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# Governance and Policy Coordination: The Case of Birth Registration in Peru

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B. Guy Peters and Andrew Mawson

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## GOVERNANCE AND POLICY COORDINATION: THE CASE OF BIRTH REGISTRATION IN PERU

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**Abstract:** This research, the second of two case studies, explores coordination through the lens of civil registration and vital statistics, with particular reference to birth registration in Peru. It focuses on the role that coordination can play in making birth registration function effectively. While the capacity of governments to deliver the function of birth registration is central to this paper, the role that understanding coordination can play in improving public services is examined, especially services for children. The capacity to register the births of children is a long-standing function of governments, and can be seen as a test of government effectiveness. In Peru, backward mapping showed that the trails from local and district registrars to the government registration organization (RENIEC) stopped almost immediately. This seems to point towards the centralized structure and top-down approach of RENIEC; to sustain its achievements to date and to reach the final three per cent of unregistered births it should consider incentivizing and empowering local and community administrations.

**Keywords:** children's rights, birth registration, governance, Peru

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In addition, the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru (PUCP) field team played a critical role, led by Professor Carlos Alza. The Ayacucho team was composed of Dr. Jessica Bensa and Mr. Julian Mesarina, and the Ucayali team of Dr. Gustavo Zambrano and Ms. Denisse Castillo, accompanied by Dr. Amelia Pesantes as special adviser on the languages and culture of the region.

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## ACRONYMS

<b>CNV</b>	Certificado de nacido vivo
<b>COMUDENI</b>	Comité Ejecutivo Regional Multisectorial de Ucayali
<b>COTRAIN</b>	Comision de Trabajo por los Indocumentados
<b>DEMUNA</b>	Defensoría Municipale del Niño y el Adolescente
<b>DNI</b>	Documento nacional de identidad
<b>EsSALUD</b>	El Seguro Social de Salud
<b>FEREMIA</b>	Federación Regional de Mujeres Indígenas de Ayacucho
<b>GRIAS</b>	Gerencia de Restitución a la Identidad y Apoyo Social
<b>INEI</b>	Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática
<b>JUNTOS</b>	National Program of Support to the Poorest, JUNTOS
<b>MIDIS</b>	Ministerio de Desarrollo e Inclusión Social
<b>MINSA</b>	Ministerio de Salud del Perú
<b>OIRA</b>	Organizacion Indigena Regional de Atalaya
<b>ORA</b>	Oficinas Registrales Auxiliares
<b>OREC</b>	Oficina de Registration Civil
<b>PARSALUD</b>	Programa de Apoyo a la Reforma del Sector Salud
<b>RENIEC</b>	Registro Nacional de Identificacion y Estado Civil

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## FOREWORD

Establishing “what works under what conditions” is becoming a mantra in the development context, both in academia and among international development organizations. This, however, is not an issue of the technical modalities of service provision alone. Just as important is their contextual framing, including analyzing real time governance factors. It is necessary to understand and address bottlenecks that impede the success of an intervention, or that make an intervention that works well in one context unrealistic or inappropriate in another. This means having an analysis of institutions and the power relations within and between them, as well as the incentives motivating both elites and the behaviour of service users (or non-users, as the case may be).

Coordination is a critical governance issue. UNICEF’s Monitoring Results for Equity approach identifies coordination as a determinant of results for children, alongside other governance issues such as budgeting, management and legislation. This is why the Office of Research has partnered with Guy Peters, Professor of American Governance at the University of Pittsburgh, to carry out two case studies on bottlenecks in coordination, of which this study in Peru is the second. The first paper, on Ghana, was published in June 2015 (Peters and Mawson, 2015).

Why the focus on civil (birth) registration? Birth registration is a fundamental right of the child, instrumental in the realization of many other rights. Indeed, recognition of the practical utility of civil registration and vital statistics in support of health in particular is giving a huge international boost to efforts to improve birth (and death) registration. Interestingly, too, the clear outputs and necessary interaction inherent in birth registration have led the development theorist Matt Andrews to posit that birth registration rates are a strong governance indicator with implications wider than birth registration itself.

We have set out to analyse coordination as primarily a set of processes, rather than a series of mechanisms. The research starts at the point of service delivery and works back from there, an innovative bottom-up approach which has not been common in the study of coordination, but which grounds the issue in what people actually do, rather than in what they might aspire to or claim. This method is easy to repeat and rapidly gets to real interactions, generating a three-dimensional view of coordination.

While the entry point selected for this investigation of coordination is civil (birth) registration, we believe the governance issues it addresses are likely to resonate more widely.

## GOVERNANCE AND POLICY COORDINATION

This research, the second of two case studies,<sup>1</sup> explores coordination through the lens of civil registration and vital statistics, with particular reference to birth registration in Peru, focusing on the role that coordination can play in making birth registration function effectively. We are concerned with the capacity of governments to deliver the function of birth registration, but also examine the role that understanding coordination can play for improving public services more generally, especially for children. The capacity to register the births of children is a long-standing function of governments, and one which can also be seen as a test of government effectiveness.<sup>2</sup>

Coordination has been, and continues to be, a significant issue for the study of governance. Both formal policy and practice in even the most specialized areas often have implications, or involve relationships that extend well beyond the particular sector. Likewise, relationships between different units or tiers of administration within the policy area itself can have significant effects on the success of programmes. Enhancing and strengthening coordination can seem to be the answer, or at least an answer, to improving the translation of policy into practice, strengthening service delivery and, ultimately, getting results for money spent. As a result, for decades the necessity of producing good coordination in government has been a central concern for public administration (see Peters, 2015). Despite the goal of producing more coherent and coordinated governments, there have been relatively few successes. This has been true even of initiatives such as “joined-up government” in the United Kingdom and the “whole-of-government” in Australia.

While everyone is in favour of improved coordination in the public sector, how does one identify and analyze it? What elements constitute adequate coordination in government? How is it achieved? Looking at coordination from the perspective of the substantive analysis of a range of determinants, how can one assess the practical significance of attempts to coordinate? What gets in the way? These are key questions for this study of coordination in birth registration, as they would be for coordination in any other policy area.

Peru, a high-middle income country with an estimated total population in 2014 of 30.81 million,<sup>3</sup> has been extremely successful in increasing levels of birth registration. In 2005 rates were 93.1 per cent of children under 5, and by 2014 96.7 per cent of children under 5 were registered.<sup>4</sup> This high figure, however, masks significant levels of inequality in registration rates. The coastal areas and urban centres of the country, including the capital of Lima, have virtually complete birth registration, while indigenous populations in the more sparsely populated jungle (*selva*) of the Amazon basin and parts of the highlands (*sierra*) of the Andes have proportionally higher numbers of unregistered children.

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<sup>1</sup> See Peters, B. G., and A. Mawson (2015). Governance and Policy Coordination: The case of birth registration in Ghana, *Innocenti Working Paper* No.2015-05, UNICEF Office of Research, Florence.

<sup>2</sup> Andrews, M. (2012) *Birth registration rates as a governance indicator*, blogpost, <http://matthewandrews.typepad.com/mattandrews/2012/10/b.html>; Duryea, S. A. Olgiate and L. Stone (2006) *The Under-Registration of Children in Latin America*, Washington, DC: Inter-American Development Bank.

<sup>3</sup> Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática (INEI), *Estimaciones y proyecciones de población*, <http://www.inei.gob.pe/estadisticas/indice-tematico/poblacion-y-vivienda/>, accessed 16 August 2016.

<sup>4</sup> Carlos Reyna Izaguerre, manager of GRIAS, World Bank South-South Learning Forum, Building Robust Identification Procedures, 17 March 2014.



This paper, then, also addresses a fundamental question for birth registration in Peru. How does a country with a very successful civil registration system achieving a headline registration rate of almost 97 per cent achieve that final 3 per cent? And does strengthened coordination (and what form) have a role to play?

This study is based on field research in Ucayali in the Amazon basin and Ayacucho in the Andean highlands, as well as interviews with officials in regional capitals and central government in Lima. The lessons learned from this study and its companion piece will inform a synthesis report exploring coordination processes and aid effectiveness from the perspective of grassroots service delivery.

One of the purposes of this research is to experiment with a methodology for analyzing coordination. The method is known as “backward mapping”, and is intended to identify actual processes of coordination and their significance by paying particular attention to mapping networks from the point of service delivery both vertically and horizontally, following real interactions, and identifying barriers and bottlenecks along the way.

## 1. THE MEANING OF COORDINATION

Coordination has been referred to as the “philosopher’s stone” for public administration and policy, with the assumption that if governments and their partners can get this aspect of governing right, they could govern effectively. The term coordination is used commonly, but often without careful consideration of its meaning. One simple but useful definition of coordination is:

The extent to which organizations attempt to ensure that their activities take into account those of other organizations (Hall et al, 1976).

In other words, coordination is the relatively simple task of ensuring that all actors working in a policy area take account of what other actors in the area are doing. This is a negative definition of coordination, implying only that the actors involved will take notice of others, but not that they will attempt to cooperate and work together to provide better services to citizens, and to provide those services more efficiently. A positive definition of coordination (Scharpf, 1997) requires cooperation and collaboration among actors, and some agreement upon a common goal. Agreement on goals is generally less than complete, but there can be enough agreement to permit cooperation (Bardach, 1998), especially at the level of actual service delivery. Indeed, coordination is generally easier to achieve at lower levels within government, given that, a) providers at the point of service delivery are faced with real clients who may need a range of services; and, b) that in practical terms providers may be in closer geographical proximity and face similar constraints, both of which may encourage a degree of cooperation to solve problems.

Lester Metcalfe (1994) has identified a scale of coordination (Table 1) that illustrates the possibilities for cooperation ranging from complete indifference among the actors through to the creation of a comprehensive government strategy for a policy area. This scale is useful for identifying levels of coordination, but tends to focus heavily on the role of public sector actors – and senior actors at that – whereas in many policy areas, including civil (birth) registration, non-governmental actors may also play a significant role and therefore must be included in any coordination activities, or

study thereof. In many low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) institutionally weak public sectors often lead to significant reliance on non-governmental actors in the delivery of services, either de facto filling a vacuum or through formal delegation and contract. The latter tendency is, of course, also true in high-income countries (HICs) where public management ideologies that support reducing the role of the public sector mean non-governmental organizations and the private sector increasingly have a central role in service delivery.

**Table 1 – Metcalfe’s Policy Coordination Scale<sup>5</sup>**

- 
9. Government Strategy
  8. Establishing Central Priorities
  7. Setting Limits on Ministerial Action
  6. Arbitration of Policy Differences
  5. Search for Agreement among Ministers
  4. Avoiding Divergences among Ministers
  3. Consultation with other Ministers (Feedback)
  2. Communication with other Ministers (Information Exchange)
  1. Independent Decision-Making by Ministers
- 

Why do we care about coordination, other than to have a somewhat tidier way to provide public services (Peters, 2015)? In general, better coordination can provide better public services, and do so at a lower cost. If it involves interoperability, in the sense of service access modalities such as “one-stop shops”, it removes some of the burden from citizens, who no longer have to go from one office to another, or even one town to another, in order to receive the services they need. Coordination can also remove the contradictions among programmes that waste money and again make the lives of citizens more difficult. Finally, coordination is logically necessary if non-governmental actors and the private sector are to be effectively integrated into public service delivery under government oversight.

Coordination is a worthy goal in providing public services, but how can it be achieved? Although governments have sought to function in a more coordinated manner for centuries, their general failure to do so is indicative of the many barriers that exist, and we therefore need to consider the possible mechanisms for producing better coordination. These barriers arise from political, administrative and individual factors, all of which tend to reinforce the tendency of organizations not to cooperate with one another.

While we can identify a range of instruments for coordination, in practice they are often used together as governments attempt to find means of creating greater coherence. The most commonly used instrument for coordination is hierarchy, meaning the use of authority within government or within an individual organization to produce actions. Hierarchy, of course, depends upon the ability of leaders within an organization, or within government as a whole, to command other actors to behave in

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<sup>5</sup> From Metcalfe, L., 1994, International Policy Co-ordination and Public Management Reform, *International Review of Administrative Sciences* 60, 271-90.

certain ways, and that authority is not always available. In addition to hierarchy, coordination can be achieved through networks. Most policy areas are characterized by networks of actors, public and private, that are involved in some way or another with the policy and who interact because of their concern with the issues. These interactions are themselves a low level of coordination. The degree of coordination can be increased if there are some common goals and some leadership available.

Finally, coordination can be produced through what Eugene Bardach (1998) has called *collaboration*, meaning the framing of issues in ways that the actors involved can agree upon. Agreement on the nature of problems and possible solutions then facilitates coordination. The parties involved in coordinating can work together to address the problems more effectively if they agree on its fundamental characteristics. This process of framing is central to the policy process in general (Schon and Rein, 1994) but is perhaps particularly important for coordination.

Most efforts at coordination focus on the top of government and on formal organizations responsible for coordinating public sector action. While those organizations are certainly important, most governments have multiple organizations responsible for coordination from the centre. Difficulties may arise in coordinating the coordinators. Further, formal mechanisms may hinder informal mechanisms for coordination at the bottom of institutions, which may be effective in producing good cooperation among multiple organizations working in one area.

This study gives particular emphasis to coordination at the bottom of the government structure, and on what happens as the programmes are actually implemented. At this level coordination is often much more about developing networks than it is about using authority and hierarchy. The research therefore engages with a variety of actors in localities of service provision, including, in principle, with any non-governmental actors who interact with the public sector in the provision of public services (although in the context of our two case studies this appears to be less relevant in Peru than Ghana).<sup>6</sup> However, authority and hierarchy are also relevant, connecting local actors back up the chain to actors and policies at the national level, which in turn influence the opportunities and incentives for cooperation at the bottom.

## 2. RESEARCHING COORDINATION

This study experiments with a relatively simple method for the analysis of coordination, as did the earlier paper on Ghana.<sup>7</sup> Known as “backward mapping”, it was originally developed to assist in determining what types of policies might be implemented most easily.<sup>8</sup> The idea is to understand the functioning of an administrative system – in this case the system for birth registration – by paying close attention to the very bottom where the service is delivered and following the chain of action backward toward the centre of the organization and the centre of government. The logic is that by understanding what is actually happening at the point of delivery of services, it is possible to develop a set of questions about the factors that shape the system of implementation from the centre.

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<sup>6</sup> See: Peters and Mawson, 2015.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Elmore, R. F., 1985, Forward and Backward Mapping: Reversible logic in the analysis of public policy, in K. F. Hanf and T. A. J. Toonen, eds., *Policy Implementation in Federal and Unitary Systems* (Dordrecht: Springer).

In reality, it is not possible to actually start such a study “at the bottom” without first having a basic grasp of the system and some of the interactions that might be predicted. In this study this involved discussion in Lima with key national stakeholders in birth registration and identity documentation, as well as research on wider governance structures. However, all information gained from policymakers and national level stakeholders was then subjected to the empirical test of what actually happens by going to the point of service delivery and working outwards and upwards from there.

This method quickly picks up informal interactions outside formal structures. Mapping backwards reveals the role of vertical coordination and the influence, positive or negative, of policy and practice coordination at higher levels of government. Taking a bottom-up perspective has not been common in the study of coordination.<sup>9</sup> However, it provides insights that rapidly move beyond formal policy pronouncements and mechanisms to the texture of actual human interaction. The approach enables the identification of processes of actual implementation in context.

## **2.1. Methodology**

Peru was chosen as a country case study because of its high-middle income status, and its overall success in birth registration coupled with significant under-registration in some districts and population centres.

There were two phases of fieldwork. The first involved setting up the research and securing the participation and cooperation of local partners and authorities in the capital, Lima. The second involved interviews at the point of service delivery in the highlands and in the jungle.

*Stage 1:* the lead researchers made a preliminary visit to Lima 12-19 May 2014. The aim was to enlist the support of the UNICEF Country Office and the Registro Nacional de Identificación y Estado Civil (RENIEC), the National Registry of Identification and Civil Status, the government organization responsible for civil registration.<sup>10</sup> The primary focal points in-country were UNICEF and the RENIEC department responsible for identity restitution, Gerencia de Restitución a la Identidad y Apoyo Social (GRIAS).<sup>11</sup>

The team mapped basic information on the formal birth registration system and its place in the wider system of civil registration in Peru, interviewing officials from RENIEC, the Ministry of Economics and Finance, the National Statistical Office, the Ombudsman’s office (Defensoría del Pueblo), and the Civil Service Commission. The School of Governance and Public Politics of the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru (PUCP) was enlisted as a research partner. The members of the research team had substantial experience in field research in the highlands and the jungle.

After consultation with the UNICEF country office and with GRIAS, it was decided to focus on relatively remote areas with varying levels of birth registration rates compared to the national

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<sup>9</sup> Some, if not most, scholars of implementation focus more on a top-down perspective and the role of individual organizations in implementation (Winter, 2012).

<sup>10</sup> In 2013 RENIEC’s achievements in advancing civil identity documentation for children were recognized by the receipt of a UN Public Service Award.

<sup>11</sup> The researchers are grateful for the active support of staff of the Registro Nacional de Identificación y Estado Civil (RENIEC), in particular the Gerencia de Restitución a la Identidad y Apoyo Social (GRIAS) team for helping organize this research.

average. The final selection was made independently of GRIAS by the research team and involved a number of criteria discussed with GRIAS. At the regional level, Ucayali and Ayacucho were selected on the basis of balancing birth registration rates with relative remoteness (but sufficient accessibility to enable research team access within the time allotted for fieldwork). Ucayali was selected for its relatively low registration rates and Ayacucho for its relative high registration rates.

Criteria used to select districts and communities within them were: coverage of birth registration at the district level; districts with civil registries in communities; districts that were not provincial capitals; districts with similar population size; districts that were 4-6 hours away from the regional capital; and settlements with more than 2,000 inhabitants. In Ucayali, the settlements of Nueva Paraiso and Santa Rosa de Dinamarca in the district of Masisea, and the settlements of Caco Macaya and Colonia Caco in the district of Iparia were selected. In Ayacucho, the community of Pomacocha in the district of Vischongo and the community of Tumsulla in the district of Paras were the selected field locations, both in the province of Vilcashuaman.

The study conducted a series of interviews with informants selected through “snowball sampling”, a method that supports identification of networks of relevant actors and the patterns of their interaction (see Atkinson and Flint, 2001). Interviews used a semi-structured protocol (see Appendix).

The initial methodological assumption was that registration officers have to engage with a range of other actors in order to do their job, and can therefore be seen as being at the centre of networks of actors. Key interviews, then, were with officials at the community level. They were asked to identify the other actors with whom they cooperated in the process of registering children, both horizontally in their area and vertically back up the chain to the regional level and then to Lima. In turn, the actors who were cooperating with registration officers were then located and interviewed.

While appropriate for the study of interactions, backward mapping does not generate information about levels of knowledge about birth registration in the wider community or government structures if these are not mentioned in the snowball sample. By definition, when there is no interaction the sampling chain stops. The sample is self-selecting, involving people with some link to birth registration and therefore presumably greater knowledge about it than parties not involved. Where necessary, information generated by fieldwork for this study has therefore been supplemented by information from other sources, including local organizations providing support for mothers and families.

*Stage 2:* The field research was carried out by two teams from the PUCP. The teams were composed of experienced field researchers. Each was given two days training to familiarize them with the research instrument and the issues involved in birth registration. In Ayacucho, fieldwork took place from 10-23 August 2014, and in Ucayali from 12-26 August 2014. The Ayacucho team was fluent in Quechua, the first language of the majority of people in the region. The Ucayali team included an anthropologist fluent in languages of the Amazon basin.<sup>12</sup> Before going into the field the questions in the research instrument were translated from English and Spanish into local languages.

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<sup>12</sup> The PUCP teams were led by Professor Carlos Alza. The Ayacucho team was composed of Jessica Bensa and Julian Mesarina, and the Ucayali team of Gustavo Zambrano and Denisse Castillo, accompanied by Amelia Pesantes as special adviser on the languages and culture of the region.

In each community, the teams opened their research sampling with the local registrar – however, in the settlements in Ucayali this first required permission from the village chief (apu). Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner, using the research protocol (see Appendix 1), but with some latitude to pursue points in the manner that worked best with the particular respondent.

Each team also spent several days in the regional capitals of Ayacucho and Pucallpa, interviewing local RENIEC and GRIAS officials, as well as other actors in these capitals identified as important for the birth registration process. These interviews provided information about who they interacted with in pursuit of their work (both vertically and horizontally), how service delivery at the community level was perceived from the regional capitals, and how the regional institutions perceived their interaction with actors at the community level.

### **3. THE LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FOUNDATIONS OF CIVIL (BIRTH) REGISTRATION**

#### **3.1. *The government system in Peru***

Peru is a republic, headed by a President elected for a five-year term. The President is both head of state and head of government. There is a Prime Minister, but the office lacks executive powers and is largely for coordination. In 2015 the executive branch had 18 ministries, with the Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion, the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Minorities and the Ministry of Health being the most relevant for coordination in the context of birth registration. The Ministry of Economics and Finance is also crucial for funding public programmes and for implementing a performance management programme (see below). There are also a number of important constitutionally autonomous institutions, such as RENIEC, the Defensoria del Pueblo, and the Central Reserve Bank. The legislative branch is a unicameral Congress with 130 members, also elected for a five-year period.

Like many governments, the government of Peru has been engaged in a process of decentralization. To some extent decentralization is a necessity given the geographical challenges facing government, but it is also a virtual ideology that often may be pressed on governments by organizations such as the World Bank, and is a strategy that rather naturally creates increased challenges for vertical coordination. For political and administrative purposes, the country is divided into 25 regions, 195 provinces and 1,840 districts. Although the general form of government is unitary, these sub-national areas have some influence over public policy, and are important for the administration of it. Below the regions, provinces and districts have functional roles in service delivery, but while the districts are contained within provinces, provinces have limited capacity for direct supervision of performance at district level, as such.

Given the emphasis on decentralization in government policy, localities have some autonomy, but are dependent upon Lima for most funding. Oversight comes primarily through the control of public monies. Given their small size and difficulties in funding all services, local governments also form associations to attempt to improve the efficiency of service delivery.

The Ministry of Economics and Finance defines budget totals for local administrations, in part through a version of performance management – a practice that has become the international

orthodoxy in public management. The budgeting system links the budgets available to public organizations and to local governments directly to measures of their performance in delivering services. One dimension of the performance management system is linked to municipal modernization, and especially targets cooperation among municipalities. This emphasis on performance is especially important for local and regional governments, as their budgets are based to a significant degree on their performance (62 per cent in one recent budget year) in areas such as health and infrastructure development, although not directly on birth registration. There is a performance-based system for the regional governments – *Fondo de Estimulo al Desempeno Fed* – which is linked in part to performance in issuing the national identity card, but not to birth registration per se. Further, part of the RENIEC budget itself that rewards sub-national governments based on the issuing of the Documento nacional de identidad (DNI).

Indeed, according to informal estimates some 60 per cent of government financing is allocated on the basis of performance. Whether it be social programmes, maternity services, health insurance, immunization, or education, targets are set by the Ministry of Finance. These targets are based in part on the proportion of people who are eligible for and access services, and funding is allocated according to success in meeting these targets. These targets vary across programmes but most depend upon the number of people availing themselves of the service, rather than actual quality of the services delivered. There is a degree of fiscal decentralization beginning in some regions (including Ayacucho) arising from the sharing of royalties from natural resource exploitation, based on population and levels of poverty. However, nearly all the money coming from royalties is being used for infrastructure rather than for programmes such as health or education.

### **3.2. The formal civil registration system**

Although birth registration, in the form of records of baptism made by the Catholic Church, has a history in Peru going back to 1556, the legal requirement for civil registration began in the nineteenth century with the promulgation of the Peruvian Civil Law. In most parts of the country, at least those most accessible, deaths were being registered by the civil authorities from 1857 and births and marriages from 1886. Up until the mid-1990s civil registration was the responsibility of the municipal authorities of districts and provinces, without a central civil registration body. Neither did registration reach far into indigenous communities, either in remote parts of the highlands or the Amazon basin. Meanwhile, a separate system of registration was maintained for identity documentation, linked to electoral enfranchisement.

The violence of the *Sendero Luminoso* (Shining Path) insurgency in the 1980s and early 1990s, in which nearly 70,000 people are estimated to have lost their lives,<sup>13</sup> involved attacks on government buildings and institutions, and assaults against civilians, including by government forces and allied government-created militia. Many people, especially in the highland heartlands of the insurgency such as Ayacucho, lost identity documentation and official record of their civil status was destroyed.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Final Report, Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2003, <http://www.cverdad.org.pe/ingles/ifinal/conclusiones.php>, accessed 16 August 2016.

<sup>14</sup> See G. Gorriti, *The Shining Path: History of the Millenarian War in Peru* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press).

The conflict is an important context for understanding contemporary institutional arrangements for civil registration and identity documentation. Complex patterns of social exclusion were factors behind the insurgency and indigenous responses to it. With the conflict waning, the government set out to restore identity documents to those who had lost them. There were two imperatives for the identity card system: security – the ability to monitor and track citizens – and nation-building – combatting corruption and fostering social inclusion. To achieve these goals, the government decided to bring responsibility for the somewhat fractured civil registration system and the system for national identity documentation together under one central institution. This is RENIEC, whose autonomous status and powers were defined in the 1993 Constitution, and which was brought into formal being by the *Ley Organica del Registro Nacio de Identificacion y Estado Civil*, (Organic Law of the National Registry of Identification and Civil Status) of 1995.

RENIEC is a highly efficient, highly motivated institution with a strong sense of mission.<sup>15</sup> It has the status to enable it to decide on the most appropriate ways of fulfilling its mandate independently of other government bodies or changes in government policy. Nevertheless, it remains somewhat dependent on the Ministry of Finance for the allocation of its budget, despite also being partially self-financing through fees. RENIEC's role includes maintaining an integrated national registration system, supported by an electronic database, and issuing both birth certificates and national identity cards (which are physically prepared in Lima). The law makes carrying an identity card, which has a photograph and the fingerprint of the holder, mandatory. A special unit, GRIAS, was created, tasked with restoring the civil identities of individuals whose records were lost in the conflict. GRIAS is also responsible for ensuring registration in poorly served communities, both those remote and hard-to-reach, but also of persons who may be at risk of exclusion for other reasons, such as abandoned children or children with disabilities.

While RENIEC has regional offices in each regional capital, and offices at lower administrative levels in the coastal areas and some major towns in the highlands, in some significant ways its operational practices remain quite centralized. Lima maintains tight control over operational standards and, while personal information can be entered into the electronic database from any connected RENIEC office, identity cards are made in and disseminated from Lima, although birth certificates may be issued by civil registrars. In the coastal areas and major urban centres civil registration is carried out by RENIEC itself. However, at the district and community levels in the highlands and the Amazon basin routine registration is generally performed by registrars working in Offices of Civil Registration (*Oficina de Registracion Civil*, OREC), employed by local government, as was the situation nationally before 1995. RENIEC sees itself as extending its reach over time. The actual civil registration system, then, is something of a hybrid. The implications for coordination of the interface of an efficient centralized institution with local administration is a theme that will be discussed later in the paper.

At the district level, registrars are civil servants in salaried positions. Appointment is generally in the hands of the mayor, and changes in local leadership can lead to changes in municipal staffing.

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<sup>15</sup> In public opinion polls, RENIEC has been cited as the most effective organization in Peru, public or private. Its performance has been internationally recognized, winning a UN Public Service Award in 2013 and an Ibero-American Quality Award in 2012.



At the level of indigenous community, registrars are also appointed by mayors or the community equivalent. They are not officially civil servants, and are generally unpaid and part-time. As such, the position is subject to even more rapid turnover of staff. Local administrations at these levels are responsible for the cost of registration activities by their registrars.

For the purposes of this investigation we can say that the birth registration process takes place in two stages. At birth, a qualified health professional (doctor, obstetrician or nurse with a degree recognized by the State) issues a Certificate of Live Birth (CNV). This is free for children born in hospitals and other health centres. If there is not a health professional qualified to issue the CNV, an affidavit from a political, judicial or religious authority confirming the birth can be secured within 30 days.<sup>16</sup>

The second step is to present the CNV or affidavit to the civil registrar in order to register the birth of the child. This must take place within 60 calendar days after the birth occurred, or within 90 calendar days within remote indigenous communities given the potential difficulties in traveling to a registration office. The birth registration certificate can be issued directly by the registrar at this point. Closing the circle, the entry of the birth registration data into the national registry paves the way for issuing the national identity card, which is processed centrally by RENIEC.

Registration within the established time limits is known as the 'ordinary' process, and is supposed to be free. If the limits are exceeded, the procedure is known as 'extraordinary', and in the context of registration through ORECs, may incur charges (although by law it should be free). In this case, the child's parents should approach the OREC and submit:

- an application signed by the informant;
- the CNV, or certificate of baptism, or school enrolment certificate, or an affidavit signed by two qualified witnesses who undersign in front of the registrar;
- the national identity card of the informant, and witness(es) if applicable.

Registration by RENIEC involves direct data entry into a national electronic database. In theory this allows immediate processing of information. However, in municipalities not connected to the electronic database, the majority in the Andean highlands and Amazon basin, registrars enter data by hand into a registration book, in duplicate. One duplicate is retained at the OREC and the other is supposed to be taken monthly to a RENIEC office for entry into the national registry. Even when entry into the database is immediate, identity documents have to be transferred down the line from Lima.

While local registrars are employed and managed by local administrations, on a technical level they are supervised and trained by RENIEC, primarily through RENIEC regional offices. The organization runs a registration training school in Lima, and the training unit also supports ad hoc training initiatives at regional level. RENIEC in Lima, however, acknowledged that capacity to provide oversight to municipal ORECs was limited, leading to a tendency to focus on the larger offices. There is an audit and evaluation unit of RENIEC (UFI) responsible for the integrity of the process.

In addition to the static system of registry offices just described, RENIEC carries out itinerant registration campaigns through GRIAS. These have played a significant role in extending civil

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<sup>16</sup> While not investigated in this project, the facility of getting a CNV and its role in getting the identity card may be an additional encouragement to mothers to give birth in a health centre.

registration and possession of identity documentation. The main focus of campaigns is on issuing identity documents, but given the significance of the birth certificate for securing an identity card, the registration of births is integral to this activity. From the perspective of the public, a key aspect of campaigns is that registration is free – there are no penalties charged for “late” registration, including that of adults with no documentation, and for other extraordinary processes.

Organizing campaigns involves coordination with other service providers at the regional level, especially in the Amazon basin where cooperation extends to on-the-ground activities, with several service providers visiting remote communities together. According to RENIEC in Lima, the organization of campaigns also involves coordination with municipal and community registrars and other officials, especially in preparing local populations for the arrival of a campaign.

Given their purpose – identity restitution as well as reaching the remote and excluded – campaigns have taken place at all administrative levels in many parts of the country, particularly those affected by the civil conflict. Increasingly, however, with the overall success of the drive to extend identity documentation (and birth registration as a means to that end) GRIAS’s focus has begun to shift towards reaching the most remote and most excluded populations.

### **3.4. Other relevant service providers**

RENIEC also needs to coordinate with several other services. The Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion (MIDIS) is important in attempting to reach indigenous populations with services, including birth registration. This ministry manages a major conditional cash transfer programme, JUNTOS, that is intended to improve the well-being of poor families, and break cycles of intergenerational poverty. It represents an explicit attempt to address the vulnerabilities of populations previously affected by political violence, and so was initially rolled out in the highlands.<sup>17</sup> Enrolment in JUNTOS requires possession of a DNI, which is also necessary to access the services related to the programme’s conditions. Among other things, JUNTOS encourages parents to register their children, often using local volunteers to make contact with the parents. The programme runs in Ayacucho but has not yet been extended to Ucayali.

To fulfill its social development mission and to improve the services provided to vulnerable populations, the ministry recognizes the need to involve other organizations to enable a more comprehensive approach to the problems of the poorest populations. The JUNTOS programme plays an informal role in sharing information about social programmes and how to access them among residents in more remote areas of the country.

Accessing hospitals and health centres run by the Ministry of Health (MINSA) or the Social Health Insurance (EsSalud), which between them provide health care to 90 per cent of the country, also, in principle, requires possession of a DNI (although it appears that this may be waived for people

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<sup>17</sup> JUNTOS (Together), officially called the National Programme of Support to the Poorest, was launched in February 2005. It has been shown to have some effects in reducing levels of poverty (see Perova and Vakis, 2009). Women receive an amount of money in order to enrol children in school and health programmes (Programme of Nutritional Articulation, Neonatal Maternal Health, and Integral Health Insurance). It aims to achieve 100 per cent coverage among its target population.

needing acute attention).<sup>18</sup> As described, in terms of birth registration an important function of health facilities is issuing the Certificate of Live Birth (CNV).

Our respondents (especially in Ayacucho), also mentioned the Ministry of Education as a player in birth registration. As a ministry with direct contact with almost all children in the country at one stage or another, schools can be of considerable assistance in identifying those who do not have the DNI, or who may not even have a birth certificate. Officially, it is only at the point of graduation from school that a student has to present a DNI (in order to receive the certificate of graduation), but according to interviews in the two study areas, local schools often request the DNI before they allow enrolment. Local schools can link children and their parents with the services that children need, including birth registration and securing a DNI card to allow school enrolment.

The Ombudsman (*Defensoria del Pueblo*), a constitutionally independent body that reports to the legislature, promotes birth registration, and, perhaps most significantly, advocates and reports on human rights issues such as severe differences in access to and quality of services across different areas of the country. In addition, the Ombudsman takes up individual complaints about problems with registration. It is also a key part of discussion to develop general procedures for addressing problems in the registration process. In particular, the office is attempting to promote procedures that can facilitate registration for children who have not been registered properly at birth.

The Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations has a special interest in promoting access to services in the more remote areas of the country, where many of the more vulnerable citizens are located. In coordination with MIDIS, the ministry helps to promote local and regional roundtables (“mesas”) for women in the rural areas. These are relatively informal groups that spread information among indigenous populations, primarily about JUNTOS and other social programmes, and help to identify women and children in need of services, including registration. According to some respondents in the fieldwork they also act as a community-based pressure group, advocating for services such as health and education.

In some districts there are other non-governmental associations for women that help to mobilize around issues for families and children. For example, in the *centros poblado* in Ayacucho the Regional Federation of Indigenous Women of Ayacucho (Federación Regional de Mujeres Indígenas de Ayacucho, FEREMIA) was active in maternal health and birth registration.

Perhaps the least expected partner in birth registration was the Peruvian navy. From time to time in Ucayali it carries registration officials along the rivers to visit areas that might otherwise be inaccessible for service providers, including those providing registration. This is a formal duty of the navy, providing essential assistance in remote areas of the jungle where travel is only really possible by river.

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<sup>18</sup> According to the World Health Organization MINSAs facilities serve about 60 per cent of the population, EsSalud 30 per cent and three other health providers covering the remainder. The system of multiple providers of services and insurance often performs functions with a high degree of overlap and little coordination.

Source: <http://www.who.int/workforcealliance/countries/per/en/>, accessed 16 August 2016.

### **3.5. Policy alignment**

Peru is implementing a set of policies at the highest level that coordinate and reinforce each other, creating citizen demand for birth registration and identity documentation, and demand on the part of service providers for citizens to carry identity documentation. In turn, these create strong incentives to increase the supply of registration and identity documentation, or in other words, incentives to make the service available and accessible.

There are three important policy-created links – between birth registration and identity documentation, between identity documentation and access to services, and between use of services and budget – each involving coordination relationships, that are fundamental to the success of birth registration in Peru.

Possession of identity documentation is important for Peruvian citizens. Above and beyond it being mandatory to carry an identity card, Peruvians often have to present their DNI card in order to access government services. For citizens, at least those in remote areas, access to social programmes appears to be particularly significant. Identity cards are also demanded by services in the private sector, such as acquiring a bank account, an internet service provider, or a mobile phone. As described, in order to get a DNI card, birth has to be registered. In order for the birth to be registered, a CNV has to be issued. The above being said, the Ombudsman's Office has declared that the rights of children are not conditional, so having a DNI may be less significant for some services directed to children.

The performance-based budgeting system is also extremely significant. Performance management is intended to improve the performance of organizations delivering public services (Halligan and Bouckaert, 2011). In Peru it provides additional incentives for coordination among service providers for birth registration. The budgets of service providers are influenced by the number of citizens accessing their services. This creates an incentive to ensure that people in their areas of operation have their DNI.

The provision of health services to as large a proportion of the population as possible is a central indicator for the performance management system that influences the budget for local administrations. In principle, therefore, local political officials and their health officials have incentives to work with local registrars to ensure that as many children as possible are registered and are being seen in the local clinics. While educational attendance does not appear to be as central to performance measurement, receiving educational certificates is contingent on possession of a DNI which creates an incentive for schools to encourage registration.

Meanwhile, another policy, formulated with entirely separate objectives, also aligns with policy on civil registration. The health authorities, aiming to reduce infant and maternal mortality, increasingly encourage mothers to give birth in medical centres, and the majority of Peruvian mothers now do so.<sup>19</sup> This facilitates issuing the CNV, which in turn is required for registering the birth and so on.

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<sup>19</sup> According to USAID, the national percentage of women delivering in health facilities increased from 57 per cent in 2000 to 89 per cent in 2014. In rural areas the change was from 24 per cent to 72 per cent over the same period.

Source: <https://www.hfgproject.org/paving-the-way-for-universal-health-coverage-in-peru/>, accessed 16 August 2016.

In this context, the role of the CNV in birth registration plausibly acts as an additional incentive in persuading mothers to give birth in medical centres. This is further reinforced where registry services are co-located in medical centres (primarily in hospitals in regional centres). In order to give birth in a medical facility, in principle mothers need to have their own DNI (in practice, many medical facilities do not demand a DNI from someone in need).

#### **4. THE SYSTEM IN PRACTICE: BASIC FINDINGS**

Given that in 2014 97 per cent of births in Peru were registered, this high level of policy alignment would appear to be effective. However, what is happening in practice in areas where birth registration rates are not as good? And what contribution do other forms of coordination make?

##### **4.1. *Patterns of interaction: Ayacucho***

Ayacucho, which covers 43,814 km<sup>2</sup> of rugged mountains and valleys in the Andean highlands in the south of Peru, had an estimated population in 2013 of 673,609,<sup>20</sup> the majority of them indigenous peoples, with over a quarter living in the eponymous capital. In 2013, across the region an estimated 2.5 per cent of children between 6 and 59 months remained unregistered.<sup>21</sup> However, there are significant disparities between districts, with some much lower than the headline figure. For example, the districts of Vischongo and Paras, field sites for this study, had registration rates of 66 per cent and 36 per cent respectively.<sup>22</sup>

There are effectively three modalities of birth registration involving interaction and coordination in the region. The first involves locally-based registrars employed by local government and the indigenous community-based registrars. The second involves campaign-style drives for registration involving RENIEC (GRIAS) officials working with local government registrars. The third involves direct registration by the RENIEC office in the regional capital, Ayacucho.

##### **4.2. *Registrars employed by local administration at district and lower levels: Ayacucho***

The registrars at the very lowest level, in the centros poblado of Tumsulla and Pamacochoa, were each appointed by the mayor. Both were part-time and came to their offices in response to communications from parents seeking to register children. One was unpaid but the other, in place since 2011, received a small stipend from the municipality. Both charged small fees for a supposedly free service (in one case, formalized in an official pricelist by the municipality). At the district level (Paras and Vischongo) the registrars were civil servants paid by the municipality, one (Vischongo) with nearly 30 years of experience in the post (however, this length of service appears to be unusual). Registration is manual, in that birth details are recorded by hand in a registration book.

At the district level and lower, registrars did not report any direct interaction with any other service providers. Although at the level of centro poblado this could be because logical partners such as

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.inei.gob.pe/estadisticas/indice-tematico/poblacion-y-vivienda/>, accessed 16 August 2016.

<sup>21</sup> Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática (INEI), January 2014, *Peru: Indicadores de Resultados de los Programas Estratégicos, 2007-2013*, Lima.

<sup>22</sup> Data provided by GRIAS.

the health centres did not provide obstetric services, the same applied at district level where maternity homes did exist. Health centre staff at the district level provided information to mothers on how to register the births of their children, but had no direct contact with the registrars. Civil society organizations and churches were not mentioned at all in the responses of participants in the survey, despite these institutions historically playing an active role in the drive to restore identity in the early 1990s.

Backwards mapping through the system, however, reveals an important chain of quasi-hierarchical and peer interactions among registrars. For example, district registrars receive registration information from community registrars, review it for completeness, and send it up the line to the Regional Headquarters of RENIEC for inclusion in the national registry. There also appeared to be a chain of peer and hierarchical support between Vilcashuaman, Vischongo and Pomacocha, with registrars reporting the ability to seek and receive advice from registrars up the line. The longevity and experience of the registrar in Vischongo means that he acted as an informal advisor to registrars across the region. The importance of telephone communication in this mountainous area cannot be over-stated.

The RENIEC regional office in Ayacucho maintains a technical supervisory relationship with the local government registrars. This role included the provision of training, although training expenses are covered from local resources (modalities reported included the individual registrar paying for themselves, a contribution from the community, and municipal funds). One registrar reported being unable to take up training opportunities as there were no funds available. The regional offices also review the quality of the work being done by local registrars. In a previous year RENIEC had requested the mayor of one *centro poblado* in the study to replace the registrar because of poor performance.<sup>23</sup>

The registration books from Pomacocha, Vischongo and Paras were periodically taken to the registrar in the provincial capital Vilcashuaman for details to be copied and forwarded onwards to the regional RENIEC office in Ayacucho. There the information is entered into the national database. The registrar in the *centro poblado* Tumsulla, which is close to Ayacucho, dealt directly with RENIEC in the regional capital to expedite registration processes.

Registrars at the lowest levels reported delays in receiving DNI documents coming down the line after they had submitted registration data. The issue of information coming back down the chain to local government from state institutions in a timely fashion appears to be part of a wider problem. Some districts maintain link offices (*oficinas de enlace*) in Ayacucho, intended to facilitate the flow of documents and to provide phone and internet communications back and forth to districts. Following allegations of mismanagement and corruption, these offices have been formally banned, but many appear to continue to operate clandestinely. This lack of visibility made it difficult to establish if they played any role in supporting information flow regarding birth certification or identity documentation – and they were not mentioned directly by registrars at the district level.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Informants reported that this had also happened in a number of other local communities in Ayacucho.

<sup>24</sup> The research team was unable to locate link offices for districts in the study, but did visit an office in another district. Staff were wary and unforthcoming about their roles.

Mistakes in the chain of the registration process, such as misspelled or wrong names on identity documentation, can be rectified through administrative and legal proceedings. However, these may be beyond the competence of community judges (*juetz de paz*) at the district level, and are referred up the line to the judge at the province level in Vilcashuaman. Access to relevant judicial processes, which requires legal representation, remains a challenge for many poor people, especially those from remote communities. The provincial judge reported that she was often not able to resolve registration-related cases, as the complainant was not adequately represented. Securing representation might require travel to the regional capital, either to approach a public defender or the ombudsman's office (*Defensoria del Pueblo*), which reported that it often receives requests for help to take a case through the courts.

#### **4.3. RENIEC registrars: Ayacucho**

At the level of the regional capital, RENIEC provided direct registration services from the registry office. Being connected to the national database, it was able to enter data immediately. Furthermore, the organization also ran an auxiliary registration office (ORA) in the regional hospital, which had the same capacity. The Office, however, remained dependent on Lima to issue identity cards.

#### **4.4. GRIAS itinerant campaigns: Ayacucho**

GRIAS maintained a coordination structure – the Working Commission for the Undocumented (Comision de Trabajo por los Indocumentados, COTRAIN) – which brings together state entities with an interest in identity documentation. These included the regional administration, regional offices of health and education, EsSALUD, the Support Programme for Reform of the Health Sector (Programa de Apoyo a la Reforma del Sector Salud, PARSALUD),<sup>25</sup> the JUNTOS programme, the Municipal Defense for Children and Adolescents (Defensoría Municipal del Niño y el Adolescente, DEMUNA),<sup>26</sup> the Justice in Your Community (Justicia en tu Comunidad) programme of the judiciary,<sup>27</sup> the ombudsman's office (Defensoria del Pueblo),<sup>28</sup> the National Institute of Statistics and Information (Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática, INEI), and the police department. The mechanism works primarily on the design of interventions, including campaigns, and on the planning process around issues of registration and identity. It was also reported to be working on measures to address some of the legal complexities surrounding correction of errors in birth registration and identity documentation.

Registrars at the level of *centros poblado* reported that once or twice a year they were requested by district registrars to contribute to GRIAS-led registration campaigns. The district registrars were

<sup>25</sup> Under the Ministry of Health, PARSALUD aims to improve maternal and child health and to reduce child morbidity in children under 3 years of age in rural areas in the 9 poorest regions of Peru. The programme operates in both Ayacucho and Ucayali.

<sup>26</sup> DEMUNAs are community and local government ombuds institutions, ostensibly under the oversight of the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations, offering information and help in solving conflicts on issues concerning children's rights. First created in 1994 in Lima and Arequipa as community initiatives, in 1997 their status was reinforced by legal changes making it obligatory for local authorities to create a DEMUNA.

<sup>27</sup> Justice in Your Community is a programme of the judiciary aimed at improving the relationship between the general public and community judges.

<sup>28</sup> The independence of the Defensoria del Pueblo is enshrined in the 1993 Constitution. The ombudsman has 38 decentralized offices around the country, including in Ayacucho and Ucayali.

in turn informed of campaigns by the registrar at the provincial level, who in turn received the information from GRIAS in Ayacucho. These campaigns involve teams of officials visiting local communities and attempting to register both adults and children. GRIAS is the principal motivator for the campaigns.

The significance of output-based planning and budgeting was a theme uniting RENIEC with the regional administration and other service providers at the regional level. In short, service providers are incentivized through the numbers of people enrolled in their programmes. In turn, in most cases enrolment, except for children in some circumstances, is conditional on possession of a DNI – which requires the birth to have been registered. The risk, identified directly by an official from JUNTOS, is that this can lead to a concentration on working where there are the greatest numbers of children and adults that need to secure DNIs, not concentrating on the most marginalized and remote who may be in greatest need of services.

#### **4.5. *Patterns of interaction: Ucayali***

Ucayali, spread over an area of 101,830 km<sup>2</sup> in the Amazon basin, had an estimated population in 2013 of 483,708,<sup>29</sup> nearly half of which live in the capital Pucallpa. Communications in the region are difficult – the bulk of the rural population, which primarily comprises indigenous peoples, is settled along river banks and is only accessible by river. In 2013, an estimated 13.5 per cent of children between 6 and 59 months remained unregistered.

As in Ayacucho, there were three modalities of registration implementation. The first involves locally employed registrars in municipalities (ORECs) and community based indigenous registrars. The remit of the district registrar extends to their town and sometimes to rural areas where there is no community registrar. The second is through GRIAS-led campaigns, involving RENIEC staff working with other service providers, including municipal registrars and sometimes indigenous community based registrars. The third is at RENIEC's Registry office in Ucayali region, including in the regional capital, Pucallpa, and in other locations.

#### **4.6. *Registrars employed by local administration at district and lower levels: Ucayali***

The interview team located registrars in the four indigenous communities that were part of this study with the assistance of GRIAS and the local community chiefs. The registrars in the four indigenous communities had been appointed by their respective community chiefs, were unpaid and worked part-time on demand. Registration was carried out manually, with birth details double-entered into a registration book. Within the framework of their day-to-day registration activities, community registrars did not interact with any other service providers. Neither did they report any interaction with registrars working in district municipalities (although one district registrar reported that registrars in indigenous communities could approach him for advice).

Interviews with health workers indicated that both the health worker and the registrar were working in their own siloes. Health workers were issuing the certificate of live birth as required, but in

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.inei.gob.pe/estadisticas/indice-tematico/poblacion-y-vivienda/>, accessed 16 August 2016.



at least two cases did not know the procedures involved in birth registration and accordingly were not advising parents of them. These two cases represent an absence of even negative coordination.

Vertical coordination with RENIEC was far more significant than horizontal coordination at the local level. On technical issues community registrars reported directly to RENIEC in the regional capital, Pucallpa. Community registrars were responsible for taking the registration book directly to RENIEC in Pucallpa, ostensibly once a month, in order for the birth data to be entered into the national database. The community registrars retain one copy of the double-entered information. In reality, there were lengthy delays in the transfer of information. One registrar had not transferred data to RENIEC for over two years. Communities, not RENIEC, were responsible for covering the cost of taking the information to Pucallpa.

If birth information is not entered into the national registry, it is not possible for a DNI to be issued. Rather than waiting for the registrar to ensure data transfer, parents can take the documentation to RENIEC themselves, although in some communities the procedures involved in doing this appear informal. Registrars are able to issue a photocopy of the entry in the registration book, signed and marked with his or her stamp, and parents can take this directly to RENIEC. However, in at least one of the indigenous communities visited photocopy machines were not available, and so the practice was for the registrar to lend the registration book to parents for a number of days to allow them to travel to the nearest town to make the copy.

In one community, an NGO supporting work on maternal and child well-being was supporting parents without DNIs to engage with RENIEC to secure them. In general, however, there was very little involvement of NGO's in registration activities. The relative isolation of these communities and their small size has appeared to inhibit significant levels of activity of NGOs in the area.

District registrars, employed as civil servants by municipalities, were in the same structural relationship with RENIEC as community registrars. Likewise, vertical coordination was far more important than proactive horizontal coordination at the local level. Registrars reported either no or very limited interaction with other services, public bodies or civil society at their local level. In one case a registrar had visited the local health department to raise concerns after learning that health workers were charging a relatively high fee for the certificate of live birth (which is supposed to be free), but the interaction was not routine.

Like in indigenous communities, registration in districts was by hand and the registrars were responsible for passing the birth information back to RENIEC in Pucallpa, from where issued DNIs were passed back down the line after delivery from Lima. Similarly, the registrars were subject to technical oversight by RENIEC.

#### **4.7. RENIEC registrars: Ucayali**

Within the regional capital, two organizations undertook registration. The first is the office of the municipality of Coronel Portillo, the second largest province of Ucayali, which provided services to the district of Calleria, part of Pucallpa. The second is RENIEC itself, through its regional office, which registered births in the districts of Manantay and Yarinacocha, also part of the city. RENIEC also ran

two auxiliary registration offices (ORA), one in the Hospital of the Amazon and the other in the Regional Hospital. All these offices had direct access to the national registry. The co-location of registration services with hospitals providing maternity services represents a clear example of positive horizontal coordination.

The RENIEC office in Pucallpa engaged in a variety of outreach activities with local communities, especially involving civil society organizations of local women promoting registration. These women were generally not from the indigenous communities which posed the greatest challenge to registration efforts (nor were they active in the communities that were field sites for this study), but they were reported to be actively engaged in their local areas. Arguably, however, the most important functions of RENIEC at the regional level in terms of coordination lay in its role as gatekeeper to the national registry, its supervisory and technical role supporting registration by local administration registrars at district and indigenous community – and its role in organizing itinerant campaigns.

#### **4.8. GRIAS itinerant campaigns: Ucayali**

GRIAS led campaign-style registration drives that involved coordination with multiple actors at both regional and local levels. These are organized through the framework of the Multisectoral Regional Executive Committee (*Comité Ejecutivo Regional Multisectorial de Ucayali*, COMUDENI), which included representatives from regional, provincial and district administrations, the regional offices of health and education, PARSALUD, the INEI, the Peruvian Red Cross, the Ombudsman's office, the public defender's office, the police department, the Peruvian Navy, UNICEF, and the Organization of Indigenous Peoples of Atalaya (*Organización Indígena Regional de Atalaya*, OIRA). The inclusion of OIRA in the organization of registration campaigns appears to be an important factor in extending their reach and success.

Neither registrars at community nor district levels reported being a key part of GRIAS-led campaigns. These activities do involve coordination among various actors in the public sector, but they appear to be primarily between Pucallpa-based bodies and local mayors and the village *apus* (chiefs) rather than directly involving local registry officials.

Just as in Ayacucho, service providers in Ucayali were united around a clear and simple common objective – enabling people to get their identity documentation in order that they might access services. It was therefore in the interests of other entities at the regional level to support the campaign activities of GRIAS in hard-to-reach communities.

#### **4.9. Comparing birth registration in the highlands and the jungle**

It would be easy to treat the processes of birth registration in the highlands and the jungle as being virtually identical. Both areas are characterized by geographical challenges for the officials responsible for registering children – difficulties in reaching some citizens who require these services and the distance of these areas from Lima and the central registration services provided by RENIEC. Both areas also present some cultural challenges for the registrars, for example differences in languages and social organization. In both areas some segments of society may be indifferent to

or wary of the activities of the State, including official registration of their children or having a DNI, though possibly for different reasons.<sup>30</sup>

Despite those similarities, there were also some important differences on the supply side between registration activities in the two geographical regions. One of the more striking differences was in the status of the local registrars in our (small) sample. In the highlands these appeared to be primarily local political appointees, some of whom appeared to have little real interest in the process of registration. In the jungle the registrars were also appointed, but this appeared to be more of a community-based office with more commitment to serving the community. Being the registrar in an indigenous community in Ucayali appeared to be an honor for the individual rather than merely a task that had to be carried out. These differences would not necessarily hold for all localities, with some local registrars in the highlands being committed to their tasks, but the field reports did identify some tendencies toward passivity for some of the registrars in highlands areas.

It appeared that coordination with the health care system and with other public services was more institutionalized in the jungle than in the highlands. This coordination appeared to be functional for both parties involved. While the health services made attempts to encourage parents to register their children, and provided CNVs, it was also reported that at times they withheld CNVs for a few weeks to encourage parents to bring back their newly born children for medical checkup. The health workers' assumption appeared to be that if parents received the CNV immediately they would be less willing to invest in the often difficult travel required to come back to the clinic. This may be true, but it infringes the right of children to be registered and may reduce the time available for subsequent ordinary birth registration (30 days).

Defying the general pattern, found in both regions, of local administration registrars being almost completely sedentary, the registrar in the district capital of Masisea in Ucayali was making some effort to reach less accessible areas. This was primarily through locally-organized campaigns and other limited direct outreach. These actions indicate the capacity for a more proactive role for local registrars, if they are motivated or can be motivated by additional incentives.

While in Ayacucho the RENIEC registrars appeared less active in organizing with the local community than did organizations such as JUNTOS and other social services, they did engage in some direct action to register children. Representatives of the RENIEC office, for example, regularly went to the obstetrics ward of the local hospital to attempt to identify new born children who required registration. In addition, there was a registrar who frequently visited the local market and was available for making registrations there. These regular activities were in the regional capital only, and did not extend to the more remote areas served by the regional office.

Finally, although there are some important differences in birth registration between the jungle areas and the highlands, our sample was small, and equally striking and perhaps even greater differences may actually be found among individual communities within the regions. The level of activity in

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<sup>30</sup> It was suggested that some communities in the Andes may remain wary of the State due to the history of civil conflict or because of involvement in the coca trade. In the Amazon, the legacy of exclusion and poor access to services were given as factors.

birth registration tended to vary with the individual registrars and other local officials as well as with more systemic issues such as support from RENIEC and the interest of the local population. RENIEC (GRIAS) in the jungle reported more initiatives to connect with local communities and with NGOs than did GRIAS in the highlands, although both areas organized itinerant campaigns.

#### **4.10. Key patterns of interaction**

Having pointed up differences, it is possible to summarize some key patterns. In the day-to-day implementation of “normal” registration (i.e. registration involving office-based registrars), in general there is surprisingly little direct horizontal interaction at the local level between community and district registrars and other service providers at the same institutional level (with the possible exception of Maisesa). The registrars are available in their offices (or to come to their offices on demand), but especially at the community level they appear to have very little direct interaction with, for example, health centres, which are also important elements in the birth registration system.

While some office-based registrars directly employed by RENIEC in the regional office appeared to be more proactive in reaching out (in Ayacucho at least), the same basic pattern also seemed to manifest in relation to them.

GRIAS-led “campaign-style” registration and identity documentation drives were only mentioned by the lowest administration level registrars in Ayacucho (in contrast to GRIAS emphasizing outreach more in Ucayali). In general, it appeared as if registrars at this level did not regard itinerant campaigns as part of their normal work. Indeed, there may have been only occasional campaigns held in any individual registrar’s area. Nevertheless, GRIAS at both national and regional levels reported that local registrars are involved in helping implement campaigns initiated and planned at the regional level. Such campaigns, which involve staff coming from the regional capital and working with local service providers, such as focal points for JUNTOS (in the highlands), require considerable planning and inter-sectoral coordination.

Mapping back up the chain of vertical coordination, the system is heavily focused on RENIEC. Registrars employed at district and provincial level by local administrations, as well as the indigenous registrars, theoretically operate in a nested hierarchy of responsibilities – and in Ayacucho this was manifest in a degree of apparently informal support provided by more experienced and administratively higher level registrars to those less experienced or working at lower levels of administration. However, this did not extend to formal technical oversight nor was it the pattern of interaction in Ucayali. Instead, RENIEC regional offices were responsible for direct technical oversight, and were the focal point for the transfer of registration data, in some cases coming direct from community-level registrars where geographically proximate, in other cases through district and provincial offices acting as “post-boxes” for the flow of data and documentation between registrars employed by local communities and RENIEC.

#### **4.11. Incentives for coordination**

The overall context of high level policy alignment creating a logic for coordination at lower levels has been described – it is not just in RENIEC’s interests to coordinate with other service providers,

but theirs to coordinate with RENIEC. However, backward mapping reveals that this logic, powerful as it is, does not appear to translate all the way through the different implementation structures and levels to the point of service delivery at community and district level. The fieldwork indicates that from the perspective of registrars at district and community level, with the possible exception of registrars at the community level in Ucayali, there appears to be very limited engagement with other actors in expanding the reach of birth registration and identity card documentation. The high level incentives do not seem to be effective in motivating supply at the level of district or indigenous community, in other words, mobilizing the staff employed by local administrations who are actually in contact with parents in remote areas.

From the perspective of the public, in both the jungle and highland areas at least some people do not appear to see much benefit from possession of a DNI. There appears to be a correlation between this and limited access to services, perhaps especially limited access to social programmes such as JUNTOS (which is yet to be extended to Ucayali).

Currently in Peru, budgets are prepared on the basis of census data, and registration data is not being used to forecast population. Although the local mayor appoints the registrar, and is therefore to some extent responsible for the success or failure of his or her activities, and other local officials are also appointed by the mayor, which might in theory facilitate the possibility of coordination within local administration, there appears to be very little of this, and a lack of local administration engagement in performance management. On technical issues concerning civil registration, RENIEC has the lead oversight role, but not necessarily the resources to implement it across the board. Other aspects of the employment of registrars are the responsibility of the local administration.

With birth registration data not being used to support population forecasting, it has little influence on budgets, and therefore is unlikely to be given priority by local administrations. For example, respondents in the highlands argued that local governments were more interested in using royalties from mining for infrastructure projects than to support birth registration and identity documentation. This money is budgeted outside the general budget coming from the Ministry of Economics and Finance (and is annually variable). Local mayors have control over these funds but generally do not assign high priority to birth registration.

Despite RENIEC's strong sense of mission, its capacity does not reach to the extent of having offices outside regional capitals in the sparsely populated highlands and jungle. It is therefore dependent upon the willingness of local governments to coordinate with it in order to fulfil its mission – indeed, this relationship is critical to RENIEC's success. However, in interviews many RENIEC staff implied that the organization sees this as a temporary situation and that in time registrars employed by local administrations will be replaced by RENIEC staff.

Our interviews at both national and regional levels suggested that RENIEC sees campaign-style interventions as the key strategy for extending registration and identity documentation to remote areas. In both Ucayali and Ayacucho, the organization has created coordination fora for planning and implementing outreach activities. However, somewhat paradoxically, the independence and strong internal culture of RENIEC may contribute to limiting the degree of coordination it maintains with other government bodies that are less effective or lower in status than itself

Several respondents argued that the current high rates of registration in general may not be sustainable. Success has depended upon the injection of a significant amount of government money into RENIEC's programmes, especially for itinerant campaigns for the DNI. These campaigns are expensive –the manager of GRIAS reported in 2014 that the average cost of DNI registration at RENIEC service offices was \$10.32 per person, whereas the average costs of itinerant registration were \$42.05 in the highlands and \$79.80 in the jungle.<sup>31</sup> In overall terms, the government's budget depends on the continued success of the mining and petroleum industries, as well as maintaining the commitment of the government, especially the Ministry of Finance, to the identity documentation programmes. The latter industry has been hurt by the decline in world oil prices and is not returning as much money to government as in the past.

Furthermore, given that the dominant incentive for most of RENIEC's potential collaborators is to register the greatest number of children, there is a risk that the areas in which relatively expensive campaign-style registration drives take place are those with relatively large numbers of children, rather than the most remote and difficult communities where the need may be greater. In this case the incentives may be somewhat perverse. The areas in which it is easier to register children may receive more attention and those where registration efforts are likely to be less numerically fruitful may be relatively ignored.<sup>32</sup> This would have negative consequences for improving the inclusion of indigenous peoples, as many live in the smaller, remote communities. The Defensoria del Pueblo and DEMUNAs have been active in attempting to make efforts at registration more equitable, and GRIAS is explicit that its objective is to be as inclusive as possible, but the supply-side performance incentives remain structured in ways that emphasize obtaining the most registrations possible with the available funds.

So there may be supply-side cost versus population disincentives to effectively reaching the most remote communities. At the same time, there are issues on the demand side too. In the communities that were field sites for this study, interest in the registration process had been increased by external factors not directly related to RENIEC. It is significant that in the remote parts of the country where service access is in general problematic, which includes parts of the jungle and the highlands, demand from the public for DNI appeared to be low.

The most significant factor in creating citizen demand was the expansion of social programmes, mainly the JUNTOS programme (which is not yet operative in Ucayali), and staff of these programmes were active in directing people to register.<sup>33</sup> Although in principle a DNI is required for accessing health services, the degree to which local health officials helped facilitate registration

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<sup>31</sup> Carlos Reyna Izaguerre, World Bank South-South Learning Forum, *Building Robust Identification Procedures*, 17 March 2014.

<sup>32</sup> This process of "creaming" is observed relatively often in service delivery under performance management. If organizations are given a set of incentives they will find the easiest and more efficient way of reaching their goals.

<sup>33</sup> The National Program of Support to the Poorest, JUNTOS, created in 2005, is a conditional cash transfer program in the framework of the social policy to fight against poverty in Peru and, since 2012, is under the Ministry of Social Inclusion (MIDIS). Through JUNTOS families receive an amount of money in order to enroll children at school and in health programmes (Program of Nutritional Articulation, Neonatal Maternal Health, and Integral Health Insurance). One of the objectives of JUNTOS is to achieve 100 per cent coverage; thus obtaining the DNI is a key factor in order to achieve the goal.

by providing information was much less clear. Some have been active in guiding parents toward registration, but in other areas health employees were said to be uninformed or passive. Parents may have been issued with a CNV for their newborn, but not necessarily told how to proceed in order to obtain a birth certificate, and then the DNI.

Some informants suggested that RENIEC was investing too much of its resources in technology rather than in outreach and using manual means to register the population. The argument was that the organization had invested huge amounts of money in information systems, but that these systems still could not answer basic questions about levels of registration in all areas of the country. This criticism was mainly voiced by informants working in places which as yet do not see significant benefit from the computerized system (where registration was still taking place by hand and documents were still slow to arrive from Lima), and were perhaps less aware of the considerable achievements which the system has helped bring about. Nevertheless, the critique raises an important question: what is the appropriate balance between investment in information technology and investment in other ways of reaching the most remote communities, including enhancing local coordination, given that in the medium-term there are limits to the cost-effectiveness or even possibility of consistently extending technological solutions to remote areas?

## **5. BARRIERS TO BIRTH REGISTRATION**

Barriers to birth registration in Peru, especially in remote areas, include the geography of the country, the encounter of bureaucracy with cultural diversity, particular challenges faced by women, a culture of legalism in service delivery, funding, training and the complexity of correcting mistakes. Questions for this study are to what extent coordination is itself something of a barrier, and to what extent might strengthened coordination between different institutions contribute to removing barriers and bottlenecks?

### **5.1. Geography and culture**

The geography of Peru is a fundamental challenge to all aspects of service provision, including birth registration (see Brito, Corbacho and Osorio, 2013). The impact of geography is most evident in the Amazonian jungle. Travel backwards and forwards from homes to district centres or regional capitals can take hours or even days of river travel. The absence of connections with the rest of the country makes it difficult to implement the full range of public services. Parts of the highlands also pose significant challenges, although here remoteness may be measured more in hours than in days. Difficulties are exacerbated by the relative absence of public transportation. Low population densities make provision expensive and, as has been discussed, can make some remote areas even less attractive to service providers.

Geographical remoteness is compounded by cultural and linguistic differences. The forms for registering children are in Spanish, but in local communities the registrar may not be fluent in that language. While RENIEC is making efforts to provide translations of forms and information about legal requirements, the linguistic differences between the official world and the community persist. Transposing from one language to the other, and also between cultures, produces a significant number of errors in CNVs and birth certificates that in turn can be an obstacle to obtaining the DNI in the correct name.

The effects of missionary activities by evangelical churches are adding further linguistic complications, as they are leading to increased use of unfamiliar English first names in many indigenous communities.<sup>34</sup> This, it is said, further increases the likelihood of mistakes on both the CNV and in birth registration. Informants also argued that local cultural practices may also make identifying pregnant women in advance of birth difficult, and reduce the likelihood of programmes such as JUNTOS being able to encourage mothers to register the birth of the child early.

The effects of remoteness are compounded by the regulations imposed on registrars by RENIEC. Although local registrars attempting to go directly to families in the community to whom children have been born might appear to be a logical means of improving levels of birth registration this approach is not possible, at least not legally. The regulations prevent the local registrar from taking the registration book into the community, although he or she is required to transfer the data within it to the regional or provincial capital, and some were reported to be doing this by physically taking the book. While this prohibition exists to ensure the security of the registration book, it also inhibits effective registration activities.

## **5.2. Gender**

In many localities men or women seasonally migrate to work in larger towns, making it difficult for mothers to achieve the presence and/or paternal recognition of children at the time of registering. In 2006, the civil code was changed to allow mothers and/or fathers to declare the name of the other parent, guaranteeing the right of children to birth registration and the right to know the identity of their parents.<sup>35</sup> However, in practice, the implementation of the directive depends on the knowledge of the registrar or of the parents.

Our informants pointed out that it can be difficult for mothers, especially single mothers, to make use of the procedure. The mother may need the name of the father, and if he is not cooperative this can stall the process. A way round this is for the registrar to register the child with the mother's family name. However, if the father subsequently becomes involved, the registration will have to be altered, and this may involve a legal process with associated expenses.

A decreasing number of children are not born in hospitals or other health facilities, even in more remote areas of the country. This shift in birth locations is usually taken as an indicator of the improving quality of services for children (UNICEF, 2008), but may present some problems of its own for the mothers. For example, in the highland field locations for this study no obstetric facilities were available, so women typically moved into a larger town two weeks or so prior to giving birth. This can mean a long journey and then a stay in a maternity home or some other facility until the time of the birth. This can be isolating, inconvenient and expensive given that family members

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<sup>34</sup> The problem of names of being mis-recorded by officials unfamiliar with different languages and cultures is not confined to Peru. Millions of North Americans have names given to them by immigration officials. Those new names may have little or nothing to do with the names that they and their ancestors once had in their original languages, but those are the names that became official.

<sup>35</sup> Law 28720, April 25 2006, amends articles 20 and 21 of the civil code, declaring null article 37 of the Regulations of Registries of RENIEC that forbids single parents to register children.



cannot stay with the mother to be in the maternity home (and mothers have to supply their own food and other basic needs such as bed linen). While recognizing the overall contribution that this policy has made to reducing child and maternal mortality, women's organizations argued that official pressure to give birth in such facilities discriminates against indigenous women.

On the other hand, a child born in a medical facility will have a greater probability of the CNV being issued immediately. Where the centre has a co-located registration office, information on the birth is transmitted electronically to RENIEC in Lima directly. Where a child is not born in a hospital or health facility with the appropriate staff, then the family must undertake additional steps to register the child. Obtaining birth certificates without the initial CNV may require legal proceedings that can only be done in a district or provincial capital, and hence time and money for the parents. If the child is born at home or with a traditional birth attendant, then the parents must get a witness to certify the birth in order to get the CNV. Other records such as baptismal certificates may be utilized as proof, and later registration in school can be used as evidence.<sup>36</sup>

### **5.3. Funding and training of local administration registrars**

While it is difficult to fault low paid or even unpaid local administration registrars for their willingness to perform a public service (see UNICEF, 2010), the calibre of registrar cadre in some local administrations does appear to create potential difficulties for parents. As already noted, local officials may be untrained, and hence they may be more liable to make errors than a trained, full-time employee. Indeed, there are more errors on birth certificates than might be expected in what seems in principle a routine administrative process.

The absence of even the most basic levels of funding for some local registrars may also impose a burden on citizens seeking to register a child. Registrars in local communities in our field sites lacked the funds to travel to the district offices to deliver registration data, and some did so only sporadically, contributing to delays in children receiving DNI documentation. Some local registrars charged a fee to the parents, although this is nominally a free service. Local registrars argue that they need this income to cover their own costs of providing the service when they have no funds from RENIEC or from the local government. In addition, the registration process may involve making copies of a CNV or other papers and the parents may be charged for those. While none of these fees appear very large, they still constitute a barrier for the poorest.

### **5.4. Legal processes**

If there are any delays in initiating registration, if the family situation is not that envisioned in the law, and if mistakes are made in information recorded in the CNV or the registration process, there can be significant difficulties which require recourse to legal proceedings.

Several of our respondents noted that if things go wrong the registration process becomes complicated with numerous legal requirements. These may make good sense within government bureaucracy, but they make much less sense for citizens faced with bureaucracy and its rules.

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<sup>36</sup> This is something of a "Catch-22" given that in order to register in school the requirement that the child have a DNI is being enforced more stringently. Therefore, school records are not likely to be available for an unregistered child.

Minor mistakes may invalidate a registration. Errors made in the CNV or on the birth certificate may present problems for getting an accurate DNI. While some can be corrected by the local registrar, many require legal proceedings. Doing that, in turn, requires proof of the birth and the correct information that should be on the birth certificate and the identity card. As described, some legal proceedings (in Ayacucho, at least) were beyond the competence of judges at district level and cases were referred up to provincial judges. This process can be expensive and time consuming, with no guarantee of success. The Ombudsman personnel with whom we talked in Lima mentioned the number of complaints made against registrars by citizens.

The judiciary, the Ombudsman and GRIAS have been making efforts to find solutions that simplify legal processes. Respondents in Ayacucho argued that the courts had become more willing to accept a variety of means of proof for the birth and parentage of children. In addition, more pro bono legal services were becoming available to parents attempting to register their children or to correct errors in the initial registration. These changes have improved the situation for parents, but there is still a significant burden on poor people attempting to navigate their way through the legal system. One estimate from a GRIAS official in the highlands was that it could easily cost 1,000 *soles* (USD 290 approximately) and take nine months or more for legal processes to reach a satisfactory conclusion.

### **5.5. Legalism**

Complex legal proceedings and bureaucratic processes are symptomatic of another cultural factor that has to be taken into account if aiming to achieve successful coordination and effective birth registration. At the most basic level, a legalistic bureaucratic culture, which is common to many Latin American government systems (Cejudo, 2014), may make informal coordination less likely than might be the case elsewhere. In Peru, public officials act under the provisions of the laws and regulations of their institutions. State agencies, in order to coordinate, expect a clear legal mandate that makes cooperation a part of their established duties.

This has two sides to it. There may be an absence of a “will of collaboration” between institutions, so-called “political will”, in the absence of legal mandates. For example, coordination between health centres and ORECs, or community registrars and ORECs in district municipalities, may only be possible if the institutions, or the person in charge of them, is mandated to perform the tasks, irrespective of the logic of other incentives. However, where legal mandates exist these may be very effective in reinforcing other incentives. In this administrative system there is significant legalism that may in fact inhibit cooperation and coordination unless there is a clear legal mandate for that action. The absence of the legal mandate may account for the low levels of interaction among local governments themselves.

### **5.6. Coordination**

Do coordination processes (or their lack) create barriers to birth registration? This research has identified a number of coordination areas which appear to be highly effective. There is good coordination between RENIEC and ministries in Lima, as well as effective coordination among the RENIEC and ministerial field staff in the regions. Policy alignment at the highest level contributes to

creating strong vertical and horizontal coordination within and between different service providers in both Lima and at lower levels of administration. The highly professional internal culture within RENIEC creates good vertical coordination within the organization, and, most especially with GRIAS, an outward-looking orientation towards coordinating with other service providers within the framework of campaigns.

However, there were also some critical vertical and horizontal coordination challenges in the registration process. These relate both to the interface between local authorities and RENIEC and to the interface of local authorities with each other. Registrars in local communities and districts appear to have little support, either from other ministerial staff working in their area or from RENIEC operating at the regional level or in Lima. There appears to be little direct linkage between ministerial field staffs and local communities and mayors. And local governments also appear relatively isolated from one another, in part by distance and transportation issues and in part through absence of structures.

This research has already described limited training and lack of funding at the local level. RENIEC appears to have prioritized engagement in intermittent and well-organized itinerant campaigns involving its own staff and professionals from other service providers than in investing in building the capacity of registrars at the level of district or local community. This means there is a two-track registration system: one with RENIEC firmly in control because it does the registration itself or on its own terms (through its own sedentary or itinerant registrars), which is highly effective in most parts of the country, and one in which RENIEC is largely dependent on under-resourced local administration registrars.

The literature on public administration points out the importance of 'street-level bureaucrats' in delivering public services (Hupe and Hill, 2015; Grindle, 1997). In the case of birth registration in Peru these lower level officials appear to be a lower priority than building up RENIEC (in this context, the centre of government). Even though these officials are essentially doing the work of RENIEC, they do not seem to be seen as being as important for fulfilling the mission of birth registration and issuing the DNI as the employees of the RENIEC itself, perhaps because RENIEC sees their role as essentially delegated pending take over by RENIEC. Having said this, the issue of capacity priorities is not an easy one. The level of turnover among employees, even in the regional offices of RENIEC and GRIAS was extremely high, in large part because of low salaries, meaning that a great deal of trained capacity was being lost. A GRIAS official in Pucallpa said that he had lost twelve employees in his office and another twelve in the field because of low wages.

Nevertheless, the registration system could be described as being overly centralized, most particularly when it comes to its fitness for tackling the challenges of remote areas with low population densities. This fits a wider governance issue of continuing concentration on centralized government that characterizes many government in Latin American countries. Emphasis on organizations at the centre of government can go only so far in achieving implementation goals in a programme such as birth registration. Building effectiveness depends on creating the capacity for implementation at all levels of government. An effective centre is necessary, but not sufficient, for the implementation of public programmes. Thus, while we have emphasized horizontal coordination efforts, vertical coordination is also important.

## 6. POLICY AND GOVERNANCE OBSERVATIONS

This research on birth registration and coordination in Peru has raised several policy and administrative issues that lead to some suggestions for restructuring processes and reforming patterns of government programmes related to birth registration. The major focus of the research was on registration processes in local communities, but the findings from those areas appear to have wider implications for registration activities in Peru, and also for linking activities in local areas to regional and national governance.

- 1) The separation between RENIEC-led activities emanating from regional capitals and Lima and the work of sedentary local administration-employed registrars and those in local communities, represents perhaps the major coordination difficulty in the registration process. There is a modern and professional system of registration in the coastal areas and major cities and towns in the remainder of the country, but that system appears to have little direct routine contact with people living in districts and small local communities in remote areas.
- 2) The professionalism at the centre of the process is in marked contrast to the nature of the registration process in local communities and local administrations. For the registration process to be successful for the entire country, much greater attention must be given to processes and capacities at the local level. Greater decentralization places a great deal of responsibility on lower levels of government, but these administrations generally do not appear to have sufficient capacity to deliver the services for which they are responsible, including birth registration. Improving training and greater responsibility on the part of RENIEC for the resourcing of local registrars (for example, ensuring their capacity to transfer registration information in a regular and timely fashion) would appear to be necessary.
- 3) Related to the above, there appears to be a need to enhance linkages between the various levels of government, for birth registration and perhaps also for other policies. In the case of birth registration the higher levels of local administration do not have any formal responsibility for technical capacities lower down.
- 4) It is not clear that mayors see the performance of their registrars as an issue over which they should retain oversight. The reasons for this are not clear, but may relate to the technical oversight role of RENIEC, or to the fact that registration data is not part of the performance appraisal that informs the calculation of local administration budgets at district and community levels. However, RENIEC is too distant from most registrars in district, and especially local community, settings and cannot possibly provide hands-on support and management where needed. Improving the incentives for mayors to do this should be considered.
- 5) While birth registration is essentially a government function assigned to RENIEC, its success depends heavily upon other organizations in the public sector. That dependence is especially evident for registration in local communities. Thus, more effort to make horizontal coordination linkages at the local level appears crucial for the success of birth registration, and these interactions can be initiated around registration efforts encouraged or supported from any level of government. If GRIAS or RENIEC is not facilitating the interactions, then local governments themselves may be able to do so.
- 6) Much of the birth registration system in Peru is based on registrars working from their established offices, with citizens who require their services visiting those offices. That model

may be successful for parts of the country with dense populations or easy access, but more assertive strategies are necessary for remote rural areas in the jungle and highlands. Existing campaign-style activities, which involve good coordination with other service providers and which are planned and largely implemented by stakeholders at the regional level, are an important modality. However, the campaign method may face funding challenges in the future. Campaigns also appear to be relatively intermittent, in the highlands, for example. Building the capacity of local administration registrars might also include providing them with the incentives, training and means to organize their own itinerant initiatives to supplement those of RENIEC. Some local areas and local registrars are exercising more initiative and other areas should be encouraged to do the same. In the longer term, this may build greater capacity and be more sustainable than relying on initiatives organized from the regional capital.

- 7) Performance management has been one of the standard remedies for improving the performance of the public sector, and it has clearly had a significant impact on civil registration in much of Peru. However, this fieldwork also demonstrated some of the potential problems. Attempts to link budgets and other support for public organizations to their performance provides incentives to maximize performance on certain indicators. Budget incentives may encourage organizations to focus on areas of higher population density rather than on more remote areas requiring greater effort to reach children. While GRIAS and JUNTOS, among others, are clearly motivated by the goal of inclusion, there is a need to ensure that incentives align with objectives when it comes to reaching areas of low population density in remote areas.
- 8) Registrars and other informants at various levels reported delays in issuing DNI cards. While the ability to connect directly into the national database speeds up data entry, documents coming down the system can still take some time to reach their holders. As issuing documents is centralized in Lima, to speed up the service RENIEC should consider the cost-effectiveness of extending this capacity to regional offices.
- 9) Initiatives by the Defensoria del Pueblo and RENIEC to simplify procedures to address mistakes or irregularities in the registration process should be intensified. This study does not consider itself competent to make concrete recommendations in relation to this, but the challenge of correcting mistakes is a clear barrier to full registration.
- 10) For the public there is a clear relationship between access to services and the need for the national identity document, preceded by the registration of births. The implication of this is that technical supply-side improvements to the registration process itself, including improving coordination between RENIEC and local administration and improving the capacity of registrars employed by local administrations, will only enhance registration so far. What is also needed is to make other services more physically accessible to provide the incentives needed to register. This is a major challenge. Whatever solution is found necessarily has to be multisectoral and highly coordinated if it is to be cost effective. This is an example of where good coordination at national and regional levels, including alignment of objectives and modalities, is essential for effectiveness at the point of service delivery.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

Peru has made major strides in improving the levels of civil (birth) registration. The creation of an independent and professional organization in RENIEC has significantly extended both birth registration and identity documentation. The challenges are now to reach the final three per cent of the population and sustain this success across time.

As shown throughout this report, effective coordination is a major aspect of Peru's success so far. High-level policy alignment on incentives creates a powerful logic behind birth registration. But geographical remoteness, limited access to services, costs and the interface of bureaucracy with cultural diversity are all major challenges to reaching people currently excluded, partly because the high-level alignment of policy seems less practically relevant the more remote the area. Other coordination issues also play an important role. RENIEC, through GRIAS, appears to be well coordinated with other regional-level service institutions, and is, accordingly, able to mount effective itinerant registration campaigns. But the interface between RENIEC and registrars employed by local administrations and local communities appears much less satisfactory.

We have suggested, perhaps controversially given how effective it is as an institution, that RENIEC is over-centralized. By this we mean simply that while it has the mandate, responsibility and authority to ensure civil registration and identity documentation, if it is to reach the final three per cent it needs to be more energetic and consistent in supporting the practical delegation of registration activities to local administrations. We consider it unlikely that RENIEC will ever have sufficient resources to place its own officers in every population centre or indigenous community, let alone for them to be electronically connected to the central database. Currently, at the lowest levels of administration there appears to be relatively little regular coordination between registrars and other actors who may be beneficial for their activities. RENIEC needs to engage with this, and pay close attention to both building the capacity of local government employed registrars and to its own coordination with and support to them. Part of this includes enhancing the capacity of district-level registrars to carry out more assertive outreach, working with others, than currently appears to be the norm. This may involve, for example, building the capacity of district level institutions to promote and apply the coordinated campaign approach.

This research has also raised the question of what incentives individual citizens living in the more remote parts of the country may have for registering their children. If the state does not penetrate these areas with other public services then there may be little to gain, at least in the short run, through registration. This must also impact on the incentives for local administrations to invest heavily in the activities of their registrars. Likewise at the level of the registrar, there is little incentive to be active given that the major incentives for higher levels of registration apply more to other actors – health and education providers – rather than to the registrars themselves. That is, if health and education providers have high levels of service they are rewarded, but the incentive scheme does not apply to general local government activities. These local governments do receive some benefits from the monies generated by oil and gas revenues, but as these are now diminishing there is less support available.

In the final analysis, RENIEC cannot deliver 100 per cent birth registration and identity documentation on its own. The extension of birth registration to remote rural areas is a necessary condition, given that access to public (and other) services is dependent on holding a DNI. For services to be cost effective, especially in the extremely difficult geographical conditions of the jungle, there is a need for innovative and highly coordinated modalities involving multiple institutions.

What did the backward mapping method bring to this research? Unlike in Ghana, where there were trails of horizontal and vertical formal and non-formal coordination involving local registrars to be followed, in Peru the trails from local and district registrars stopped almost immediately. This was extremely revealing, as it indicated the isolation of these actors in the registration process. It quickly drew attention to the dilemmas underlying RENIEC's strong identity, and pointed towards its centralized structure and top-down approach, despite the success of itinerant campaigning. RENIEC is a very successful institution with impressive results. But arguably, to sustain its achievements and to reach the final three per cent it should consider incentivizing and empowering local and community administrations much more than it does at present.

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