

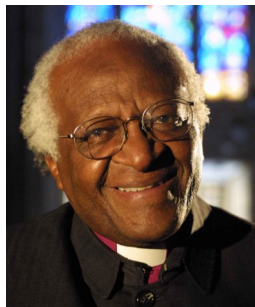


“A birth certificate is a matter of life and death.”

“The unregistered child does not exist.”

“How can we live with the knowledge that we could have made a difference?”

Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu



“Inclusion means belonging to and being identified with God's community. Our understanding of this must thus prompt us to be concerned that the people in our earthly community are similarly connected so that they too have a feeling of belonging and sense of identity.”

*Canon Andrew Khoo, Diocese of West Malaysia,
Church of the Province of South East Asia*

International Anglican Family Network

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The Rt Revd Kay Goldsworthy,
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IAFN

International Anglican Family Network
Promoting front-line Family Care throughout the
Anglican Communion

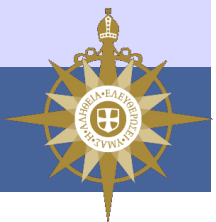
Supporting the Campaign for Universal Birth Registration

Why does birth registration matter?



Photo: PLAN International

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IAFN : Supporting the Campaign for Universal Birth Registration

Birth registration is a big issue

- 51 million children are not registered each year.
- Half of the under 5s across the world are not registered.
- South Asia has the most unregistered children – 64% of births – closely followed by sub-Saharan Africa with 63% unregistered. In industrialised countries only 2% are not registered.

Birth registration protects children

- Lack of evidence of age means that unregistered girls are more likely to be forced into early marriage.
- Unregistered boys can be drafted as child soldiers or find themselves imprisoned as adult prisoners because they lack a birth certificate.
- Unregistered children find it hard to get into education and so may be used as child labourers or drawn into prostitution and pornography.
- Unregistered children may not have access to health care or immunisation.

Birth registration promotes development for individuals and nations

- Adults with birth certificates can play a full part in society as working citizens, voters and property owners.
- Nations with high levels of registration can plan effectively for immunisation and other

health programmes, education and economic development.

- Registration builds identity with the community and nation and so promotes economic development.

Birth registration is a Gospel issue

- Central to the Christian faith is the idea of belonging – being children of God and having our identity in Christ.
- Christians see themselves as living in relationship and in community with rights and responsibilities to one another.
- Unregistered children almost always come from poor, marginalised or displaced families. Jesus stood alongside the poor and marginalised and, in particular, promoted the welfare of children.

Why is access to birth registration still a challenge?

- Rural communities are often too far from the registration offices.
- Patriarchal attitudes and culture may make it difficult for women to register the birth of a child.
- Parents do not understand the importance of registration or are suspicious of the State's intentions, eg, fear of discrimination.
- The State may not have enough capacity or resources.
- Registration may be expensive and parents will lose pay if they take time off to register a child.
- Registration rules don't fit with local culture or traditions.

What is happening to promote birth registration?

- A number of international NGOs, eg, PLAN International and UNICEF are making birth registration a priority.
- Some States, especially in Africa, are running registration campaigns and striving to make registration simpler and more local.
- Anglican churches and organisations, along with other faith groups, are using their local presence and community networks to promote birth registration and assist families in overcoming obstacles to birth registration.

What more can Anglican churches do?

- See registration as a Gospel priority because it is part of God's concern for justice and wellbeing for the marginalised.
- Share good practice across Provinces and dioceses so we can learn from one another. Use the International Anglican Family Network or other mechanisms for communication.
- At national level work with the State to promote accessible registration systems.
- At local level help to build trust and awareness through the church's community presence.
- Promote registration at Baptism classes, under-5s clinics, and in other family ministries.
- Support registration by providing baptism and clinic records as evidence of birth.
- Offer church buildings as local registration offices.
- Partner with other churches and agencies that are seeking to promote birth registration.