

Obstacles to Births Registration in Urban African Evidence from the Ouagadougou Health and Demographic Surveillance System

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The civil registration of a birth is the official proof of his existence. It gives him the right to nationality, and also access to certain privileges (access to education, employment, right to marriage, etc.). Unfortunately, according to statistics from UNICEF, 51 million children worldwide are not registered (UNICEF, 2009). This situation is unfortunately more common in developing countries, specifically in sub-Saharan Africa where about 2 out of 3 children are not registered (UNICEF, 2009). The objective of this paper is to contribute to the understanding of this problem. By combining quantitative and qualitative approaches, it examines factors associated with non-registration of births in Ouagadougou, capital of Burkina Faso, where approximately 1 in 4 children are not registered.

Especially, we use data collected in the Ouaga HDSS (Rossier et al, 2012)¹, a research and intervention platform whose prime objective is to help policy makers make evidence-based decisions regarding poverty, health, and education, and housing, -- access to basic social services. The surveillance system follows five large districts, and the population is about 80,000 individuals. Two of the 5 districts are formal neighborhoods (in which the land is deeded and government services are provided) and three are informal settlements (essentially illegal slums around the periphery of the city, without access to electricity, running water or other government services). During regular visits that take place every 10 months, field workers collect information on "vital events" (pregnancies, births, unions, migrations, deaths) as well as information concerning schooling, housing, employment, living standards, health, etc. The first round of data collection started in October 2008 and three additional rounds have since been conducted. 6,752 births were born under surveillance for whom we have information about civil registration.

We use logistic regression to highlight the importance of individual and family characteristics. We also use in-depth interviews conducted for a better understanding of the quantitative results. The preliminary findings indicate that poverty, lack of open-mindedness, and some family problems are the main obstacles to births registration. In this context, female birth are less registered.

References

Rossier Clementine, Abdramane Soura et al "The Ouagadougou Health and Demographic Surveillance System". In *International Journal of Epidemiology*, June edition, 2012, pp 1-9.

UNICEF, *Progrès pour les enfants: un bilan de la protection de l'enfant*, n°8, 2009, 46 p.

¹ <http://ije.oxfordjournals.org/content/early/2012/06/08/ije.dys090.short?rss=1>