Identification for Development (ID4D)

Making Everyone Count

The Challenge

There are an estimated 1.5 billion people, the majority of them living in Asia and Africa, who are unable to prove their identity. The problem disproportionately affects children and women from poor rural areas in Africa and Asia. The ability to prove your identity is critical to ensure access to educational opportunities, financial services, health and social welfare benefits, economic development, and the right to vote.

Despite these compelling motivations, an overwhelming majority of low- to middle-income countries lack adequate systems to register births or uniquely identify millions of people living within their borders. Where identification programs exist, they are often fragmented across several functions and agencies.

The Opportunity

With the transformational potential of modern solutions—the advances in identification technology (both digital and biometric) and the dramatically falling costs of technology and implementation—there is an opportunity to leapfrog traditional paper-based approaches and build strong and efficient identification systems at a scale not previously achievable. Mobile devices also offer promising solutions to enroll and authenticate individuals with a unique identification, particularly in remote and rural areas.

A robust and efficient solution is becoming a priority for governments around the world and is included as Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 16.9: “By 2030, provide legal identify for all, including birth registration.” It is also key to the attainment of many other SDG goals.

Responding with a Multi-Sectoral Approach

To enable access to services and rights for all, the World Bank Group launched the Identification for Development (ID4D) Initiative to support progress toward identification systems using 21st century solutions. The ID4D program will bring global knowledge and expertise to bear across multiple sectors and countries to tackle the fundamental development challenge of official identification.

Collaboration with development partners, donors, and governments will provide unified technical and financial support to low- and middle-income countries.

To assist client countries in implementing effective ID systems, the World Bank is leveraging its own financial resources and technical expertise to:

- Assess country ID systems and implement recommendations;
- Design sustainable business models of ID systems, including public-private partnership (PPP) models;
- Develop appropriate legal and regulatory frameworks, including data protection and privacy requirements;
- Leverage relevant technology standards and interoperability frameworks;
- Promote advocacy, awareness-raising campaigns and public-private partnerships;
- Ensure that monitoring and evaluation mechanisms;
including impact assessments, are included in the design;

- Finance the infrastructure required for the public sector as well as streamline the process flow needed to support service delivery.

The convergence of a better understanding of the role of identification systems together with significant advances in and the ubiquity of many new technologies, throws up unprecedented opportunities to further the ID4D agenda.

**Enabling Critical Development Outcomes**

The ID4D agenda has the potential to serve as a key enabler of some of the most pressing development challenges today, such as:

**Financial Inclusion.** Less than half of all adults in the poorest 40 percent of households have a bank account—and approximately 375 million unbanked adults in developing countries (18 percent) are constrained by not having the necessary ID documentation. Verifiable ID systems can facilitate the Know Your Customer (KYC) requirements of providers and expand the use of financial services. For example, when the Reserve Bank of India approved the use of the Aadhaar ID card as a proof of identity to meet the regulatory KYC requirements, approximately 170 million new bank accounts were opened.

**Gender Equality.** Women often struggle to assert their rights and access services due to lack of legal identification. Often, their government benefits and wages are deposited into a household account rather than into their own account. With official identification, however, they can open and operate their own bank accounts. Pakistan, for example, implemented a cash transfer that was to be made only to the female head of the household and required the woman to show possession of the national ID card. Evaluations showed that, as a result, women grew in confidence and had more say in the management of their household finances. Their households spent more on nutrition, health, and child education.

**Access to Health Care.** Targeted and monitored health interventions and services require countries to identify the beneficiaries. In Thailand, the launch of the universal coverage scheme has led to the development of a unique identification number which is used to access and track health care services. The subsequent adoption of smart cards has decreased fraud, human error and overhead costs.

**Social Safety Nets.** 870 million people living in extreme poverty do not have access to any kind of social assistance programs. Such programs can be more effective with precise targeting and credible verification of the intended beneficiaries. For example, in Pakistan provided flood relief using the national identification database to make payments to 1.5 million families.

**Improved Governance.** Many country governments link civil servant databases to national identification registers to verify who is still on the rolls, check absenteeism and overall increase the accountability of government institutions and curb fraud and corruption in these places. For example, biometrically enrolling civil servants through Nigeria’s Integrated Personnel and Payroll Information System, saved N12 billion (approximately US$74 million) in the first phase and eliminated 43,000 ghost workers. Liberia’s Employee Biometric Identification and Records System (EBIRS) reduced payroll by 10 percent to 15 percent.

**Platform for Partnership**

The global community must act together by aligning its actions in providing sustainable support for regions and countries to achieve ID4D goals and development outcomes. To this end, ID4D is reaching out to a range of partners and stakeholders to engage in this ambitious effort with their insights, expertise and financing with a particular focus on:

- Accelerating scale at the Country and Regional Level, incorporating good practices and lessons learned.
- Global convening and building a multistakeholder partnership platform with other development partners, public sector and private sector associations to develop a shared vision and set of principles, and provide a platform for developing countries to share learning.
- Thought Leadership to advance global knowledge of this somewhat nascent development topic.

For more information, please contact the ID4D Program Manager, Vyjayanti Desai (vdesai@worldbank.org)

www.worldbank.org/id4d