

Combatting Statelessness: The Case for Increasing Access to Birth
Registration in Côte d'Ivoire

By:

Phillip L. Menard

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Applied Policy Project (APP) Advisor:
Dr. Andrew S. Pennock

University of Virginia
Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy
Charlottesville, Virginia

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Executive Summary

This Applied Policy Project (APP) is focused on providing the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration's Office of Assistance for Africa (PRM/AFR) with well-researched policy options in order to address the grievances of the estimated 700,000 stateless persons living in Côte d'Ivoire. Although PRM/AFR does not have the legal authority to change the nationality laws in Côte d'Ivoire, they have the ability to fund United Nations, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and non-governmental organization (NGO) programs in the field that can help alleviate (or reduce) the harmful effects associated with statelessness. Therefore, the policy options presented in this paper have been narrowed down to focus on increasing access to birth registration for the 300,000 stateless children, a prerequisite for enrolling in the formal Ivorian primary school system. This paper will provide a background on the history of statelessness in Côte d'Ivoire; analyze the literature on the causes and effects of statelessness, as well as the common barriers to birth registration; and evaluate potential solutions for increasing the number of stateless children registered at birth (and through late birth registration). To conclude, I recommend Option #5, Commission Participatory Assessments and Mapping of the Stateless Populations in Côte d'Ivoire.

Problem Statement

Since establishing its nationality law in 1961, Côte d'Ivoire has been home to the largest stateless population in Africa, with an estimated 700,000 stateless persons living in the country's borders (Adjami, 2016). Those most affected by statelessness are often children, who account for 43 percent of the stateless population (or 300,000 individuals) in Côte d'Ivoire (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2012). In Côte d'Ivoire, stateless children are often denied access to primary education, and their ability to secure a government-issued work permit in the future, because their parents failed to register their birth with the Ivorian Government. In Côte d'Ivoire, only 65 percent of the population under the age of five has been registered with the Ivorian Government, excluding many children from the formal education system and forcing stateless individuals to accept employment opportunities in manual labor and other low-paying, exploitative career paths. This ensures that stateless persons cannot escape the generational cycle of social, economic, and political deprivation.

Background

Statelessness as a global phenomenon has only begun to garner attention from the international community since the migration crises that resulted from the end World War II. However, most citizens (and even some practitioners) are still unaware of the root causes and effects of statelessness on the macro and micro-levels of society. Therefore, this background section will inform readers on the origins of statelessness, the context of the issue in West Africa, and explain how colonialism and civil conflict has led to the current statelessness crisis in Côte d'Ivoire.

What is Statelessness?

According to the 1954 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, the international legal definition of a stateless person is “a person who is not considered as a national by any State under the operation of its law” (Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, 1954). Nationality is the individual membership that shows a person's relationship with a state; however, it's focused on ethnic and/or racial identity, rather than the legal rights of individuals that are provided by citizenship (Volk, 2012). Most individuals are born stateless, while others become stateless due to several different factors which will be explored in-depth later on in this report.

The United Nations adopted the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons on September 28, 1954 in order to establish an international framework for improving the livelihood of stateless persons across the globe (Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, 1954). As of September 2017, the 1954 Convention has 23 signatories and boasts 89 countries that are party to the Convention. On August 30, 1961, the United Nations adopted the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, thereby establishing a series of measures to curb statelessness at birth by requiring states to grant citizenship to children born on their territory or to their nationals living abroad (Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, 1961). Although states have the authority to set the rules for acquisition, change, and withdrawal of nationality, these countries are also limited by the obligations outlined in the international and regional agreements that they have ratified with respect to statelessness and nationality (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2012).

Statelessness in West Africa

The UNHCR estimates that there are approximately one million stateless persons living in West Africa, around 700,000 of which reside in Côte d'Ivoire (Manby, 2015). Côte d'Ivoire has the largest stateless population in Africa, and the second largest stateless population in the world (behind Myanmar). However, the Ivorian Government is party to a series of regional and international agreements dealing with statelessness and nationality.

One of the first regional agreements adopted by the Africa Union (AU) with respect to nationality laws is the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC). The AU adopted the ACRWC in 1991 as a treaty that defined the universal rights, principles, and norms related to the status of children on the continent of Africa (Adegbola, 2007). More explicitly, in Article 6 of the ACRWC, it states that “every child shall have the right from birth to a name, to be registered immediately after birth and to acquire a nationality” (Adegbola, 2007). This guarantee of immediate birth registration and the acquisition of nationality are fundamental to preventing children from become stateless.

On July 11, 2003, the AU adopted the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women (also known as the Maputo Protocol) to guarantee social and political rights for women (Protocol to the African Commission of Human and Peoples' Rights, 2003). With respect to nationality laws, Article 6 of the Maputo Protocol established the equal right of men and women to acquire their partner's nationality; gender discrimination in nationality laws is one of the main causes of statelessness in West Africa (Protocol to the African Commission of Human and Peoples' Rights, 2003). Gender discrimination prevents many women from passing on their nationality to their children, and in extreme cases, women are stripped of their nationality and/or citizenship if they choose to marry a foreigner (Protocol to the African Commission of Human and Peoples' Rights, 2003).

More recently, members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) adopted the Abidjan Declaration at the first Ministerial Conference on Statelessness in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire on February 25, 2015. The Abidjan Declaration established measures and recommendations for the ECOWAS Member States on how to reform their nationality laws and national civil registration systems to end statelessness by 2024. However, many Member States, including Côte d'Ivoire, have failed to make significant progress in this area (Abidjan Declaration of Ministers of ECOWAS Member States on Eradication of Statelessness, 2015).

Statelessness in Côte d'Ivoire

Côte d'Ivoire was colonized by the French from 1893-1960, who forcibly imported thousands of people from the neighboring countries of Burkina Faso, Guinea, and Mali to work on cocoa and coffee plantations in Côte d'Ivoire (Adjami, 2016). According to the 2014 Ivorian Census, residents of Burkinabe, Guinean, and Malian descent account for 24 percent (5,490,222 people) of Côte d'Ivoire's total population. This large population of “foreigners” has been an underpinning driver of the ethnic, religious, and secretarian violence that has plagued Côte d'Ivoire for the past forty years.

In 1960, after declaring independence from France, Côte d'Ivoire adopted a nationality law in 1961 mandating that a child must be born to at least one Ivorian parent, regardless of place of birth, in order to automatically acquire Ivorian nationality (Adjami, 2016). Furthermore, the law allowed children born in Côte d'Ivoire from foreign parents to apply for Ivorian nationality after meeting a two-year residency requirement (Adjami, 2016). However, amendments made to the nationality law in 1972 revoked the acquisition of Ivorian nationality by declaration for those born in Côte d'Ivoire to foreign parents; it also removed provisions that automatically granted Ivorian nationality to "foundlings," children born in Côte d'Ivoire to unknown parents (Adjami, 2016). Both the 1961 nationality law and the 1972 amendments effectively barred residents from Burkinabe, Malian, and Guinean descent from obtaining Ivorian nationality, despite the fact that many these families have been living in Côte d'Ivoire for decades,

After the death of pro-immigrant advocate President Felix Houphouët Boigny in 1993 and an economic recession in the mid-1990s, the Ivorian National Assembly adopted measures that denied nationality documentation to individuals that they perceived to be of "foreign" origin (Manby, 2016). These policies revoked the identification documents of hundreds of thousands of people who had previously been defined as nationals, and ultimately contributed to the First Ivorian Civil War (2002-2007). Following the civil war between the government-controlled Christian south and the politically repressed rebel-held Muslim north, the tension was temporarily restrained until the provisional President Election results in December 2010 were invalidated by the government. This led to the resurgence of violent conflict, lasting for five months in 2011, in what is known as the Second Ivorian Civil War (Manby, 2016). The Second Ivorian Civil War ended after President-elect Alassane Ouattara's FRCI (political party), supported by France and the UN, defeated opposition forces in April 2011. This resulted in 3,000 casualties and the destruction of civil registration offices across the country.

In 2013, the Ivorian National Assembly adopted a law that established a special temporary procedure for foreign-born residents living in Côte d'Ivoire before independence and their descendants to acquire Ivorian nationality. Foreign nationals born in the Côte d'Ivoire between 1961 and 1972 and their children were also eligible. During the program's two-year period between 2014-2016, approximately 120,000 people applied for the program, but only 6,400 individuals received nationality documents by early 2016 (Manby, 2016). No permanent reforms to the Ivorian nationality law have been proposed (Manby, 2016).

Literature Review

This literature review will begin by providing a critical analysis of the scholarly research that has been conducted on the key contributing factors and impact of statelessness on individuals. Subsequently, it will include an in-depth analysis on common barriers to birth registration and potential solutions for improving access to birth registrations for stateless children. Birth registration is essential for stateless children in Côte d'Ivoire because it enables them secure a birth certificate which is a prerequisite for enrolling in the Ivorian primary school system, and later on applying for work permits to enter the labor market (Strum, 2016). However, one major caveat to note is that this analysis relies upon the limited research that has been conducted on the topic of statelessness. UNHCR has been one of the leading researchers on the topic; however, the majority of their studies are focused on specific countries, thereby making it more difficult to generalize the findings to my case study.

Causes of Statelessness

Conflict of nationality laws

Nationality laws diverge into two types: *Jus soli* (right of the soil) and *jus sanguinis* (right of blood). *Jus soli* clarifies that those born in the territory of a country have the right to nationality or citizenship of that country (Batchelor, 1998). On the other hand, *jus sanguinis* confers nationality and citizenship onto children whose parents are citizens of a given country (Batchelor, 1998). Therefore, it's possible for a person to become stateless if they are born in a country whose nationality laws are based on the principle of *jus sanguinis* while his/her parents were born in a country whose nationality laws are based on the principle of *jus soli* (International Justice Resource Center, 2017). In Côte d'Ivoire, the nationality laws are based on the *jus sanguinis* principle. This has significantly reduced the ability of the 300,000 stateless children living in Côte d'Ivoire to acquire Ivorian nationality because neither of their parents, of foreign descent but born in Côte d'Ivoire, are recognized as Ivorians (Manby, 2016). Conflicting nationality laws between Côte d'Ivoire and the birthplace of stateless parents has led to an increase in the stateless population in Côte d'Ivoire; however, there is no data on the number of children who have become stateless specifically due to conflicts of nationality laws.

State succession

During conditions in which states gain independence or dissolve into multiple new states (such as the Soviet Union), there are often questions related to the nationality of former citizens (Blackman, 1998). Successor states are tasked with establishing new nationality laws which may conflict with the legal status of persons whose nationality had been recognized by the previous state, thereby leaving people without a claim to any nationality (Blackman, 1998). The International Observatory on Statelessness (2017) argues that successor states are responsible for having safeguards in place to prevent anyone from becoming stateless; however, these safeguards rarely exist in most developing countries. In 1993, when Eritrea peacefully seceded from Ethiopia, nearly 300,000 persons of Eritrean origin living in Ethiopia found themselves stateless and without a claim to nationality from either country (Southwick, 2009). State succession was one of the initial drivers of statelessness in Côte d'Ivoire. After gaining independence from France in 1960, the Ivorian Christians in the south believed that the migrants

who had been living in Côte d'Ivoire for generations were “foreigners” and established a nationality law that excluded the majority of these individuals from qualifying for nationality.

Discrimination against particular ethnic groups

Goldston (2006) argues that statelessness is often the result of discrimination against particular ethnic groups. There are some states that use nationality laws and other state-run institutions to deny nationality to persons of a particular ethnicity or religion (Goldston, 2006). Ethnic discrimination can often lead to statelessness if a child is born to stateless parents, who were denied their right to nationality based on their ethnicity, even though the country's nationality law automatically confers nationality to those born within the country's borders. An example is the Rohingya people in Myanmar who are facing discrimination at the hands of the Burmese Government which stripped them of their nationality in 1982 on the grounds of their ethnicity (Chickera & Whiteman, 2014). This policy has restricted the Rohingya peoples' ability to move freely, marry, work, and has made them targets for arbitrary arrests and torture by the Burmese Government (Chickera & Whiteman, 2014). Although there have been individual reports of residents of Burkinabe, Malian, and Guinean descents being denied nationality in Côte d'Ivoire, despite having all of the necessary identification documents, there is no data on the extent that this issue has led to statelessness in the West African nation.

Lack of birth registrations

Birth registrations are an essential tool for combatting statelessness in the developing world (Pais, 2002). The main benefit of birth registrations is that it establishes a legal record of where a child is born and who their parents are. Depending on a state's nationality laws, these are also requirements for acquiring citizenship and nationality (Pais, 2002). Low birth registration rates are a common problem in West Africa, with UNICEF reporting that approximately 40 million children under the age of five are unregistered in the region (Nigerian Tribune, 2017). One explanation for the low birth registration rates observed in Côte d'Ivoire is the fact that most residents are unacquainted with the country's birth registration laws. A recent survey conducted by the UNHCR found that less than 45 percent of residents were aware that the act of declaring a child's birth is free in Côte d'Ivoire. Furthermore, only 55 percent of residents were aware of the three-month deadline to register births; and only 35 percent of residents were able to correctly identify that either parent is legally able to register their children (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2016).

Impact of Statelessness on the Individual

Limited access to health services

Stateless persons are often prevented from seeking medical attention because they lack access to state-sponsored health services and/or the ability to obtain a visa to travel across borders to receive treatment (Ravi, 2015). In Myanmar, researchers found that the stateless Rohingya population, living outside of the scope of state-sponsored health services, have reported lower rates of immunization and are more vulnerable to infectious diseases such as tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS compared to Burmese citizens (Ravi, 2015). Further, there is also evidence that state-sponsored healthcare systems in some countries impose higher medical costs on foreigners, placing medical treatment out of the reach of many stateless persons (United Nations High

Commissioner for Refugees, 2015). In Côte d'Ivoire, there has been no indication of the number of stateless persons who have been denied access to health services or whether these denials are due to their status or other financial constraints.

Employment restriction

Stateless persons are often excluded from employment opportunities in the labor market because they are unable to present the government-issued identification documents needed to secure work authorization (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2015). These restrictions have forced stateless persons to engage in economic activities that are low paying, exploitative, and offer minimal (if any) job security (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2015). Prohibiting stateless persons from pursuing employment opportunities in career fields that can improve their livelihood and socio-economic status ensures that these individuals will remain destitute (Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion, 2017). In Côte d'Ivoire, foreigners are required to obtain a work permit from the Ivorian Government before they can enter the formal labor market; however, residents are required to show proof of nationality (such as a birth certificate) which most stateless persons do not possess. This should matter to the Ivorian Government because having a large population of unemployed stateless persons has the potential to increase crime, mortality rates, and recruitment to violent extremist organizations operating in Côte d'Ivoire (Ansaaku, 2017).

Financial exclusion

Without proof of nationality, stateless persons are frequently excluded from the financial institutions in their country of residence (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2012). A perfect example of this is the fact that most stateless persons are unable to open up a bank account because they often lack a birth certificate or another form of identification that is required by financial institutions. As research has shown, bank accounts can help low-income families build a credit history, access low-interest loans, and build wealth and assets, which are all key factors to improving one's socio-economic status (Brown & Robinson, 2016). Some scholars argue that the negative effects associated with financial exclusion can be diminished by using mobile financial services (Mas & Radcliffe, 2010). M-PESA, a mobile financial services firm that is popular in Sub-Saharan Africa, offers a range of services including international transfers, loans, and health provisions to nine million users (Mas & Radcliffe, 2010). However, in Côte d'Ivoire, the World Bank found that only 25 percent of residents have mobile money accounts, therefore, mobile banking is not a viable solution for the unbanked stateless population (World Bank, 2016).

Travel restrictions

Although the freedom of movement is a right that is guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, stateless persons still face restrictions on their ability to travel within and outside of their country of residence (Tibet Justice Center, 2016). In India, there are 100,000 stateless Tibetans whose international travel must be approved by the Government of India (Tibet Justice Center, 2016). Tibetans are eligible to acquire travel documents known as Identification Certificates, which permit them to travel internationally; however, the application process still requires Tibetans to submit copies of their birth certificates and proof of residency (Tibet Justice Center, 2016). Identification Certificate applications are rarely denied but can take up to three

years to be approved, thereby limiting stateless persons' ability to return to their country of origin, visit relatives, or study abroad (Tibet Justice Center, 2016). In the case of Côte d'Ivoire, there is no evidence that stateless persons are restricted from traveling within the country.

Political exclusion

As non-citizens, stateless persons are excluded from participating in the political process in their country of residence (Hayden, 2008). Stateless persons, similar to foreigners in many countries, are prohibited from voting in elections or running for elected office. Political exclusion has ensured that stateless populations are never given the opportunity to address their political grievances because they have zero input into the policymaking process that determines their livelihood. Political grievances (including statelessness) are one of the main drivers of the armed conflicts that led to the two Ivorian Civil Wars.

Limited access to education

Stateless persons are often restricted or denied access to the formal education system in their country of residence (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2015). Scholarly literature has indicated that access to education is imperative for all children, especially for vulnerable children such as refugees. Schooling incorporates children into the national school system, builds their social networks, and enables them to acquire the skillsets needed to enter the labor market and provide for their families (Taylor & Sidhu, 2012). In Syria, there is a real concern that there will be a 'lost generation,' as close to 5.4 million Syrian children are in need of education assistance (Deane, 2016). Being out of school for so long will have long-term implications on the economic recovery and development of the Arab nation (Deane, 2016). Although 93.6 percent of school-aged Ivoirians are enrolled in primary school in Cote d'Ivoire, the statistic is considerable lower for stateless children, who are required to provide proof of nationality (or residency) to enter (and in some cases continue) the Ivorian primary school system (Index Mundi, 2016).

Common Barriers to Birth Registration

Birth registration is the process by which a child's birth is recorded by the government-run national civil registration system (The International Observatory of Statelessness, 2017). It provides the first legal recognition of a child and is generally required to obtain a birth certificate. In the case of Cote d'Ivoire, parents are required to register their child within the first three months of birth. Parents must declare the birth of their child in front of a judge at a civil court, and if the appeal is approved, the judge will provide them with an appointment with the local civil registration office, who will then input the child's biometric information into the Ivorian National Civil Registration System (Gilliam, 2009). Children who are not registered at birth are at a heightened risk of becoming stateless.

Lack of Political Will

Political will is defined as "the firm intention or commitment on the part of a government to carry through a policy, especially one which is not immediately successful or popular" (Oxford Dictionaries, 2018). The UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre (2002) reported that lack of political will is one of the main barriers to birth registrations in the developing world. In many

cases, government officials and politicians fail to recognize that birth registration is a universal human right and that having a large population of unregistered residents within their own country will have long-term implications on the livelihood and social fabric of their society. These countries often have insufficient birth registration laws, enforcement mechanisms, and allocate limited resources towards improving the capacity of their national civil registration system (UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, 2002). This has left millions of people without adequate access to the birth registration system in their respective countries of residence.

Weak Institutional Capacity

In a 2013 report on birth registration, World Vision surveyed 10 developing countries and found that the lack of government capacity is one of the main drivers of low birth registration rates (World Vision, 2013). In addition, these survey results illustrated that most governments in the developing world lack the financial resources, databases, personnel, and training programs needed to swiftly respond to all of the birth registration-related requests that are received (International Institute for Vital Registration and Statistics, 1981). These capacity issues have led to significant delays in the adjudication of birth registration cases, thus significantly increasing the number of children that have become stateless.

Ethnic and Gender Discrimination

Some politicians understand the significant implication of birth registrations and choose to implement discriminatory measures to deny national rights to members of specific ethnic, religious, or minority groups (UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, 2002). This has been observed in Kosovo, where Albanian children faced significant barriers to birth registration under the Serbian administration from 1989-1999 (UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, 2002). Restricting access to birth registration for Kosovar Albanians enabled the Serbian regime to “[downplay] their numbers and [minimize] their official visibility” (UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, 2002). These policies forced many Albanian women to have their babies in private health clinics or at home, opposed to at the hospital. As a result, thousands of Kosovar Albanian children remained unregistered for nearly ten years (UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, 2002).

Further, in many countries, gender discrimination is also a contributing factor to the low birth registrations rate observed across the world (UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, 2002). In Nepal, the Nepalese Government established a law that states that only the senior male household member can register the birth of a child (UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, 2002). This effectively excludes women from the birth registration process, especially single mothers, which has had a significant impact on the ability of many families to register the birth of their children.

Financial Constraints

Birth registration and the issuance of the first copy of a birth certificate should be free of charge; however, many countries, especially in the developing world, have legally-mandated registration fees (Pais, 2002). These registration fees often place a significant financial burden upon the poorest and most vulnerable individuals in society, such as refugees and stateless persons. In Bolivia, an estimated one-fifth to one-third of children are unregistered, with indigenous persons and impoverished populations being most affected because they cannot afford the fees that the

Bolivian Government requires for birth registration and the issuance of a birth certificate (UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, 2002). Furthermore, there are also opportunity costs associated with registering a child, such time, transportation expenses, and loss income from missing work (Pais, 2002).

Geographic Barriers

Another barrier to birth registration, especially for individuals living in rural areas, is the distance to the nearest court and civil registration office. The further away the registration site is from an individual's household, the greater the opportunity and travel costs are for parents trying to register the birth of their child (Pais, 2002). In addition, Pais (2002) argues that accessibility to birth registration sites, such as local civil registration offices, often depends on both the presence of public transportation and a strong infrastructure system (roads and bridges). For example, in Tanzania, the rural birth registration rate is 3 percent compared to an urban registration rate of 22 percent (UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, 2002). These findings are relevant to Côte d'Ivoire, as a significant portion of the stateless population resides in the rural, remote regions of the country.

Lack of information

Research has shown that one of the main contributing factors to low birth registration rates, especially in rural areas, is the fact that most people are unaware of the birth registration laws of their country of residence (Sharma, 2015). Many children become stateless because their parents are uninformed or misinformed on the birth registration process, such as mandated registration deadlines (Sharma, 2015). In Paraguay, the UNICEF Committee on the Rights of the Child found that a large number of children, particularly those belonging to indigenous groups and/or living in rural areas, are not registered because their parents are unaware of the importance and benefits associated with registering their children (UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, 2002).

Potential Solutions to Improving Access to Birth Registration

This section will focus on a critical analysis of the scholarly literature on potential solutions to increasing access to birth registrations for stateless persons in the developing world. However, these alternative options have been tailored to my client, the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration's Office of Assistance to Africa (PRM/AFR), and their administrative feasibility. PRM/AFR supports humanitarian assistance to refugees, returnees, and other populations of concerns including stateless persons in Côte d'Ivoire through its regional contributions to UNHCR's and ICRC's operations in Africa; it provided \$123.2 million in humanitarian assistance to support Côte d'Ivoire in FY 2017 (Alderman, 2018).

Public awareness and education campaign

The UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre (2002) reported that raising public awareness regarding birth registrations is a critical first step towards improving a country's national civil registration system. People must be encouraged to register their children at birth, through messages that are culturally sensitive in terms of content and platform. These campaigns should be focused on informing residents of their right to birth registration, as well as the benefits associated with registering their children's birth, such as acquiring a birth certificate (UNICEF Innocenti

Research Centre, 2002). Birth registration-related public awareness campaigns have proven to be successful. In 2013, in partnership with UNICEF, the Chhattisgarh state government in India launched a public awareness and education campaign using street theater, graffiti, and leaflets that were distributed in local markets to educate residents on the importance of birth registrations. The state has successfully been able to register nearly 100 percent of births through this program (Independent, 2017).

Mobile courts for birth registrations in rural areas

A number of countries have established mobile courts to facilitate the registration of people living in rural, isolated communities (Prevost & Arnaud, 2015). These mobile courts are deployed to communities with limited to no access to local civil registration offices, with particular focus on the regions with the lowest birth registration rates. These rural areas tend to be occupied by some of the most vulnerable and marginalized populations in the country. Niger's Civil Registration Office, in partnership with UNICEF and the European Union, expanded its use of mobile court hearings to respond to the country's low birth registration rates in the most rural areas of the country. Between 2009 and 2011, the mobile courts delivered 600,000 judgments of birth registration cases for marginalized children under the age of 18 (Prevost & Arnaud, 2015).

Building national civil registration capacity

The UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre (2002) argues that increasing the capacity of a country's national civil registration system is an essential step towards improving the birth registration rate. This includes providing civil registrars with training, improved supervision, data collection software, and orientation on human rights issues related to birth registration. In some cases, these initiatives are also combined with a hiring program to increase the total number of staff in the civil registration offices (UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, 2002). In the Philippines, state-funded capacity-building initiatives, such as hosting a biannual national convention and establishing an ordinance converting civil registrars to career employees, have led to a significant increase in the country's birth registration rates (UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, 2002).

Eliminating birth registration fees

Currently, many countries charge fees for birth registration. These fees often disproportionately restrict access to birth registration for the most vulnerable, marginalized, and impoverished communities in a given country (Fagernas & Odame, 2013). In the case of Ghana, the World Health Organization (2013) found that 32 percent of Ghanaian parents failed to register their child's birth due to the high costs associated with birth registration. Research demonstrates that eliminating birth registration fees can lead to an increase in the number of birth registrations (Adgie, 2017). This strategy was effective in Ghana; the government increased birth registration rates from 44-71 percent between 2003-2008 by expanding the legal period for free birth registrations of children from twenty-one days to one year (Fagernas & Odame, 2013).

Policy Alternatives

There are a number of methods that my client, PRM, can use to increase the number of birth registrations in Côte d'Ivoire. Birth registrations are required to establish a proof of residency for stateless children, and can lead to obtaining a birth certificate, which is prerequisite to enrolling in Ivorian primary education system and will allow stateless adults to apply for a work permit in Côte d'Ivoire. Therefore, all of the following options are focused on maximizing the number of additional stateless children that are registered at birth in Côte d'Ivoire.

Option #1: Let Current Trends Persist (Status Quo)

The UNHCR and the Ivorian Justice Ministry estimate that there are approximately 700,000 stateless persons (300,000 children) living within the borders of Côte d'Ivoire; however, the actual number is anywhere from 700,000 to 1.8 million, as the Ivorian Government has failed to conduct a country-wide assessment on the stateless population. The Ivorian Government and the UNHCR have failed to make significant progress in terms of combatting statelessness within the country, having only registered and issued documentation for 42 persons of concern, out of the 30,000 targeted, in 2017 (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2017c). If PRM lets current trends persist, the economic, political, and social grievances of the stateless population and the rural communities in the northern regions of the country will rise, exacerbating the tensions between the “native” Ivoirians in the south and the “foreign” populations in the north. **Therefore, letting current trends persist is no longer an option, because Ivorian civil conflict will destabilize the country, as well as the region, enabling non-state actors, such as Boko Haram, and ISIS-West Africa to infiltrate the state.**

Option #2: Establish Mobile Courts to Register Births in Rural Areas (Including Late Registrations)

Birth registration provides children not only with a record of their birth, but it enables children to obtain a birth certificate. Although birth certificates do not confer nationality and citizenship rights, they are required for stateless children to enroll in primary school and apply for work permits once they are of age (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2017a). However, a significant portion of the stateless population living in the northern region of Côte d'Ivoire lack the transportation or funds necessary to travel to and from the closest civil court and registration office (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2017a).

One solution is to deploy mobile courts to adjudicate birth registration-related cases for individuals living in rural areas in Côte d'Ivoire. In 2013, the UNHCR partnered with the Ivorian Government, specifically its Civil Registration Office, to establish mobile courts that traveled to the rural communities in the north in order to conduct late birth registrations. This initiative was relatively successful, registering approximately 70,000 children who otherwise wouldn't have been able to reach their local institutions (Gilliam, 2009). Therefore, I recommend that PRM earmarks funding for the UNHCR to scale up this initiative and increase the total number of stateless children that are registered.

Option # 3: Conduct Public Awareness and Education Campaigns on Birth Registration Laws in Côte d'Ivoire

As previously stated, many residents in Côte d'Ivoire lack basic understanding of the Ivorian birth registration laws. This can partially explain the low birth registration rates observed in the West Africa nation. One potential solution is to conduct a series of public awareness and education campaigns to inform residents of the birth registration process, laws, and associated benefits. These campaigns can be used to encourage stateless parents, whom were not registered themselves as children, to register their own children at birth. Therefore, I recommend that PRM earmarks funding for the UNHCR, UNICEF, or an NGO to conduct public awareness and education campaigns for residents in rural areas of the country. These campaigns must use appropriate messages and mediums, such as town halls, radio stations, and other community-related events, to ensure that the message is accepted by the target population.

Option # 4: Build the Capacity of the Ivorian National Civil Registration System

The Ivorian National Civil Registration System is still recovering from the destruction of civil registration offices and documentation during the Second Ivorian Civil War (Manby, 2016). Many Ivorian and stateless persons lost their birth certificates when they were forced to flee their homes due to violence (Manby, 2016). Currently, the Ivorian National Civil Registration System is being inundated with requests for national identification documents; however, the civil registration offices have struggled to fulfill these requests, as they lack the institutional capacity and a sufficient number of trained personnel (Manby, 2016). Therefore, I recommend that PRM earmarks funding for the UNHCR to serve in an advisory role to improve the training and personnel capacity of the Ivorian Government. PRM can accomplish this by funding UNHCR programs that are focused on providing civil registrars with technical trainings, cultural awareness trainings, data collection software, and financial support to increase staff hiring. Building the capacity of the Ivorian National Civil Registration System will enable civil servants to improve their response rate to requests for birth registration/certificates, thereby increasing the birth registration rates in Côte d'Ivoire and ensuring that fewer children become stateless.

Option # 5: Commission Participatory Assessments & Mapping of Stateless Populations in Côte d'Ivoire

The Ivorian Government, the UNHCR, and other humanitarian actors have been restricted in their ability to respond to crisis due to the widespread absence of reliable data on the location and needs of the stateless population in Côte d'Ivoire (Minority Rights Group International, 2018). Most of the stateless population reportedly lives in the northern region of the country; however, there is no data confirming the specific districts, cities, and towns that they live in. Furthermore, the Ivorian Government and the UNHCR have failed to conduct any needs assessments on the stateless population. In this situation, needs assessments are “how organizations identify and measure the humanitarian needs of [the stateless population] ... these enable the organizations to make good decisions about how to allocate resources and gather more resources to meet the needs of the disaster-affected community” (Currion, 2014). If the Ivorian Government continues to ignore the political, social, and economic grievances of the stateless population, this crisis could lead to a Third Ivorian Civil War.

PRM should commission the UNHCR to conduct a 2-3-month long research study in order to identify the scope and scale of statelessness in Côte d'Ivoire. One of the main priorities of the study should be to conduct participatory assessments with stateless persons, community leaders, and local NGO leaders in order to better understand the needs of the affected population. This would also help the Ivorian Government, the UNHCR, and other humanitarian actors craft better responses to address their concerns (Adjami, 2016). Data can be collected through a series of interviews, surveys, and focus groups in the community. The second objective for this study will be to support the Ivorian Government's effort to map the stateless population (Adjami, 2016). These mappings will be able to provide more details of the demographics of the stateless population, including ethnicity, religion, gender, and socio-economic status, and can also help determine which areas in Côte d'Ivoire have the highest concentration of stateless persons (Minority Rights Group International, 2018). These mappings can also be used to determine the best allocation of resources, including determining where the Ivorian Government or the UNHCR should establish a birth registration program (Gregg, 2011).

Evaluation Criteria

To evaluate potential policy options for increasing the number of additional stateless children registered at birth (or through late registration) in Côte d'Ivoire, I used a standard set of criteria: administrative feasibility, cultural feasibility, effectiveness, cost-effectiveness, and sustainability.

Administrative feasibility

Administrative feasibility describes the extent to which the Ivorian Government, NGO partners, and/or PRM possesses the necessary legal, budgetary, institutional, and human capital to successfully implement the policy option. As this criterion is a qualitative measurement, the policy options will be evaluated as having low, medium, or high administrative feasibility.

Cultural feasibility

Cultural feasibility describes the extent to which a policy option will be adopted by the host country (government and politicians). In terms of birth registration, this criterion will be used to measure how well the policy option is framed with consideration of the cultural norms, values, and traditions of the host country. Culturally competent and local-based solutions are essential to securing significant buy-in from the beneficiaries. Cultural feasibility will be codified using public opinion data and official statements made by Ivorian politicians and government officials. As this criterion is a qualitative measurement, the policy options will be evaluated as having low, medium, or high cultural feasibility.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness is defined as the degree to which the policy alternative is successful in producing its desired result. In this case, the desired result for each policy option is to increase the number of birth registrations of stateless children born in Côte d'Ivoire. Effectiveness will be measured quantitatively by the number of additional birth registrations that are expected to occur under each of the given policy options. These numbers will be extrapolated using existing data from birth registration-related programs that have been conducted in Côte d'Ivoire and/or other developing countries, when available.

Sustainability

Sustainability is defined as the degree to which the policy option and its affiliated programs can continue to achieve their desired results following the termination of PRM funds. Sustainability is essential to ensuring that the programs are community-led and foster an environment that is committed to guaranteeing that all children born in Côte d'Ivoire are registered at birth. Sustainability is a qualitative measurement; therefore, policy options will be evaluated as having low, medium, or high sustainability.

Cost-effectiveness

Cost-effectiveness is defined as the ratio of the cost of the policy option compared to total number of new birth registrations. Cost-effectiveness will be measured quantitatively, using costs of programs conducted in Côte d'Ivoire and in other countries as a proxy. If comparable costs are not found, this report will instead evaluate the policy options as having low, medium, or highly cost-effectiveness.

Evaluating Policy Option 1: Let Current Trends Persist (Status Quo)

Policy Option #1, let current trends persist, means that the Ivorian Government, the UNHCR, and PRM will continue to operate without a plan (or programming) to combat statelessness and the low birth registration rates in Côte d'Ivoire. In 2017, the Ivorian National Civil Registration System, in partnership with the UNHCR, fell short of their annual goal of registering and issuing documentation (proof of nationality identity) to 4,000 children, by only assisting 42 children (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2017b). However, if nothing else is done to address the crisis, the political, social, and economic grievances of the stateless population and the impoverished residents in the northern region of the country will continue to exacerbate existing ethnic tensions and can potentially lead to a Third Ivorian Civil War.

Administrative feasibility

The Ivorian National Civil Registration System, PRM, and other partners can choose to let current trends persist, thereby using their legal, budgetary, and human capital resources to address other policy issues. This policy option is rated as “high” for administrative feasibility, because it does not require the Ivorian Government or PRM to create any new laws, manage any additional programs, and/or hire additional personnel to staff the civil registration offices, which are all needed to increase the number of additional stateless children registered in Côte d'Ivoire.

Cultural feasibility

President Alassane Quattara and the Ivorian National Assembly will face limited (if any) backlash from Ivorians and the international community if they let current trends persist and continue to ignore the suffering of the stateless population in Côte d'Ivoire. This policy option is rated as “high” in terms of cultural feasibility, because it's easier for politicians to ignore the stateless population compared to enacting policies or programs that could potentially anger Ivoirians who are opposed to loosening the legal barriers facing foreigners in their country.

Effectiveness

Currently, the Ivorian Government, in partnership with the UNHCR, has only enrolled 42 stateless children in 2017 (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2017b). If current trends persist, no additional stateless children will be registered at birth (or through late registrations). Therefore, this policy option is rated as “low” for effectiveness, even though it has zero effectiveness.

Cost-effectiveness

Letting current trends persist will enable the Ivorian Government to continue to register a negligible number of stateless children, while minimizing their costs. Therefore, this policy option is rated as “high” for cost-effectiveness.

Sustainability

Currently, there are an estimated 300,000 stateless children living in Côte d'Ivoire; the majority of this population has not been registered at birth. If current trends persist, this large population of stateless persons will continue to be marginalized and tensions will rise due to social, economic, and political grievances, which can ultimately lead to conflict and another Ivorian Civil War. Therefore, this policy option is rated as “low” for sustainability.

Evaluating Policy Option 2: Establish Mobile Courts to Register Births in Rural Areas (Including Late Registrations)

The objective of establishing mobile courts for birth registrations is to ensure that residents (including stateless persons) living in rural, remote areas in the northern region of the country, can access the formal institutions for registering the birth of their child. People living in rural areas often live far away from the local courts and civil registration offices and lack the necessary funds and transportation to travel to those locations. In Côte d'Ivoire, residents are required to attend a hearing for the status of their case, then they are given an appointment to a civil registration office, and then their information is entered into the Ivorian National Civil Registration System. However, the mobile courts are designed to fulfill all three steps in one-sitting, including late registrations for individuals who have missed the government-mandated 3-month registration deadline.

The Ivorian Government would permit Ivorian judges, civil registrars, and UNHCR officials to set-up makeshift court hearings in the most rural and remote regions of the country, where individuals would otherwise have little to no access to the birth registration. After the judge has approved the appeal for birth registration including late registrations, the applicants will meet with civil registrars, who will then place their biometric data into the existing Ivorian National Civil Registration System, enabling applicants to apply for a birth certificate. These courts will operate and remain open for around two to three weeks.

Administrative feasibility

The Ivorian National Civil Registration System, PRM, and other NGO partners possess the necessary legal, budgetary, institutional, and human capital needed to establish mobile courts in rural areas in Côte d'Ivoire. The Ivorian Government partnered with the UNHCR in 2013 and launched a series of mobile courts in the northern, rural areas of the country to conduct birth registrations (including late registrations) for residents. This initiative demonstrated that the Ivorian Government has the legal authority to recognize the mobile court and late birth registrations, that the UNHCR has the institutional and human capital needed to manage this type of program, and that financial support from PRM can ensure that mobile courts are a financially-feasible policy option for increasing birth registrations. Therefore, this policy option is rated as “high” for administrative feasibility.

Cultural feasibility

Establishing mobile courts to register births (including late registrations) in rural areas in Côte d'Ivoire is culturally feasible because President Alassane Quattara and the Ivorian National Assembly have previously supported a similar program. In 2013, the Ivorian Government supported a partnership between the UNHCR and the Ivorian Civil Registration System which launched mobile courts in the rural, remote northern regions of the country. Therefore, this policy option is rated as “high” for cultural feasibility because policymakers are likely going to support the scale-up of a similar program to increase the number of birth registrations in Côte d'Ivoire.

Effectiveness

Establishing mobile courts to register births (including late birth registrations) in rural, remote areas in Côte d'Ivoire has already been proven to be an effective policy option for increasing the number of birth registrations. In 2013, the Ivorian Government, in partnership with the UNHCR, registered ~70,000 children using mobile courts. The inclusion of financial support from PRM will enable the program to be scaled-up, thereby increasing the number of children that will be registered through the UNHCR's mobile court system. However, there is concern with the reliability of the data on the stateless population, so the programs be less effective because they are not necessarily targeting the most vulnerable and at-risk populations. Therefore, this policy option is rated as "medium-high" for effectiveness.

Cost-effectiveness

Although this policy option is more expensive than Option #1, establishing mobile courts to register births (including late birth registrations) is still a relatively cost-effectiveness solution to significantly increase the number of birth registrations in Côte d'Ivoire. Managing, operating, and staffing these temporary mobile courts is relatively inexpensive (especially compared to Option #4), and will result in a significant number of additional birth registrations with the Ivorian National Civil Registration System. Therefore, this policy option is rated as "high" for cost-effectiveness.

Sustainability

Although establishing mobile courts will be effective in terms of increasing the number of birth registrations in Côte d'Ivoire, there are concerns with this option's sustainability. Due to the temporary nature of the mobile courts (and financial support), it's unlikely that this policy option will continue to increase the number of birth registrations for children in Côte d'Ivoire after PRM's funding has ended. Additionally, there is no guarantee that this policy option will create communities that are committed to improving access to birth registration for all children born in Côte d'Ivoire, thereby potentially undermining the feasibility of this policy option as a long-term solution to combatting statelessness. Therefore, this policy option is rated as "low" for sustainability.

Evaluating Policy Option 3: Conduct Public Awareness and Education Campaigns on Birth Registration Laws in Côte d'Ivoire

The objective of Option #3 is to inform the residents of the process, laws, and benefits of registering their children at birth in Côte d'Ivoire. One of the main drivers of the low birth registration rate is the fact that the public does not understand the birth registration process and its related benefits. Therefore, this policy option aims to increase the number of stateless children registered at birth (and through late registrations) by conducting a series of public awareness and education campaigns in the areas with low birth registration rates. This option will include both in-person outreach and a multimedia marketing campaign. The Ivorian Government and the UNHCR will have staff members travel to hard-to-reach communities to host town halls and forums, in partnership with local community and religious leaders, to inform the residents of their right to birth registration as well as the associated benefits. Staff members will distribute brochures, guides, and other fact sheets to attendees; these documents will be translated into French and the local dialect. In addition, the town halls should be hosted in an inclusive and accessible location in the town. These campaigns will also rely upon the use of digital marketing to spread the messages. The Ivorian Government and the UNHCR will create advertisements for local television stations, radio stations, and newspapers.

Administrative feasibility

The Ivorian Government, PRM, and other NGO partners have the necessary legal, budgetary, institutional, and human capital to conduct public awareness and education campaigns on birth registration laws in Côte d'Ivoire. This policy option will require the Ivorian Government to approve the operation of the UNHCR or NGO campaign (no direct costs to the government) and a minimal staff from the UNHCR and/or the partner NGO to manage the outreach and digital marketing aspects of the campaigns. It would also require the implementing partner to budget resources for television, radio, and newspaper advertisements. In this case, PRM can directly partner with the UNHCR or another locally-based NGO in order to inform residents of the requirements and benefits associated with registering the birth of their children with the Ivorian National Civil Registration System. Therefore, this policy option is rated as “high” for administrative feasibility.

Cultural feasibility

Although there is little political will from the Ivorian President, National Assembly, and other elected officials to improve access to birth registration for Côte d'Ivoire residents, I would argue that this policy option is going to face limited (if any) opposition from these groups because the campaigns will be relatively low-cost (no costs to the government) and it will not create any legal or administrative changes to be made by the Ivorian Government. Furthermore, this policy option is culturally feasible because the public awareness and education campaigns will be focused on spreading information regarding birth registration and its benefits through locally-driven mechanisms, such as town halls, radio stations, and community events, thereby ensuring that the messages resonate with the target audience. However, the success of this option is dependent on community buy-in. Therefore, this policy option is rated as “medium-high” for cultural feasibility.

Effectiveness

The low birth registration rates observed in Côte d'Ivoire can be partially explained by residents' poor understanding of the country's birth registration laws, so there is reason to believe that a series of targeted public awareness and education campaigns can be an effective strategy for increasing birth registrations for children in Côte d'Ivoire. One example of a successful birth-registration related campaign is Burkina Faso. In 2008, the Government of Burkina Faso partnered with UNICEF and conducted a series of public awareness and education campaign to raise consciousness about the importance of birth registration for vulnerable children living in rural areas of Burkina Faso. This 12-month UNICEF-led initiative supported the issuance of 132,000 birth certificates for Burkinabe children (Nduita, 2012). PRM can support a similar program in Côte d'Ivoire in order to increase the number of birth registrations, a prerequisite for obtaining a birth certificate. However, the success of the program is still dependent on reliable data and community buy-in. Therefore, this policy option is rated as "medium-high" for effectiveness.

Cost-effectiveness

Although this option will be considerably more expensive compared to Option #1, it's still a cost-effective option in terms of the ratio of cost (spending) per additional children registered at birth in Côte d'Ivoire. The program costs will be focused on hiring UN/NGO personnel, coordinating the town halls, transportation (to and from the locations), marketing/content material (such as brochures), and television, radio station, and newspaper advertisements; however, it should result in the registration of thousands of additional children. Therefore, this policy option is rated as "high" for cost-effectiveness.

Sustainability

This policy option has the potential to foster an environment and culture that is committed to improving access to birth registration for all children born in Côte d'Ivoire. These campaigns can also help community members better understand the tangible benefits of birth registration, leading to a more educated society. This option can also lead to community-based ownership, thereby ensuring that birth registrations will continue in these rural areas after PRM and its implementation partners have withdrawn from the program. However, the sustainability of this program is highly dependent on community buy-in. Therefore, this policy option is rated as "medium-high" for sustainability.

Evaluating Policy Option 4: Build Capacity for the Ivorian National Civil Registration System

The objective of this policy option is to reform the current Ivorian National Civil Registration System, enabling it to finally address the low birth registration rates in the country, and hopefully begin to collect reliable data on the stateless population in Côte d'Ivoire. A good civil registration system provides reliable documentation on the identity and demographics of the individuals living in a given country (Report on the Status of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Africa, 2017). This will also include the implementation of new technology and methods for collecting, storing, and analyzing data (Report on the Status of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Africa, 2017). Furthermore, civil registrations will require regular and frequent collections of data in order to improve infant mortality, birth and death rates, and to ensure that population projections are accurate (Report on the Status of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Africa, 2017). I recommend that PRM earmarks funding for the UNHCR to partner with the Ivorian Government to begin the reform the Ivorian National Civil Registration System. These reforms will include: hiring additional civil registrars to manage the various civilian registration offices in Côte d'Ivoire; UNHCR-led training modules for civil registrars on cultural sensitivity and the technical/logistics aspects of the birth registration process; and implementation of a new CRM software to ensure that the national civil registration system is able to store the data. It will also include the establishment of tutorials and best practices guidebooks with respect to research, surveying, and overall data collection.

Administrative feasibility

The Ivorian National Civil Registration System has historically failed to address the low birth registration rates observed across the country. The Ivorian Government lacks both the political will and the resources (budgetary, institutional, or human capital) to build an effective and sustainable civil registration system that is capable of collecting, storing, and analyzing vital statistics. In order to reform and build the capacity of the Ivorian National Civil Registration System, it would require PRM, the UN, and other NGOs to invest a tremendous amount of resources (finances and personnel) to provide the technical, culture awareness, data collection, and hiring support needed to increase the capacity of the Ivorian National Civil Registration System. However, this will not only require the Ivorian Government to permit the UNHCR to serve as an advisor to the Ivorian National Civilian Registration System, but it will also require PRM to invest significant resources over an extended period of time. Therefore, this policy option is rated as “low” for administrative feasibility.

Cultural feasibility

The cultural feasibility for this policy option is dependent upon the Ivorian Government's willingness to allow the UNHCR and/or other NGO implementation partners to advise, train, and support the Ivorian National Civil Registration System and its civil registrars. Although there is minimal interest and political will to increase access to birth registrations for stateless children, Ivorian politicians are going to be reluctant to permit the UNHCR to advise the Ivorian National Civil Registration System because of the potential backlash that they will face from Ivorians (the public) who might perceive this partnership as UN (western) intervention into Ivorian domestic affairs. Therefore, this policy option has been rated as “medium” for cultural feasibility.

Effectiveness

Building the capacity of the Ivorian Government's National Civil Registration System is an effective policy option because it will enable Ivorian civil servants to improve their capacity and technical skills, enabling them to better respond to requests for birth registrations and issuances of birth certificates. This improvement has the potential to increase the birth registration rates in Côte d'Ivoire, thereby ensuring that fewer children will become stateless. However, the effectiveness of this initiative is largely dependent on buy-in from the Ivorian civil registrars. If they don't believe in the system and the general need for reliable vital statistics, no amount of advising, training, and support will improve the situation. An example of a successful case is the Philippines, a country that has experienced a significant increase in birth registration. The Filipino Government, in partnership with UNICEF, launched a civil registration capacity building program, which included developing a central database on civil registration, and has achieved a 93.5 percent birth registration rate (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2017). However, this option will only be effective if the civil registrars support the reforms. Therefore, this policy option is rated as "medium-high" for effectiveness.

Cost-effectiveness

Building the capacity of the Ivorian National Civil Registration System is going to be the most expensive policy option because it will require long-term investments in training programs, data collection software, and hiring programs from PRM, the UNHCR, and the Ivorian Government. Additionally, the effectiveness of this policy option is highly dependent upon PRM's willingness to invest in long-term capacity building initiatives and programs in Côte d'Ivoire, which I would argue is a financially unsustainable proposal. Therefore, this policy option is rated as "low" for cost-effectiveness.

Sustainability

Building the capacity of the Ivorian National Civil Registration System is likely going to be the most sustainable policy option presented in this paper. Following the capacity building initiatives, the Ivorian Government will have developed a culture and environment that is both capable and committed to improving access to birth registration for all children born in Côte d'Ivoire. Additionally, the Ivorian National Civil Registration System will have accumulated the necessary budget, institutional resources, and finances to build upon the mission of the PRM-funded programs long after the State Department has withdrawn its support. Therefore, this policy option is rated as "high" for sustainability.

Evaluating Policy Option 5: Commission Participatory Assessments & Mapping of Stateless Populations in Côte d'Ivoire

The objective of commissioning participatory assessments and mapping the stateless populations in Côte d'Ivoire is to ensure that the Ivorian Government, the UNHCR, and other relevant actors can begin to target and address the needs of the stateless population. Currently, there is little data on the location, demographics, and needs of the stateless population. Without sufficient data, the Ivorian Government and relevant humanitarian and development actors have not been able to establish an effective approach for addressing the needs and grievances of the stateless population.

Administrative feasibility

PRM, the Ivorian Government, and the UNHCR have the combined administrative feasibility to commission a research study focused on participatory assessments and mapping the stateless population in Côte d'Ivoire. These stakeholders lack the capacity to conduct such a study on their own; however, this policy option is feasible because PRM can fund (and rely upon) the UNHCR staff (or their consultants) to travel to the remote areas of the country to collect census-related data on the location, demographics, and needs of the stateless population in Côte d'Ivoire. This will require the UNHCR, in partnership with the Ivorian Government, to plan the travel logistics, create surveys, and set-up interviews /focus groups with local community members. However, since this option is something that the Ivorian Government and UNHCR have failed to accomplish yet, this option has rated as “medium” for administrative feasibility.

Cultural feasibility

Commissioning a research study on the stateless population in Côte d'Ivoire is likely going to be the most culturally feasible options from the perspective of the Ivorian Government. The Ivorian Government and politicians are going to support this option because it shifts the responsibility of collecting reliable data on the location and needs of the stateless population onto PRM and the UNHCR, while also helping to fill in the current gaps in the government-conducted research. In addition, this option is culturally feasible in terms of the affected population. The participatory assessments incorporated into the research study will provide stateless persons with the opportunity to voice their grievances, concerns, and needs to the researchers, with the hope that this information will be used to inform humanitarian and development-related programs. Therefore, this policy option has been rated as “high” for cultural feasibility.

Effectiveness

Commissioning a research study on the stateless population will not directly increase the number of birth registrations in the Côte d'Ivoire in the short-term; however, it has the potential to significantly increase the total number of birth registrations in the long-term because the identification of the location, demographics, and needs of the stateless population will enable the Ivorian Government, the UNHCR, and other NGOs to improve the effectiveness of their programming. More specifically, this research study will enable relevant actors to determine the

best locations for providing birth registration-related services. Therefore, this policy option is rated as “medium-high” for effectiveness.

Cost-effectiveness

Despite the fact that commissioning a research study will be more expensive than Option #1, it’s still a cost-effective option in terms of the ratio of cost per additional children registered at birth (in the future) in Côte d’Ivoire. However, this assessment is based on the assumption that finalizing the research study will lead to an expansion of birth-related programs administered through the Ivorian Government and the UNHCR. The program costs are focused on UN/NGO personnel salaries, transporting personnel to remote areas in-country, coordinating the focus groups, amenities (room and board for the researchers), and technology (laptops or tablets) used to collect, store, and analyze the available data. Therefore, this policy option is rated as “high” for cost-effectiveness.

Sustainability

Besides building the capacity of the Ivorian Civil Registration System (and reforming Ivorian nationality laws), commissioning a research study on statelessness in the Côte d’Ivoire is the most sustainable policy option. After the research study has been completed, the Ivorian Government, UNHCR, and PRM will be able to use the participatory assessments and mappings of the stateless populations to create programs that are tailored to meet the needs of the affected population, including birth registration, and that are piloted in communities with the largest number of stateless persons. This option will ensure that the Ivorian Government and other actors have the relevant data that is needed to increase the number of birth registrations, long after the study and PRM’s support has concluded. Therefore, this policy option is rated as “high” for sustainability.

Recommendation

After evaluating the policy options (see Appendix 1 for an Outcome Matrix), this report recommends Option # 5, Commission Participatory Assessments and Mapping the Stateless Populations in Côte d'Ivoire. Although this option might be a challenge to manage administratively, it outperforms the other options in terms of cultural feasibility, cost-effectiveness, and sustainability. Commissioning a research study from the UNHCR enables PRM, the Ivorian Government, and other relevant actors to obtain (or begin to obtain) comprehensive and reliable data on the location, demographics, and needs of the stateless population in Côte d'Ivoire. This data can then be used by relevant actors in the humanitarian assistance and development fields to create targeted, context-specific programs and initiatives that can more effectively address the concerns and grievances of the stateless population. However, the most relevant trade-off that must be made by selecting this option is that the additional number of stateless children registered at birth (or through late birth registrations) will not increase in the short-term. Although Option #3 is more administratively feasible and will register more children in the short-term, I decided against recommending this option because the UNHCR has insufficient data on the best locations for implementing their campaigns and will face resistance in terms of securing community buy-in for the program (and birth registrations more generally). These factors will limit the effect of the public awareness and education campaigns on the long-term birth registration rates in the country. Therefore, the trade-off is worthwhile, as Option #5 will increase the effectiveness of any PRM-funded, and UNHCR and Ivorian Government-run, birth-registration related initiatives by collecting reliable data and conducting participatory assessments that enable the affected population to be involved in the humanitarian and development response.

Implementation

The objectives of this research study are to: count the number of stateless persons; determine where stateless people live; learn more about the causes and consequences of statelessness in Côte d'Ivoire; and assess the self-reported needs of the affected population. Secondly, the researchers will need to use existing administrative data sources such as censuses, surveys, civil registries, and social service agencies that have data on the stateless population to determine the service gaps that need to be filled. Subsequently, the researchers will need to create a plan for primary data collection in the targeted rural areas. This should include participatory assessments with key informants, NGO leaders, and stateless persons, as well as observation data to begin plotting out maps of the stateless population in Côte d'Ivoire. The research study will rely on the use of a mix-methods approach in order to collect both qualitative and quantitative data.

Quantitative data collection methodology: UNHCR and partners can design and carry out a survey in rural areas of the country to study the stateless population. The survey questions should focus on asking the affected population about their self-identified nationality, ethnicity, migration history, highest level of education, and other socio-economic status indicators. Researchers should also use simple random sampling to collect this survey data. Random sampling tends to produce more accurate results and conclusions that can (to an extent) be extrapolated to the entire population. Furthermore, this aspect of the data collection process will be used to obtain more reliable estimates of the stateless population in the country.

Qualitative data collection methodology: In order to gain a deeper understanding of the causes of and potential solutions to statelessness, the researchers will need to solicit feedback from the affected population (Gregg, 2011). Participatory assessments will be used by the UNHCR to build relationships with and promote meaningful participation amongst the affected population. These assessments will be structured around discussions in the community in order to gather accurate information on the needs of the population and to hear their proposed solutions. This information can be collected through one-on-one interviews with community, religious, and NGO leaders and focus group discussions (Gregg, 2011). It's recommended that these interviews and focus groups are structured around a few key questions, lasting no more than 2 hours per session (Gregg, 2011). This aspect of the research study can be completed within a two-week period.

Appendix 1: Outcome Matrix

Table 1: Evaluation of Policy Options to Increase Birth Registrations in Côte d'Ivoire

	Option 1: Let Current Trends Persist	Option 2: Establish Mobile Courts in Rural Areas	Option 3: Conduct Public Awareness and Education Campaigns	Option 4: Build Capacity of the Ivorian National Civil Registration System	Option 5: Commission Participatory Assessments & Mapping of Stateless Populations in Côte d'Ivoire
Administrative Feasibility	High	High	High	Low	Medium
Cultural Feasibility	High	High	Medium - High	Medium	High
Effectiveness	Low	Medium - High	Medium - High	Medium - High	Medium - High
Cost-effectiveness	High	High	High	Low	High
Sustainability	Low	Low	Medium - High	High	High

Appendix 2: Cost Analysis

This section will focus on providing recommendations to PRM on how they should estimate the costs associated with each of these policy options. Due to my limited resources, I was unable to visit Côte d'Ivoire to collect the data myself and/or solicit data/reports from relevant stakeholders (UNHCR, UNICEF, and NGOs) operating in the field. Instead, this section will inform PRM of the relevant stakeholders that they should contact, and the different categories of costs that need to be considered when estimating the direct costs associated with each policy option.

Policy Option #1: Let Current Trends Persist (Status Quo)

Letting current trends persist will have zero financial costs to PRM because they are currently not funding any birth registration-related programs in Côte d'Ivoire.

Policy Option #2: Establish Mobile Courts to Register Births in Rural Areas (Including Late Registrations)

PRM can estimate the costs of establishing mobile courts to register births in rural areas (including late registrations) using the following two methods: 1) PRM can review their previous RFPs on similar health-related programs and clinics in the region and use those costs as proxies for this new program 2) PRM can reach out to their contacts at the UNHCR's Country Office in Côte d'Ivoire to request data and the budget for the UNHCR's mobile courts initiative in 2013.

Potential costs: Personnel (salary); security (private contractors); transportation (van and/or helicopters to transport the staff and equipment to rural areas); technology (computers, tablets, other devices to collect and store the data); accommodations (housing, food, water, etc. for staff to live in the area for the duration of the program (a few days or two weeks)); supplies (forms, pens, pencils, etc.); logistics (tables, chairs, room/space rental); translators (for conducting the hearings and appointments in the local dialect).

Policy Option #3: Conduct Public Awareness and Education Campaigns on Birth Registration Laws in Côte d'Ivoire

PRM can estimate the costs of conducting public awareness and education campaigns on birth registration laws in Côte d'Ivoire using the following two methods: 1) PRM can review their previous RFPs on similar public awareness and education campaigns in the region and use those costs as proxies for this new program 2) PRM can reach out to their contacts at UNICEF's Country Office in Burkina Faso to request data and the budget for their 2008 campaign which supported the issuance of 132,000 birth certificates for Burkinabe children.

Potential costs: Personnel (salary); security (private contractors); transportation (vans and helicopters to transport staff and equipment to and from the rural areas); technology (computers, tablets, etc.); promotional materials (brochures, posters, sign-in sheets, handouts); advertisements (television, radio, and newspapers); logistics (tables, chairs, room, and food for staff and attendees); translators (to translate in-person conversations and advertisements to the local dialect).

Policy Option #4: Build Capacity of the Ivorian National Civil Registration System

PRM can estimate the costs associated with building the capacity for the Ivorian National Civil Registration System by reviewing their previous RFPs dealing with the following areas: technical training programs; cultural awareness programs; technology implementation; and workforce development and use those costs as proxies for this policy option. These costs will also need to be adjusted to account for inflation and the duration of the programs.

Potential Costs: Civil registrars (recruitment and salary costs for hiring additional people to staff the civil registration offices); trainers (salary for UN or NGO employees to train incoming/current civil registrars); technology (new computers, tablets, a CRM software); training materials (brochures, guidebooks, forms, etc.); and certification fees (to ensure that the civil registrars are certified in the necessary technical skills/programs).

Policy Option #5: Commission Participatory Assessments & Mapping of Stateless Populations in Côte d'Ivoire

PRM can estimate the costs for commissioning a research study on participatory assessments and the mapping of the stateless populations in Côte d'Ivoire by reaching out to their contacts at the UNHCR (as well as the European Union's Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations) to obtain a copy of their budget for a study that they conducted on statelessness in Central Asia in 2011 (Farquharson, 2011).

Potential Costs: Researchers (salary); transportation (vans and helicopters for transporting the researchers to remote areas to collect data on stateless persons); technology (computers, tablets, statistical data analysis software (STATA); materials (questionnaires, forms, pens, pencils); logistics (tables, chairs, etc.); translators (in-person and documents should be translated into the local dialect); focus groups (incentives and room/space rental); and accommodations (housing, food, water, etc. for staff to live in the area for the duration of the study).

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