

Why Africa Should Invest in Birth Registration, as Part of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics...



The 7th African Population Statistics Conference

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Two children registered with Birth Registration Certificates
after their immunization

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CRVS Defined <<<

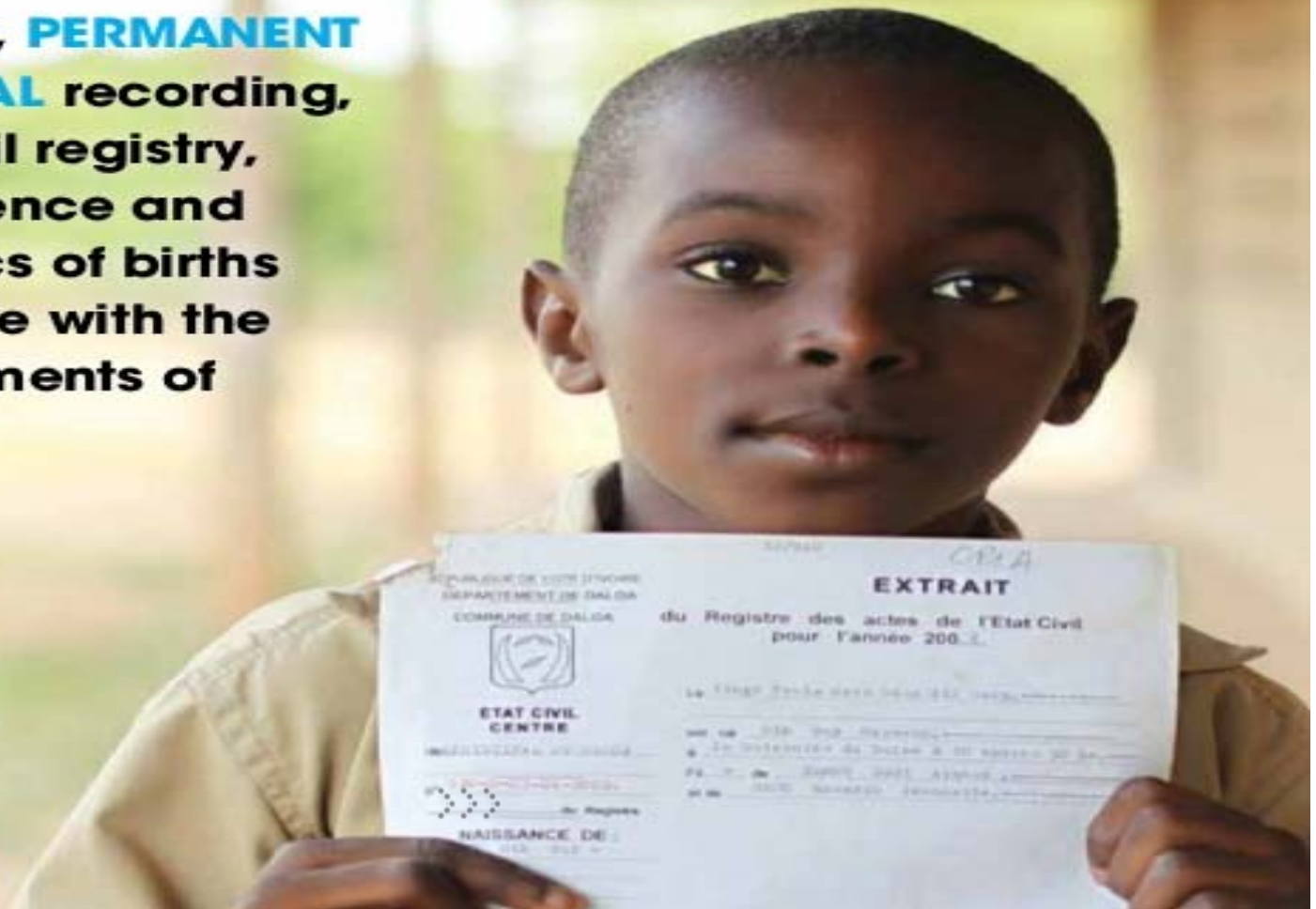
- The United Nations defines civil registration as “the continuous, permanent, compulsory, and universal recording of the occurrence and characteristics of vital events (live births, deaths, fetal deaths, marriages, and divorces)...”
- A well-functioning civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) system registers all births and deaths, issues birth and death certificates, and compiles and disseminates vital statistics
- Operating a civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) system is a fundamental function of governments and has multiple purposes: administrative, legal, statistical, demographic and epidemiological.
- A well-functioning and integrated CRVS system is one of the most critical ways to foster social inclusion ensuring that all citizens have access to their human and constitutional rights and benefit from the positive development of nations.

“the continuous, permanent, compulsory, and universal recording of the occurrence and characteristics of vital events (live births, deaths, fetal deaths, marriages, and divorces)...”

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CRVS Defined <<<

Birth registration is the
CONTINUOUS, PERMANENT
and UNIVERSAL recording,
within the civil registry,
of the occurrence and
characteristics of births
in accordance with the
legal requirements of
a country.



Registered child with Birth Registration Certificate

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Key Events & Trends <<<

Key events and trends are dovetailing to make this the perfect time:

- The Accelerated Programme for the Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (APAI-CRVS) in 2010;
- African Heads of States and Governments increased the status of the Ministers meeting to an African Union standing mechanism that reports progress every two years;
- African Symposium on Statistical Development (ASSD)
- There is renewed donor interest (EU-UNICEF project, WHO/ World Bank and Canada multi-billion dollar proposal of a Global CRVS Investment Framework);
- Global emphasis on improving the health of women and children requires reliable data on for example mortality rates;
- The snowballing interest in ID and voter registration systems;

Africa's commitment to regional integration aims to increase the continent's economic competitiveness, diversify its economic base and create employment for its growing population through the integration of goods, labour and capital markets. Vital to this strategy is **the free movement of people**, and vital to the free movement of people is **CRVS**.

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Building Towards 2030 <<<



- The UN General Assembly's Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals has proposed “legal identity for all, including birth registration” by 2030.
- Meanwhile, Generation 2030/ Africa (UNICEF's 2014 report) highlights the fact that Africa has the potential to be a super-continent, reaping its demographic dividend IF the right systems are in place and fully functional.
- Just as a birth certificate is a child's first right, CRVS is a country's first duty in terms of becoming all that it can be.

- Increasing the rate of birth registration across programme countries is one of the three main impact indicators of UNICEF's 2014-2017 Strategic Plan
- In 2014, just over half (78) of all UNICEF country offices reported working on varying components to strengthen their birth registration system.
- Approximately 35 % of the UNICEF programme countries currently engaged in birth registration work included a major focus of their activities around legal and policy reform and the development of civic registration processes, policy and legislation.
- UNICEF supported programming contributed to the registration of approximately 14.59 million children's births in 2014, in part through improvements in the quality of services and service delivery mechanisms.
- UNICEF plays a key role in the Global CRVS Group, and through engagement with the Rule of Law Coordination and Resources Group, to ensure that targets and goals related to universal Birth registration were included in the Sustainable Development Goals and continue to be mainstreamed in Rule of Law support by the UN .

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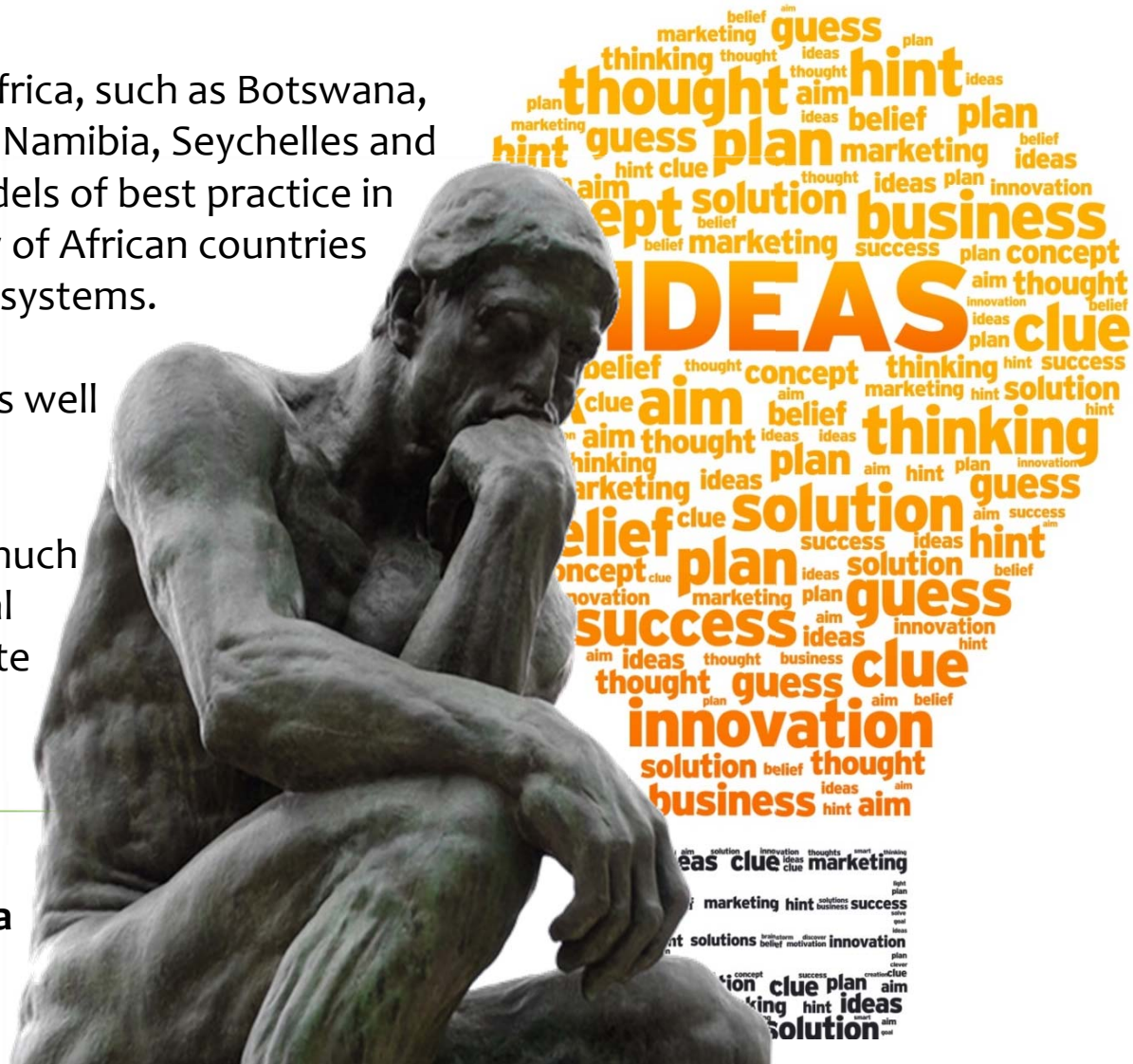
Zero to Hero <<<<

While some countries within Africa, such as Botswana, Cape Verde, Gabon, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles and South Africa are providing models of best practice in various ways; the vast majority of African countries do not have Functioning CRVS systems.

This can be negative, but it is as well a positive.

When you are starting pretty much from scratch, there are minimal “legacy systems” to incorporate or adjust to.

So many African States are in a position to start with the ideal system.



International Best Practice is in Place

African Best Practice is Emerging: **Uganda** <<<

In Uganda 1,696,044 children under-5 years have been registered in the period January 2012 to December 2014, contributing to an estimated national increase of birth registration for under 5 year olds from an 30% to 60.05%. This increase is attributed to the introduction of Mobile VRS which is now functional in all 135 hospitals mandated to register births and deaths, and in 58 district local governments.

www.mobilevrs.co.ug



International Best Practice is in Place

African Best Practice is Emerging: **Mozambique** <<<

In Mozambique, During 2014 UNICEF invested financial resources and provided vital USD \$2.4 M technical support towards strengthening in CRVS services which is yielding encouraging results: 319,785 children were registered through regular birth registration activities, including 193,081 children under 5 during the Child Health Week. At the end of 2014, the National Institute of Statistics (INE) reported a 60 per cent% birth registration rate: ; a 12% per cent increase on rates reported in the rate reported in 2011 (last DHS).

Mozambique eCRVS System

<http://civil.registos.gov.mz>



Women registering their children after immunizing them; October 2014



International Best Practice is in Place

African Best Practice is Emerging: **Senegal** <<<

Institutional level

- National standards/ Legal reform to allow interoperability in progress;
- Revision of data collection tools in progress;
- MoU being prepared between the Justice and Health Ministries to define roles and responsibilities;
- Place civil registrars in big hospitals and health centres and to validate revised data collection tools;
- Work towards making the two digitized systems interoperable.

At the **decentralized level**, there are ongoing pilots in six communities; including local communities of Kolda and Sédhiou with a total population of 30,574 of children aged 0-1 year:

- Capacity strengthening of civil registrars and health workers
- Testing of new practices of using health workers in the notification of births and in follow-up of birth registration/certificates

Senegal is transforming both HMIS and CRVS systems to make the two systems truly interoperable !



Senegal, Mali, Ethiopia and South Sudan are at very different levels of development with regard to CRVS: with support from the DFAT-D funded programme, they're working hard to develop a similar system

International Best Practice is in Place

African Best Practice is Emerging: **Democratic Republic of Congo** <<<

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, UNICEF helped to increase the birth registration rate by promoting the use of the power of attorney in maternity services, by linking with vaccination campaigns, and by supporting functional civil registration offices. As a result, 925,957 children (46 per cent % of the 2,000,000 targeted) were registered in maternity services. During the vaccination campaigns, 103,245 children (52 per cent% of the 200,000 targeted) were registered. The number of civil registration offices increased from 1,571 to 2,026.



International Best Practice is in Place

African Best Practice is Emerging: **South Africa** <<<

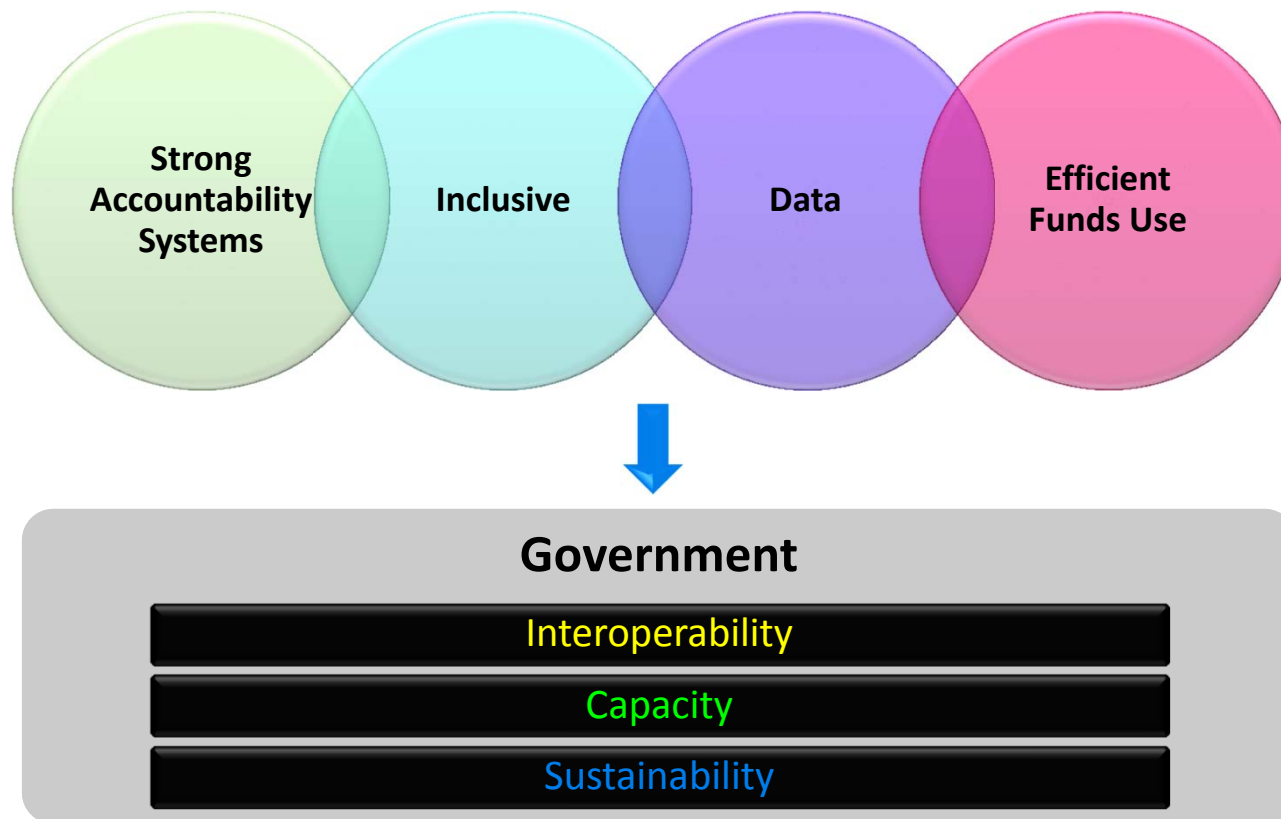
As part of the APAI-CRVS, UNICEF facilitated South-South cooperation via an exchange visit between Kenya and Uganda and the provision of technical support to the government of South Sudan by the government of Uganda on ITC in birth registration



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CRVS Aligns Government Best Practices to Make Country Best it Can Be <<<

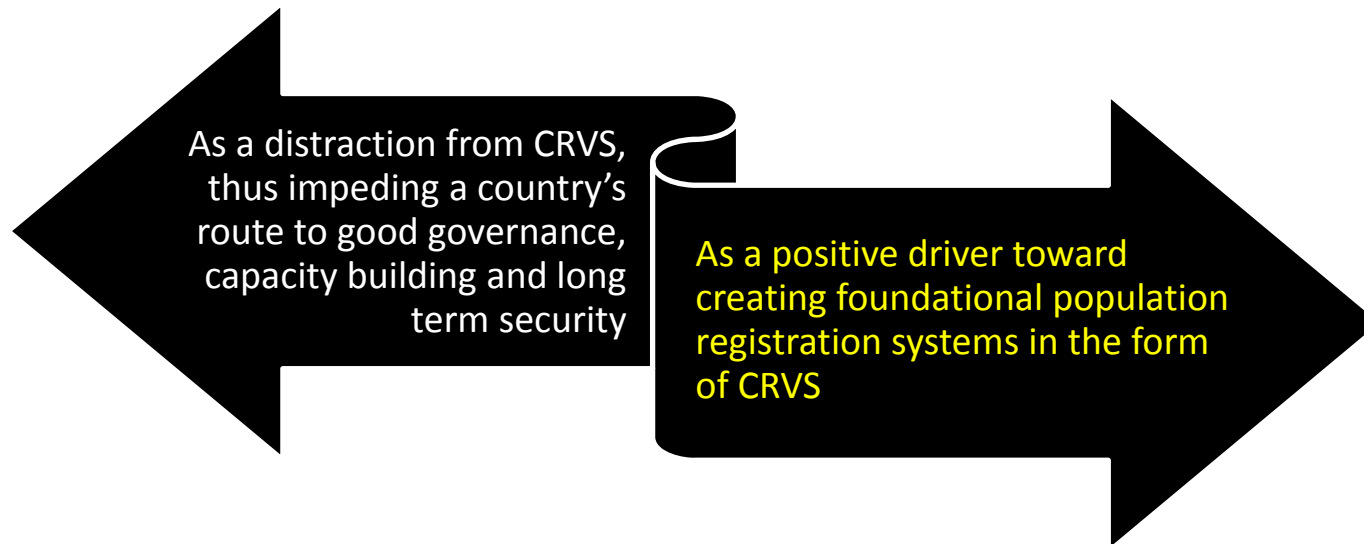
To really do CRVS properly, you have to do “being a State” properly



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The Demand for ID can be Good News <<<

The huge demand for ID systems and voter registration can go in one of two directions



Invest in BR as Part of CRVS

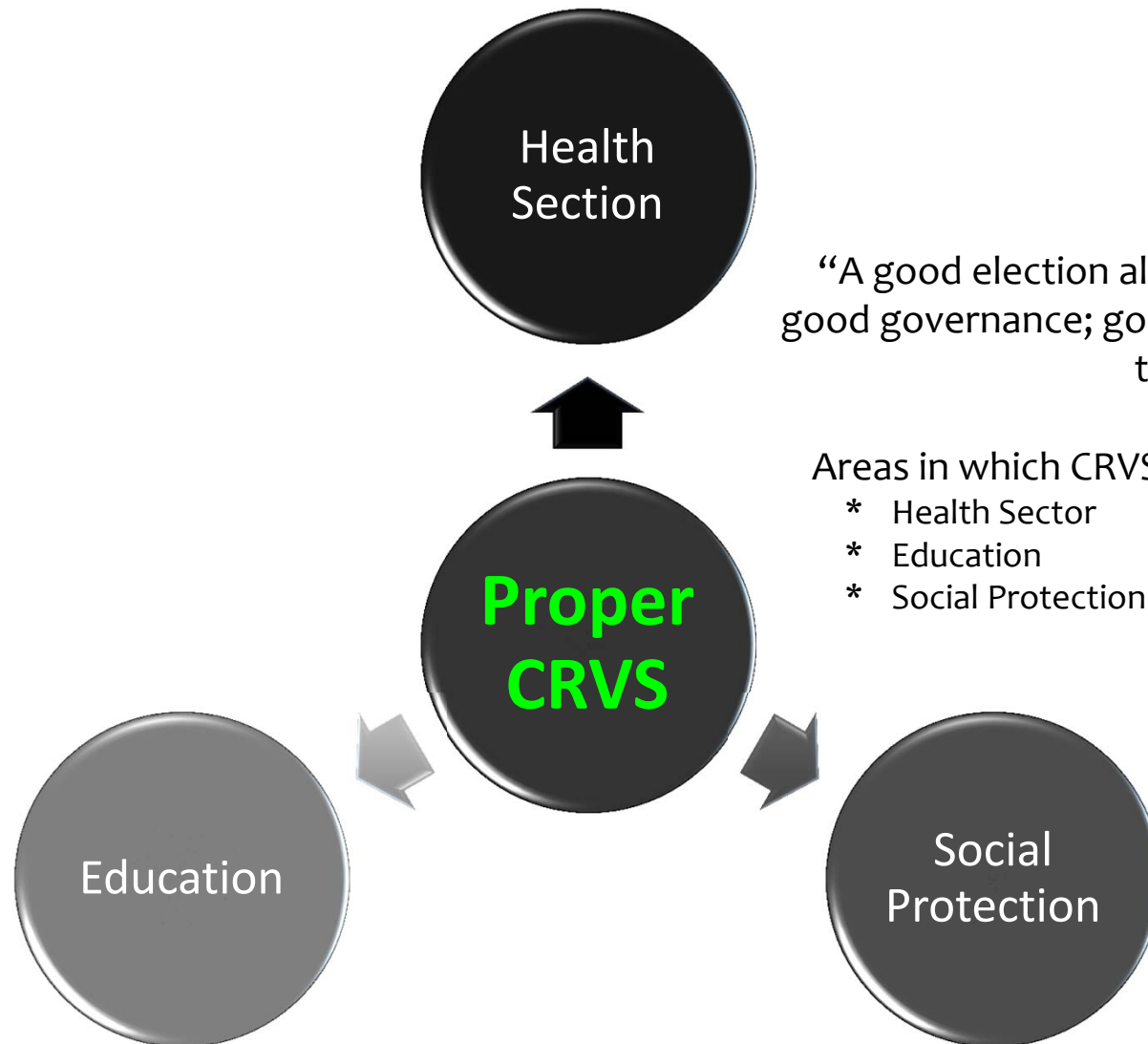
CRVS is Mandatory and Must Come First <<<

- Tendency to associate technologically advanced solutions with advanced problem solving;
- Premature investment in programmes such as NID without a base of functioning civil registration can detrimentally impact governance and human rights;
- Birth registration is a right and States have legal obligations to fulfil that right;
- Often the most vulnerable and marginalized are hardest to reach in terms of birth registration.



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CRVS When Well Planted, Grows Multiple Benefits <<<



“A good election alone is rarely sufficient to produce good governance; good governance on the other hand tends to produce good elections”.

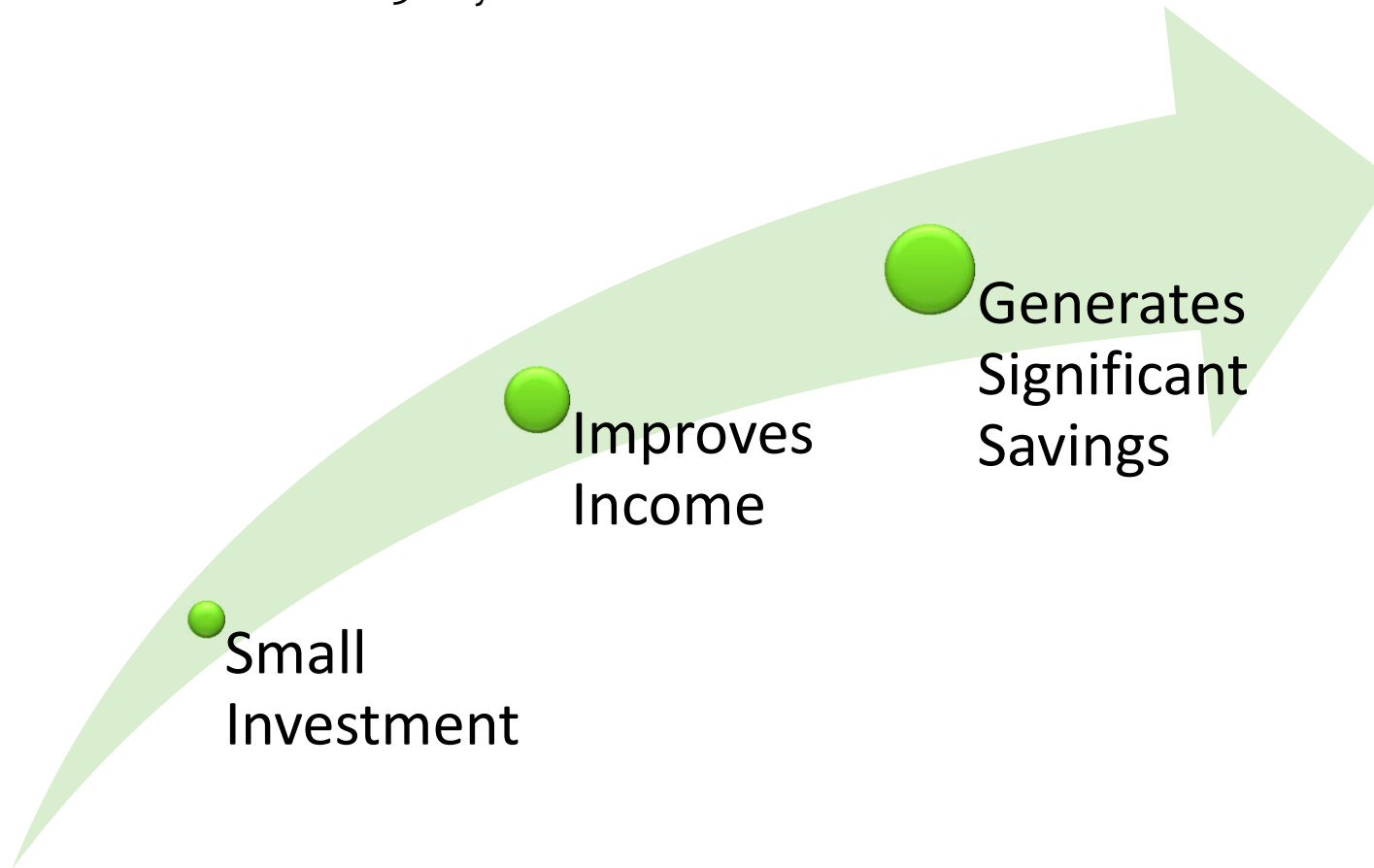
Areas in which CRVS is reaping rich dividends include:

- * Health Sector
- * Education
- * Social Protection

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CRVS Financial Sense <<<

CRVS makes financial sense in 3 ways:



Invest in BR as Part of CRVS

Patience is a virtue <<<

CRVS takes time and requires patience.

- Painsstaking laying of such a firm foundation;
- Stakeholders to understand the significance of CRVS;
- Governments to realign their strategies regarding population ID systems so that CRVS comes first;
- Comprehensive assessments to be undertaken;
- Legal reform;
- Merits of investment in CRVS to come to light in the form of country progress
- Barriers to registration to be addressed and incentives put in place;
- Interoperability between government functions and systems to come to fruition;
- Service continuity to mature so that registration ensures birth certification.

CRVS is NOT a quick fix, and is all the better for that !

Thank You



EVERY CHILD'S BIRTH RIGHT

Inequities and trends in birth registration



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