

Universal Birth Registration For Every Child

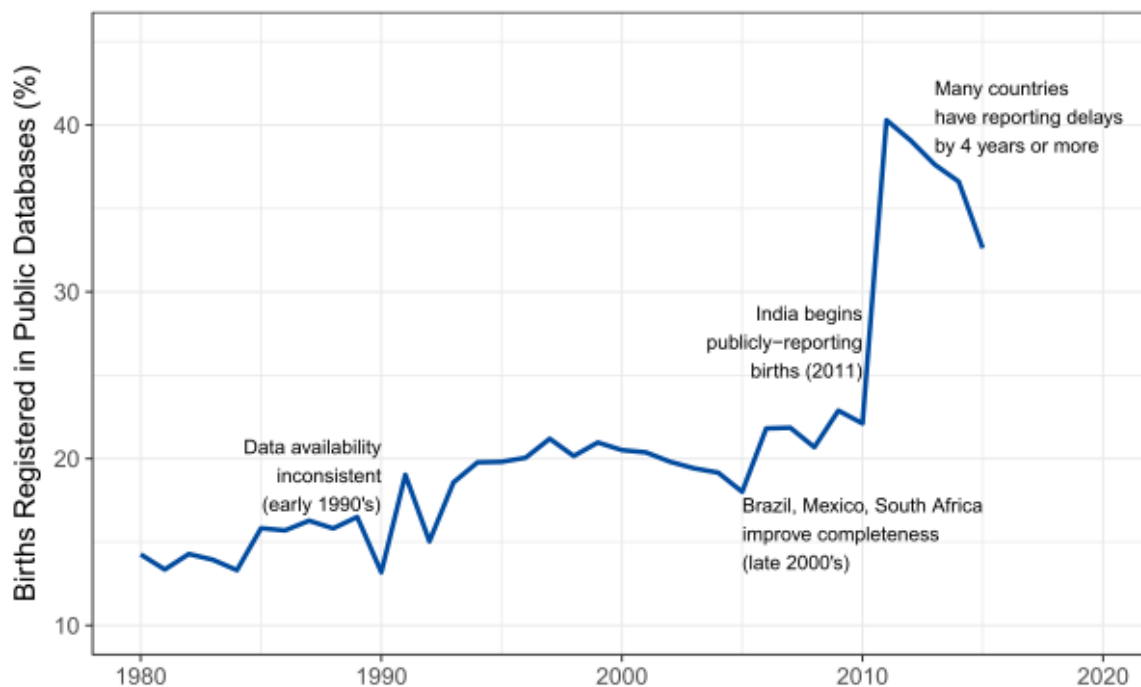
What is Universal birth registration?

Universal birth registration is the official and permanent [record of the existence of a child](#). It recognises the child's identity, along with the identity of the child's biological parents. It is an important way through which a child's human rights are initially recognised. Birth registration also helps the government to plan things like immunisations, highlight issues that are in need of development, and plan forms of education.

Universal Birth Registration vs Birth Certificate

When parents register the birth of a child, they can obtain a [birth certificate](#). It exists as evidence that registration has taken place. It is sometimes known as a [breeder document](#) because birth certificates are needed to obtain other documentation. Take [Australia](#) for example, parents need to register the birth of their child within 8 weeks of birth. When applying for government services, schools, and passports, parents must have a birth certificate.

Birth registrations have significantly increased over recent years. However, 1 in 4 children remains unregistered [worldwide](#). Often, parents register the births of their children but fail to collect a copy of their certificate. [According to UNICEF](#), of the 508 million children registered under the age of 5, approximately 70 million do not have proper certification.



Universal birth registration is data available to the general public.

Source: [Population Health Metrics](#)

Why registering a birth is important

1. The Prevention of Child Marriages

According to [UNICEF](#), a lack of birth registration increases the risk of child marriages and human trafficking. World Vision has estimated that approximately 12 million girls [become brides](#) before the age of 18. Such early marriages expose women to domestic violence and sexual assault. This prevents them from acquiring the minimum level of education. These factors result in employment difficulties and social isolation. A [2017 UNICEF report](#) revealed that countries in Sub-Saharan Africa rank among the lowest in birth registration. Similarly, Sub-Saharan Africa also has the highest rate of early marriages.

2. Protection Against Family Separation

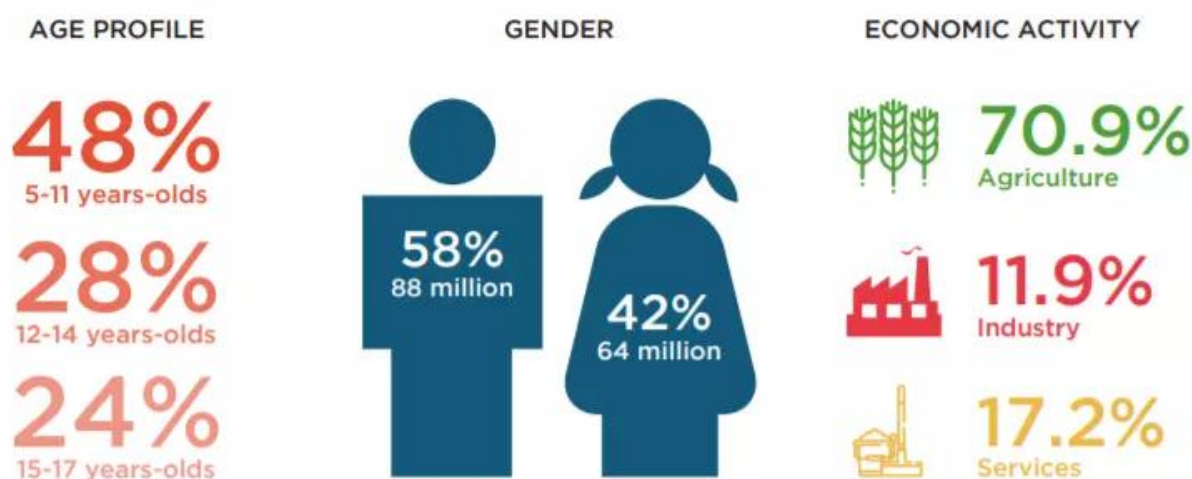
There were 36 million [child migrants](#) across the globe in 2020. These children face many challenges in transit. Migrant children are at high risk of forced child labour and early marriages. They also risk falling victim to smuggling and human trafficking activities. [Refugee children](#) are more likely to have a lack of schooling, depriving them of access to basic human rights. Without the opportunity to learn about new cultures integration with the local communities is a struggle. These

factors prevent a child from reaching their full potential. And may leave lasting psychological and physical effects.

3. Safeguarding Against Child Labour

At the beginning of 2020, 1 in 10 children worldwide – approximately 160 million children – were subject to [child labour](#). This number increased by 9 million with the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic. Child labour often exposes children to [slavery](#) and overexploitation, both sexual and economic. The increased risks to migrant and refugee children mean that they are especially susceptible to violence and abuse.

OF THE 152 MILLION CHILDREN IN CHILD LABOUR



Global child labour statistics, rendering universal birth registration essential.

Source: [World Economic Forum](#)

Universal Birth Registration and Civil Rights

A birth certificate is more than a piece of identification. It unlocks many of the fundamental rights and services accorded to every human. This documentation is needed to complete tasks such as enrolling in school, accessing healthcare, applying for a bank account, obtaining a passport, voting, and gaining a [Unique Student Identifier](#).

Importantly, [education equips a child for the world](#). It allows them to develop skills and abilities to function in society. Education cultivates healthy thought processes and cognitive abilities. [Early childhood education](#) enhances social and emotional skills through peer interactions.

Similarly, [accessibility, affordability, and quality](#) are the 3 key ideas of a decent healthcare system. With growing populations, healthcare needs to grow as well. Access to proper healthcare is important as it prevents diseases and [improves overall well-being](#). However, a country or government needs to be aware of its [population growth](#) to plan for appropriate [services](#). Having accurate universal birth registration statistics facilitates this.

Finally, [passports](#) are a form of identification required for safe international travel. It also exists as a proof of citizenship; helping people register their country of origin. A passport is also able to track where you have been and prepare for necessary safety measures. A passport also provides the holder [protection and safe passage](#) in foreign countries, a factor that could help reduce the difficulties faced by displaced and migrant children.

Birth Registration and Gender Equality

Birth registration is a foundation for [gender equality and children's rights](#). It identifies women's rights and allows women to vote, with access to scholarships. It also enables the inheriting of properties down the maternal line.

[Unregistered births](#) deprive mothers of having access to crucial services for their [children](#). These range from free [vaccinations](#) to [education](#). Having legal proof of identity protects vulnerable women from being exploited, violated, and forced into labour.



Rubi (15) used her birth certificate to avoid early marriage.

Source: [Girls Not Brides](#)

Research also shows that child brides have a higher maternal mortality rate. In fact, the leading cause of death for girls aged [15-19](#) is complications during pregnancy and childbirth. Most countries have a legal age for marriage. Thus, possessing a birth certificate plays an important role in preventing forced child marriages. Therefore, birth registrations play a significant role in protecting [women's rights](#), and supporting [gender equality](#).

Moving forward

Birth registration and a having legal identity are both human rights. Therefore, governments need to improve their registration system to ensure that it is accessible to everyone.

There are a [range](#) of ways birth registration rates can improve. Removing registration and late fees, and increasing the number of employees manning

registration counters would be beneficial, and governing bodies could also send staff to rural areas to register births.

Technology has been a crucial part of the birth registration process. Countries like [Pakistan and Tanzania](#) have introduced apps for parents to register the birth of their children. They also receive digital copies of their birth certificates through the app. Such innovations improve accessibility to the fundamental rights that protect a child's future.

why Is it essential that we focus on this issue?

Focusing on all issues that affect individual well-being, as well as issues that affect our global ecosystem are integral parts of THRIVE's focus and mission. By addressing factors that potentially impact all human rights and individual well-being, we can prevent violations of said human rights, promoting individual sovereignty. This is core to a thrivable society and compliments a thrivable Earth.

achieving the United Nations Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs): how they link to Universal Birth Registration

The United Nations [SDG16](#) (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), and [SDG10](#) (Reduced Inequalities) promote the importance of individual sovereignty. THRIVE advocates for optimal well-being for every child, no matter where they are on the globe. This is directly intertwined with [SDG4](#) (Quality Education), and [SDG8](#) (Decent Work and Economic Growth) where all children should have access to education and should not be forced into child labour. [SDG5](#) (Gender Equality) advocates for children, (especially girls) and their access to opportunities. Every one of these SDGs can be ensured and promoted further when universal birth registration is adopted.

A Thrivable Framework

Universal birth registration is vital to ensuring the protection of children, enabling human rights protections more broadly. The practice also promotes a baseline for ensuring individual sovereignty. THRIVE invests in issues fundamental to human well-being, human rights and a thrivable world more broadly, addressing human rights and social issues alongside environmental issues. ‘[Thrivability](#)’ goes beyond mere sustainability, and ensuring individual protections, especially for our most vulnerable children. THRIVE’s belief is that humanity can do better with the knowledge currently available to us. By being aware of the issues facing children who are not registered at birth, we are able to act upon this information effectively in order to combat threats to individual well-being. THRIVE’s mission is not just to offset disaster, but to allow for a society in which all are able to flourish.

THRIVE Framework examines issues and evaluates potential solutions – making predictive analyses using topics such as this, that support environmental and social [sustainability](#) transformations. We recognise that human happiness can sometimes compete with environmental well-being, which is why we use our ciambella chart to illustrate the ‘thrivable zone’. THRIVE intimately promotes that environmental, ecological and social needs can be met simultaneously without adversely encroaching on each other. By researching, educating and advocating for the universal registration of births, THRIVE has the capacity to ensure that individual sovereignty and human rights protections are more easily safeguarded, creating a more thrivable world and a future beyond sustainability.

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