>MINALOC<br>Disabled people's organizations (DPOs) |
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#### BIRTH REGISTRATION RECOMMENDATIONS

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| <b>Avoiding confusion and ensuring smooth roll out of the new digital birth registration process</b> | <p><b>Mobilize and sensitize community health workers and engage local leaders.</b> Participants predicted some confusion in the roll out of the new system and noted that these actors have relationships with new mothers and are trusted figures for supporting new mothers through the necessary processes. Mobilization should also aim to use existing community structure such as community assemblies, monthly community work (umuganda) as and when COVID-19 abates.</p> <p><b>Sensitize parents to the new birth registration process and the need to decide on a name before the birth (and certainly before discharge from the hospital) to ensure timely birth registration.</b> For example, as part of the ANC and CHWs visits nurses can explain the new birth registration processes and stress the need to have the baby's name ready at the time of registration.</p> <p><b>Issue a standard form for village coordinator's letters to facilitate registration at the Cell level.</b></p> <p><b>Ensure there are sufficient staff at Cell-level offices to carry out the registration.</b></p> <p><b>Undertake rigorous training at health facility and Cell level and national awareness raising campaigns when the new process is rolled out.</b></p> <p><b>Allow mothers who gave birth a home to register the baby at the hospital when they go for the first set of vaccinations, using the same documentation they would take to the Cell office.</b> This would create multiple access points for birth registration (both Cell and hospital) for all mothers.</p> | NIDA<br>MINALOC<br>Ministry of Health |
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| <b>Service delivery issues</b>                             | <b>Consider implementation of a national complaints hotline and complaint receipt procedures at Cell and Sector offices to enable NIDA to be aware of service delivery issues (e.g. requests for bribes, rude treatment, lengthy delays, etc.) and to respond.</b>  | NIDA  |
| <b>Late registration fees</b>                              | <p><b>These are not yet in force and have been abolished in 2017 when the Minister of Local Government issued a statement/directive requiring all Local government authorities to register all civil events specifically births-including late birth registration at no cost. However, when the respective presidential order is enacted, these could present a significant financial barrier to late registration of births.</b> NIDA should continue with periodic late registration drives such as “CRVS week” or other “mop up” drives which will encourage late registration before the enactment of any late registration fees. Once late registration fees are enacted, periodic grace periods where fees are waved may be necessary to encourage late registration.</p> <p>Communications campaigns for birth registration should be clear that there are currently no fees for late birth registration and should advertise periodic late registration drives.</p> | NIDA<br>MINALOC                               |
| <b>Barriers faced by refugees</b>                          | <b>Greater awareness raising and liaising with existing support organizations, like UNHCR, are necessary to ensure seamless roll out of the new system and timely delivery of BCs for refugees.</b> Refugees need to be aware of the importance of BCs, particularly for their children, and the process via which they can access the documents. Communications campaigns should also address misinformation, for example the incorrect belief that registering their children in Rwanda makes the children Rwandan citizens.  | NIDA<br>MINEMA<br>UNHCR<br>NGOs               |
| <b>Barriers faced by persons with disabilities</b>         | <b>Consider registering births for persons with disabilities at home and engaging them through disabled people's organizations (DPOs).</b>  | NIDA<br>DPO                                   |
| <b>Barriers faced by women (especially single mothers)</b> | <p><b>Targeted awareness campaigns should also be launched to reach single mothers and others who may fear stigma and thus have not registered the births of their children.</b></p> <p><b>Capacity building to service providers to know the correct processes to follow for registration of children born out of wedlock as prescribed in the law.</b></p>  | NIDA<br>Ministry of Gender & Family Promotion |
| <b>BIRTH CERTIFICATION RECOMMENDATIONS</b>                 |   |   |
| <b>Incentives for uptake of BCs</b>                        | <p><b>Reduce the cost of BCs for certain groups, such as persons with disabilities, or make it commensurate with Ubudehe categories to improve uptake.</b> This recommendation from participants was similar to the ID and seen to be essential to addressing cost barriers for the poor and vulnerable.</p> <p><b>Create incentives for procuring BCs (and thereby also increasing birth registration) by linking the use of BCs to critical services access by children under 16 years of age.</b></p> <p><b>Consider simplifying BCs by eliminating the three different types (The Attestation de Naissance, the Extrait d'acte de Naissance and Acte de Naissance).</b></p>   | NIDA  |

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| <b>Distance and long wait times for BCs</b>            | <p><b>Participants requested that the process of getting replacement BCs be made easier and not require people to travel to their Sector of origin.</b> This may require digitizing old civil registration records or increasing awareness of the Attestation as an option for older individuals, or increasing awareness of the Attestation as an option for older individuals. Additional recommendations were made to increase staffing at Sector offices and/or set specific days for seeking to update or replace a BC to streamline the process.</p> <p><b>Service standards should be set under the new digital birth registration system to ensure immediate issuance of BCs via Irembo.</b> This would address current issues of long wait times to receive BCs at the Sector offices.</p> | NIDA<br>Irembo                                 |
| <b>Issues with changing and replacing BCs</b>          | <p><b>Processes for rectifying and replacing BCs, particularly as they relate to the new digital birth registration system, should be clearly communicated through awareness campaigns.</b> There will likely be confusion about whether people should go to Irembo or to Sector offices to change or replace BCs.</p>  | NIDA<br>Community leaders                      |
| <b>Barriers to accessing BCs for orphans and teens</b> | <p><b>Documentary barriers to accessing BCs should be revisited to enable orphans and youth to access BCs before they are eligible for national IDs.</b> Many young people are effectively left without any form of identification as a result of being orphaned or because their births have never been registered by their parents. This leaves young people with any form of ID to access employment, education, exams, SIM registration, etc.</p>   | NIDA   |
| <b>Barriers to accessing BCs faced by refugees</b>     | <p><b>Greater awareness raising is necessary among refugees on how to get and/or replace a BC.</b> UNCHR presently covers the cost of BCs, thus a system needs to be devised to enable replacement costs to be covered as well.</p> <p><b>Refugee participants specifically requested that the BC and the refugee ID should both be made equally valid for them to access services.</b> They also requested that refugee ID and a BC should have the same weight in terms of accessing services. This should be communicated to the population and service providers at large to decrease discrimination against refugees.</p>  | NIDA<br>UNHCR<br>MINEMA<br>NGOs                |
| <b>OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS</b>                           |   |  |
| <b>Data protection and privacy</b>                     | <p><b>Adopt national data protection legislation and regulations to ensure that both the public and private sector adequately protect personal data.</b> Addressing data protection of personal data collected as part of a registration processes should be handled with special care to preserve the trust that the people have in government's ability to handle their personal data.</p> <p><b>Telcos should consider revision of the processes via which personal data is registered to reduce fraud and identity theft.</b> As noted in the report, SIM registration fraud is prevalent and arises from paper photocopies of IDs kept at telco offices. A more secure and/or digital system could reduce SIM registration fraud going forward.</p>  | MINICT<br>RURA<br>Private sector (e.g. telcos) |

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| <b>COVID-19 and limitations on physical interaction</b>   | <p><b>NIDA should find ways to introduce a pre-registration mechanism to minimize human interaction and ensure social distancing requirements at registration sites. This could include the following options:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An option of establishing SMS/USSD to allow for self-registration for those beneficiaries who have access to a feature phone.</li> <li>• An option of a web application or a mobile app for those who have the means to self-register and have access to a computer or smartphone.</li> <li>• The government may call upon Digital Ambassadors to help with pre-registration, while observing social distancing requirements.</li> </ul> <p><b>Online mechanisms should also be developed to enable people to correct information and request replacement ID cards.</b> These could be produced and then delivered to their Cell or Sector office where the officers could verify the person's identity using biometrics at the time of pick-up of the card.</p> <p>An SMS-based system of notification for when the card is ready for pick-up should also be introduced to minimize multiple trips to government offices.</p> | NIDA<br><br>Irembo<br><br>Digital Ambassadors                            |
| <b>Raising digital literacy and preparing Rwandans to move toward paperless and remote service delivery</b> | <p><b>Low mobile phone penetration and low digital literacy mean community members do not access information on identity processes via mobile phone.</b> This is despite efforts by programs like the Digital Ambassadors to train people on how to access e-government services.</p> <p><b>If the local community leaders start using phones to do their work, rather than doing it manually, community members would follow suit.</b> The local leaders should lead by example; and make use of digital services to encourage community members.</p>   | MINICT<br><br>Telcos<br><br>Community leaders<br><br>Digital Ambassadors |



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