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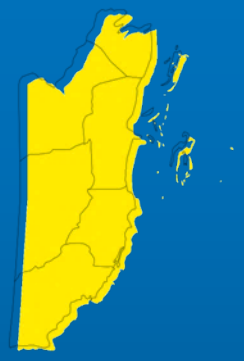
OPERATIONAL UPDATE

Birth Registration Mobile Clinic



Belize

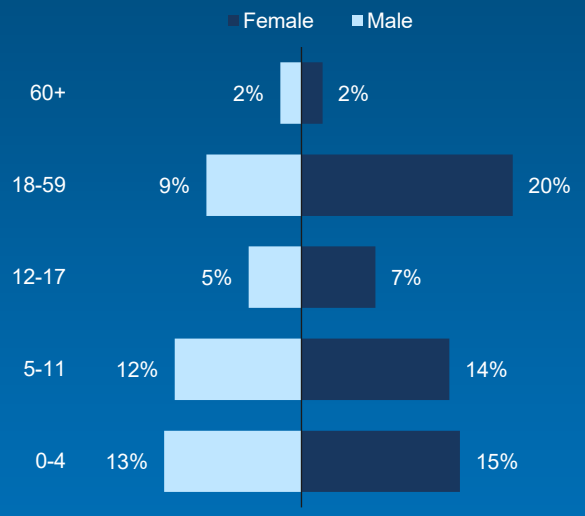
December 2023

UNHCR and HUMANA People to People supported Belize's Vital Statistics Unit in hosting a **three-day birth registration mobile clinic** in Independence, Stann Creek.

From 24 to 26 November, **644 people,** including asylum-seekers, refugees and indigenous people received access to access civil registry services.

UNHCR and its partners are working to support the Government in reducing statelessness in Belize by improving access to civil registry services.

Individuals seeking civil registry services at mobile clinic



Note: figures do not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding
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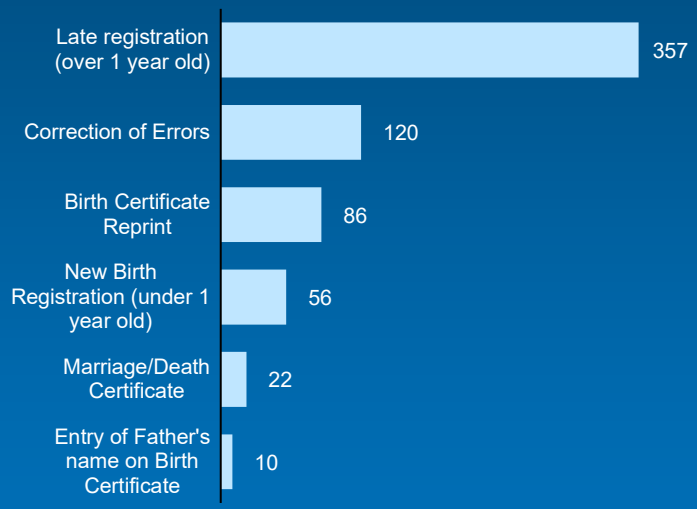
Civil registry services requested at mobile clinic

Multiple responses allowed



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BIRTH REGISTRATION

Documentation provided for Birth Registration

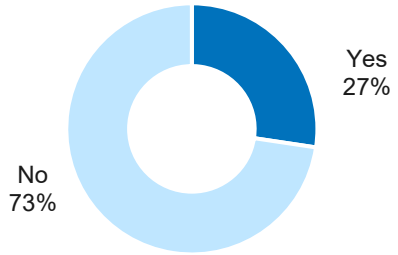
To register a birth in Belize, it is necessary to present a **'Proof of Birth'** issued by the hospital where the birth occurred. During interviews conducted at the clinic intake, it was evidenced that **27 per cent** of the individuals seeking to register a birth had the required documentation, regardless of whether it was for a standard birth registration procedure or a late registration process.

Many individuals who lacked this documentation cited as reasons for this the failure to pay their hospital bills or giving birth at home.

Some alternative forms of documentation individuals provided to support their claims included hospital bills (**18 per cent**), vaccination cards (**12 per cent**), and signed declarations from witnesses (**11 per cent**). **Six per cent** of the interviewed needed documentation to support the birth registration. However, this number is likely higher because individuals with the required documents were given priority for admission during the registration process.

Only **14 per cent** of individuals seeking to register a family member's birth had a Belize government-issued identification, such as a Social Security card, a passport, or a voter's ID.

People in possesion of documents serving as proof of birth



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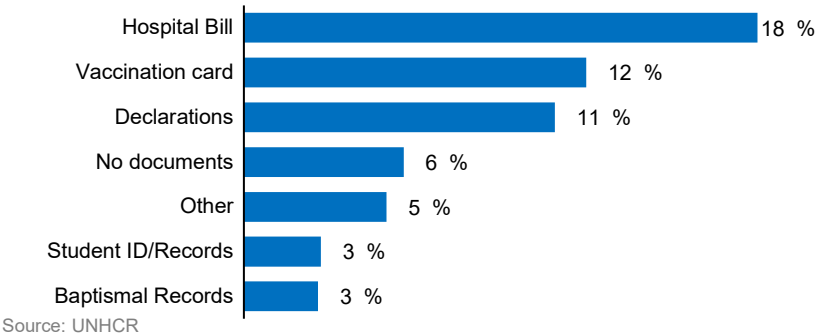
% of individuals registering births with other types of documentation

Multiple responses allowed



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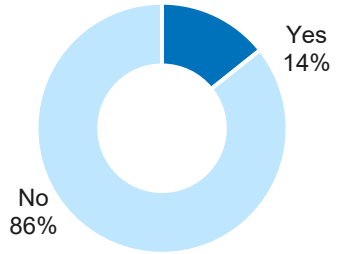
People in possesion of a goverment-issued ID



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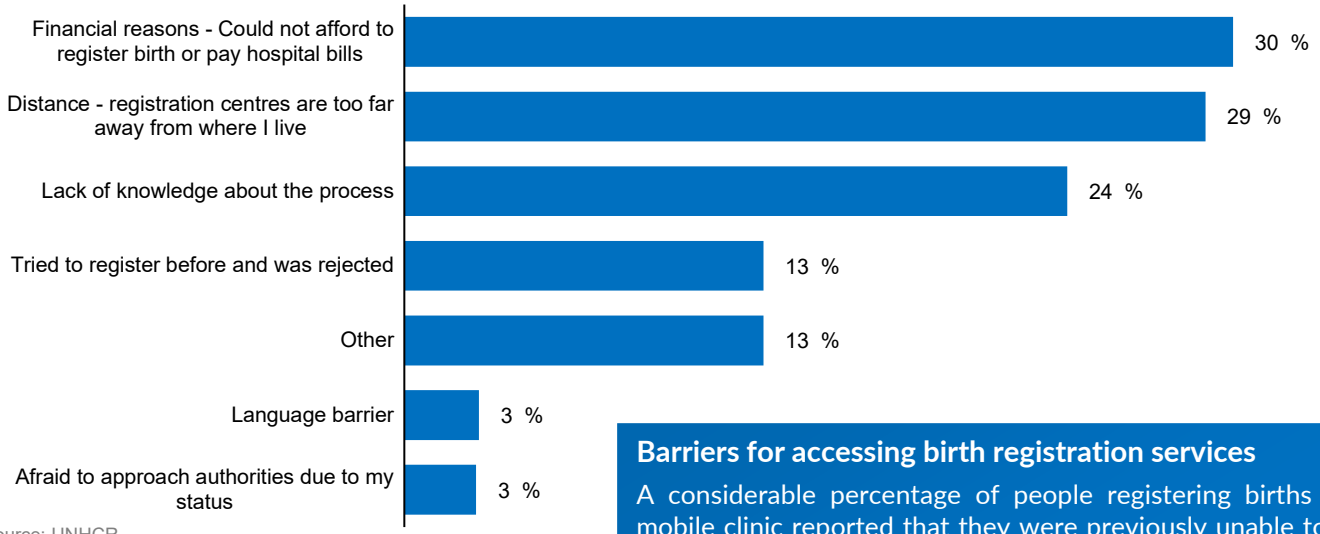
Officials required individuals who lacked the documentation serving as Proof of Birth to provide declarations from witnesses. UNHCR and Humana's volunteers helped applicants to complete the declaration forms in English. Authorities later notarized these declarations.

Reasons for not registering birth previously via available channels
Multiple responses allowed



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Barriers for accessing birth registration services

A considerable percentage of people registering births at the mobile clinic reported that they were previously unable to do so due to financial constraints. About 30 per cent could not afford the costs associated with registration or paying hospital bills, which prevented them from obtaining Proof of Birth documentation.

The exercise showed that distance to registration centres (29 per cent) and lack of knowledge (24 per cent) were the main barriers to birth registration.

Other individuals mentioned lack of time, unavailability of a parent to attend the registration centre, and missing documents as other reasons for failing to complete the process.

Working in partnership

UNHCR hosted this clinic in partnership with the Government of Belize, Ministry of the Attorney General – Vital Statistics Unit and the Area Representative for Stann Creek, with support from partner Humana People to People Belize.

UNHCR Panama MCO wishes to convey a special thank you to its donors: the United States of America, the European Union, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), Guyana, and the UN Programme on HIV/AIDS. We also thank the fundamental support provided by donors who have contributed to UNHCR with unearmarked and softly earmarked funds: Belgium | Canada | Denmark | France | Germany | Ireland | Japan | Netherlands | Norway | Spain | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom | private donors in Australia, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

For more information:
In Belize | **Myrat Myradov**, Head of National Office, muradov@unhcr.org
In MCO Panama | **Viola Eleonora Bruttomesso,** Associate Communications Officer, bruttome@unhcr.org
Follow us on **Facebook** and see **here** for the Government of Belize's statement on the exercise.