Issues governments need to take care when building their identity systems
Challenge # 2: non-accessibility and exclusion
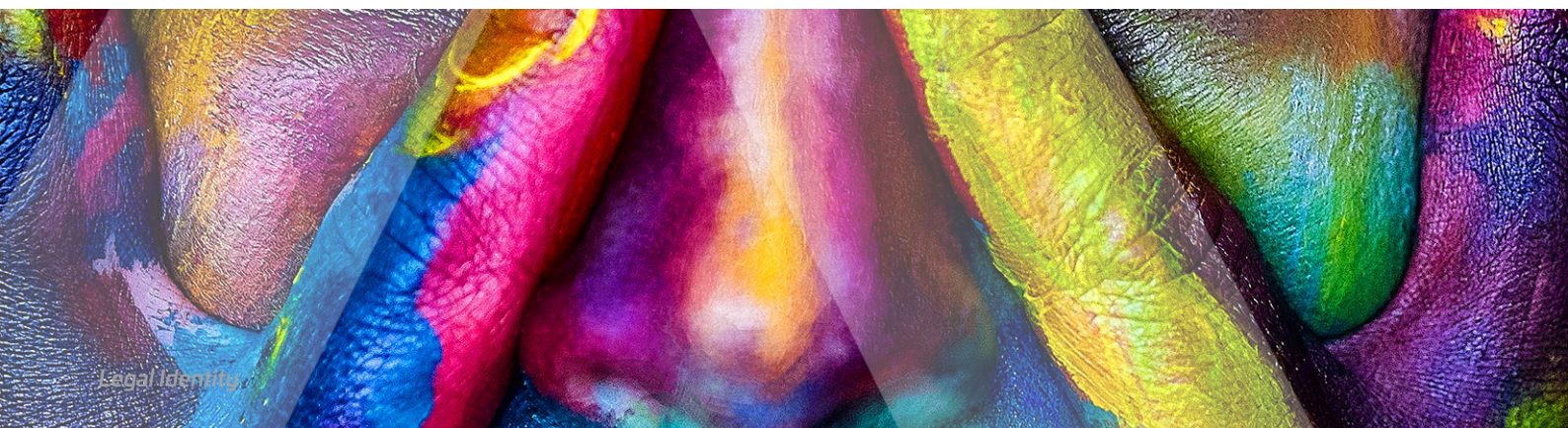
THALES
Building a future we can all trust

Provide a context-oriented solution

Global access to a single identity will happen only if the chosen solution is both powerful and relevant. It must be accessible to all, inclusive and scalable. It also needs to account for local constraints, be consistent with people's culture and specific needs.

Registration: barriers to accessibility and inclusion

1. **Physical access to the identity registration office is difficult:** there are not enough offices, some people live too far from registration points...

2. **Access to a technology essential to the solution is not guaranteed for all.** For instance, the internet network does not cover parts of the country, while the registration process requires Internet access. In Africa, a campaign to register inhabitants was hampered by difficulties in access to energy: numerous power cuts made it impossible to collect and send data.

3. **Access to a single legal identity can be too costly for individuals**, especially when it requires travel. Most among the poorest will then be excluded.

4. **Cultural or religious pressure may induce exclusion.** In some countries, an unmarried mother may be reluctant to register her new-born baby. A woman will simply refuse to enter a registration office run by men... According to Unicef, « institutional procedures and processes sometimes treat children from certain ethnic or religious groups differently or impose restrictions, whether formally by law or informally in practice, on a mother's ability to register her child without the father's involvement. »

5. **Isolated communities are excluded**, for example in rural areas, due to lack of communication or excessive distance from a registration office.

6. **The project is poorly understood**, due to inadequate communication. Some situations (illiteracy, minorities with poor command of the official language, refugee or displaced populations, etc.) have not received the specific attention they deserve.

Legal Identity

Thales' vision

There is no «one size fits all» solution, and a solution successfully implemented in one country will not necessarily work in another. Within a country, we have to **show adaptability; we must not hesitate to simultaneously run several interoperable solutions, making the best of existing and reliable infrastructures**. For example, use both sedentary city offices and mobile equipment in rural areas; on-the-spot registering in connected area and deferred registering in off-grid areas, etc.

In some locations, when necessary, we must be ready to **work in «less technological» ways** – such as using paper forms with deferred registering - to ensure comprehensive accessibility. Finally, the solution we offer must be scalable and sustainable, so as to be able to integrate new technologies (biometrics, communication, etc.).

Use cases and good practices

- To improve access to registration, some programs reach out to populations, for example by setting up mobile registration offices in markets or in health centers (notably to reach future mothers). **In Senegal, an association has taken actions to promote child civil registration. They organised mobile hearings, conferences in villages, poster advertising, and even house calls.**

- **In Indonesia,** women were sometimes reluctant to register for fear of being confronted to a male interlocutor. To address this issue, women are systematically included in registration teams.

- «Simplified» solutions can help generalising registration. Thus, **in Burkina Faso, thanks to the iCivil** solution, every new-born receives a unique wristband linked to the baby's civil status-related data: the officer only has to scan the bracelet, in order to retrieve the data to the city hall. **In Nigeria, text messages are used to report the birth of a child**. This is a good example of a reliable solution based on an existing infrastructure. The text message triggers a judge or clerk to come, register the birth and issue the birth certificate in the presence of local authorities.

- In Peru, the Registro Nacional de Identificacion y Estado Civil **(RENIEC)** put a stress on inclusion: **agents travelled the Amazon on military boats to reach isolated communities.** Communications were published in more than 40 indigenous languages.

To know more

thalesgroup.com