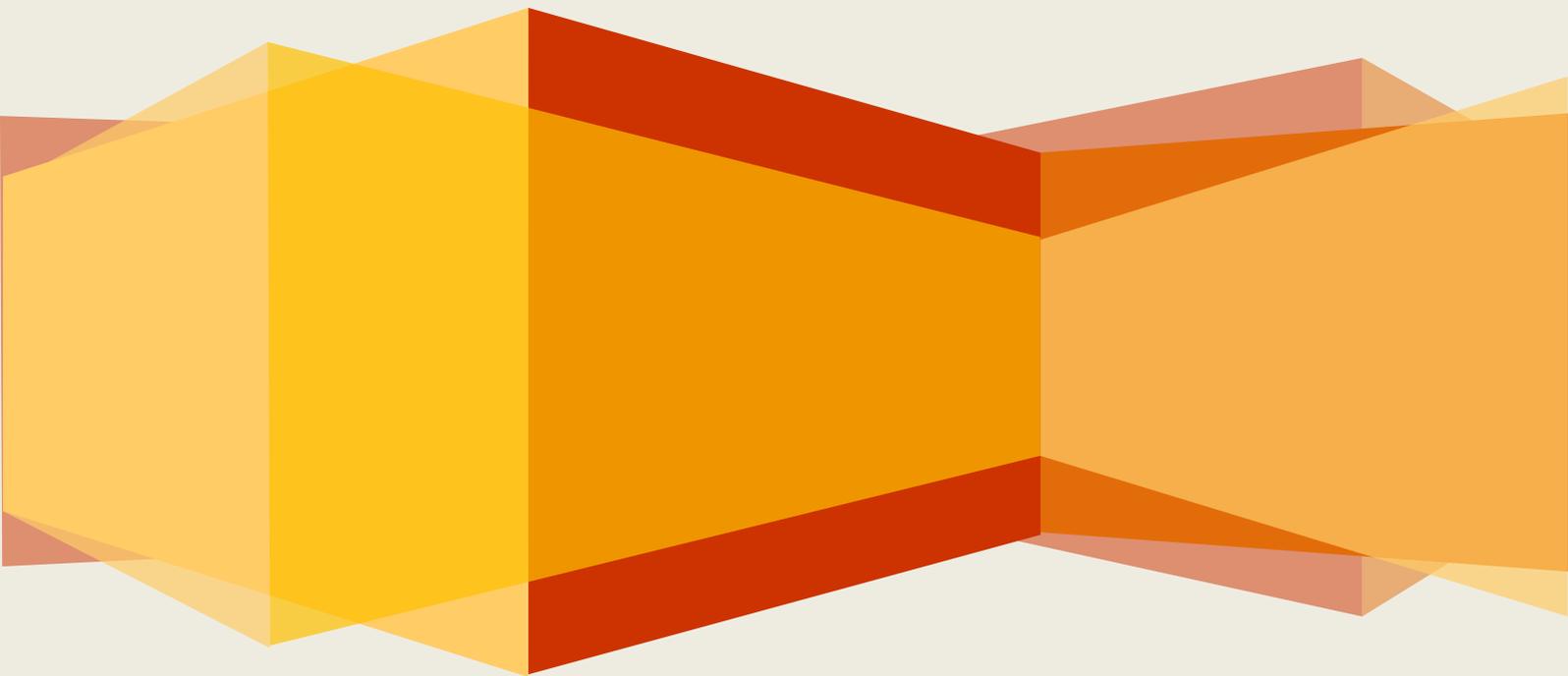




Outcomes of the 2016 NRF Mobile Birth Registration and School Outreach Program



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MOBILE BIRTH REGISTRATION

Birth registration guarantees the child the universal right of belonging to a state as protected by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) Article 7. 1

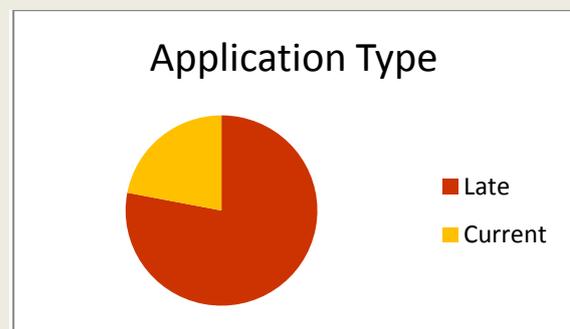
The child shall be registered immediately after birth and shall have the right from birth to a name, the right to acquire a nationality and, as far as possible, the right to know and be cared for by his or her parents.

The Nubian Rights Forum (NRF), in partnership with the Kenyan Department of Civil Registration with the support of UNHCR, Namati and the Open Society Justice Initiative (OSJI) have conducted three successful mobile birth registration campaigns in Kibra, Nairobi. The mobile birth campaign is a five day registration process where the Nubian Rights Forum invites and facilitates the civil registration department officials in Kibera to register births on the ground. NRF supplements the officials with paralegals who help guide the applicants through the registration process, register the names and contacts of the applicants as well as helping them fill the forms especially for those who cannot do it themselves. This project is in line with the Global Action Plan to End Statelessness Action 7:

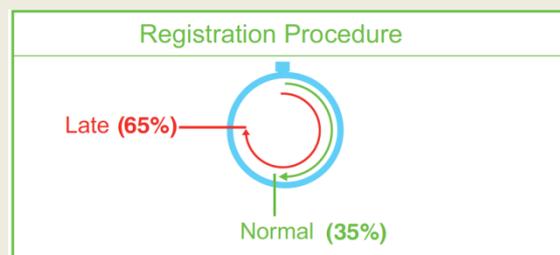
Ensure birth registration for the prevention of statelessness.

NRF's effort began with the first mobile birth registration in 2015 where over 1800 people were registered during the event. In 2016 following the good momentum of the paralegal work and through a partnership with UNHCR, NRF carried out a mobile birth registration campaign in Kibra in the month of November. This was aimed at further enhancing and devolving birth registration services with the aim of mopping up all the un-registered births in Kibra.

From the mobile birth registration data, collected by the NRF paralegals during the event, it was evident that the majority of the applications are late registration. Current registration is when a child's birth is notified – whether through a hospital or local authority such as chief – within 6 months of occurrence. Late registration is when the child was born at home or the birth is not notified within 6 months. In the 2015- 2016 events, 78% of the cases registered in the mobile birth exercise were late registration as seen in the figure below.



In the recently concluded mobile birth registration in November 2016, the majority of cases are still alarming at over 65% of the cases are late birth registration as seen in the figure below:

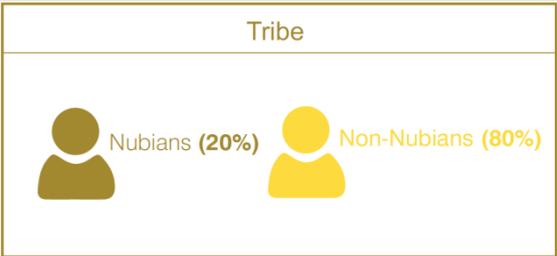


Many applicants, even within children who are several years old, are only going to the chief to acquire a birth notification at the time of the mobile registration event. With this notification, they can then apply for a birth certificate from Civil Registry. From this information we can deduct that there is a large number of people who have not registered since majority of the cases are of late registration in all the mobile birth

campaigns. Given the big population of Kibra and the number of villages, the NRF team has handled only a small portion of the community given the limited resources and the limited time.

The November 2016 event was aimed at further eliminating unregistered births, especially those who are late registrants. NRF set a target of 1500 applicants for the event, though only around 760 people took advantage of the mobile registration this round. There is a possibility that the areas selected already had a relatively high level of people with birth certificates, based on the paralegal project casework from February 2013 as well as the prior mobile birth registration events. Other areas of Kibera are yet to be served intensively. Other factors like the weather and accessibility could also have affected the number of people who registered as the November event was affected by the heavy rains as could have led to the low turn up.

In the conception of this project, the primary beneficiaries were the Nubian population in Kibra. Nubians are at risk of statelessness due to discriminatory processes that has made access to nationality documents for the community a tedious process, with some people opting to not register at all. The assumption was that the community had major challenges in documentation compared to the rest of the communities in Kibra. The results on the ground proved the assumption to be wrong as seen in the figure below:



There is therefore need to do a comprehensive research to know why the number of applicants were high for the non-Nubian population compared to the Nubian population but as of now the justification could be the population as the total Nubian population in Kibra is less than 30,000 compared to the total population of Kibra which is of over 500,000 people as the statistics on the total population varies from different authors as some even put the figure to over 1,000,000 people.

MOBILE BIRTH CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the three mobile birth activities of which two were funded by UNHCR, it is evident that there is still a lot to be done to achieve 100% birth registration in Kibra. The number of late birth registration is still over 60% and many people only pursue a birth notification when a special event such as mobile birth is conducted, which means there is still potentially a lot of unregistered births in Kibra. This could be caused by the lack of government health centers in the areas thus people resorting to home births. The government should partner with the local health centers like Freepals, Vipawa among others to give basic free maternity health services to the poor Kibra population.

There is also need to devolve birth registration with the use of the nyumba kumi initiative to give the nyumba kumi officials the power to issue birth notifications with the supervision of the chiefs to reduce on late birth registration. The Civil Registry should also encourage the local health centers to register all children who come for vaccination as new births and educate patients about both birth registration and birth certificate processes. These efforts can also be more sustainable over time in ensuring on-time birth

registration and high levels of birth certificate possession.

In conclusion, there is still need to have more outreach events like mobile birth registration campaigns as well as the use of more paralegals in the area to help the Civil Registry reduce on the rate of unregistered births in the area.

SCHOOL PROGRAM

Birth registration and registration of persons in general hugely affect children as they get affected when their parents lack registration documents as it makes the child not able to apply for registration documents and this can render them stateless. The Nubian Rights Forum identified that all interventions in the country in terms of birth registration and other forms of national registration campaigns never gave audience to the children's voices. There was need to amplify these voices as well as empowering them on the importance of documentation and how they can pass the message to their parents.

In October 2016, NRF carried out a citizenship inter-school competition for schools within Kibra. This competition aimed at empowering students on citizenship knowledge. This competition targeted both primary and secondary schools. The main tools of conveying the message was through inter-school debates and a creative writing and drawing competition that provoked thinking and research by the young minds. The school empowerment program was carried out in both primary and secondary schools, in the primary schools NRF focused on classes 6 and 7 while the secondary schools involved all classes from Form 1 to 3.

This project highly depended on the NRF citizenship paralegals who took the students through two weeks of intensive review of the basic laws on nationality and Chapter Three of

the Constitution of Kenya 2010. These sessions gave the students the basic knowledge of the nationality laws as a foundation of more research on statelessness on the side of the students. The students were also given copies of the Constitution to act as a point of reference for the competition.

The entire program was carried out in under 3 weeks with highlight over one week between the 29th of October and the 4th of November 2016 showcasing the statelessness and citizenship competitions.

The school debate competition was the highlight of the school competition with some of the topics debated being:

- A National Identity Card is a matter of survival
- Vetting should be nationalized
- Fines and penalties are effective ways of ensuring birth certificates and identification cards registration
- Birth registration should occur immediately at birth
- Statelessness should be solved legally not politically
- Men and women should be given equal rights to confer nationalities to their children
- States should automatically grant citizenship to children born in their territory

It was impressive to listen to the arguments of high school children arguing on very complex issues that not many adults could discuss. This is what we see as empowerment after just two weeks of mentorship by the paralegals, the students understood the issues around nationality and statelessness. Below is a collage of some of the photos of the school debates:



The final debate attracted the area nominated Member of County Assembly (MCA) and even the office of the Member of Parliament for Kibra.



The second from the left is the nominated MCA Madam Asha Abdi Sosso.

The main aim of the program was not to create a competition for students to participate for the trophies but to impart knowledge and provoke research on issues that are not taught at school but can affect anyone at any time and that is statelessness. The students really performed to our expectation in terms of content and delivery of the content and based on the feedback of the teachers they believe that the level of debating skills in their schools have improved.

In conclusion, we believe there is still a lot to be done as not all the schools in Kibra participated as only 8 secondary schools did participate and we look to exploring other schools also to participate, though it might increase on the total number of days for the program and also on the logistical constraints of the project.

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