



MEASURING SDG 16.9 (LEGAL IDENTITY) IN THE KINGDOM OF TONGA: WHAT DOES THE CENSUS SAY?



i) Legal identity

Target 16.9 of the global sustainable development goals (SDGs) commits countries to providing a legal identity to all, including birth registration. The Tonga 2016 Census of Population and Housing sought to establish the level of completeness of birth registration in the country and the proportion of the population in possession of a legal identity; in form of a birth certificate and national identification card. In regards to birth registration, the census collected data pertaining to the last child born, including the name, age, sex, month and year of birth, whether the birth was registered and whether the child was in possession of a birth certificate.

Birth registration completeness

Of the children born within the past one year of the Census, i.e. between 1st December 2015 and 30th November 2016, 96% [1,984] were reported to have their births registered and 90% in possession of a birth certificate. This estimate excludes births in this period for which the month of birth was not provided. A similar analysis conducted among children aged below five years reveals that 97% of these children had their births registered, and 94% were in possession of a birth certificate. The United Nations considers 90% completeness as sufficient to undertake extensive vital statistics tabulations. It is recommended that registration is conducted at least within one year of occurrence, to ensure that data from these events is included in national vital statistics.

96% Children aged <1 have their births registered

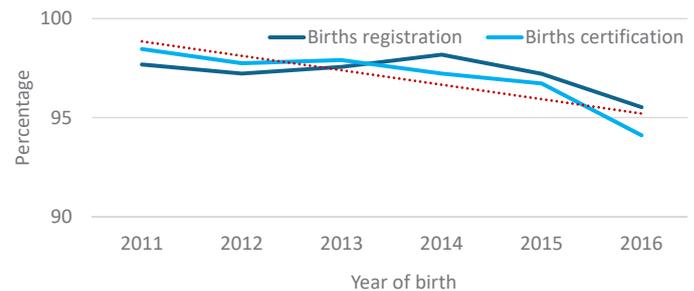


94% Children aged <5 possess their birth certificate

The data collated was further used to analyse trends in registration of births and ownership of birth

certificates. The country has maintained a birth registration completeness rate of >95% over the last five years. Birth registration completeness and certification appears to have dropped slightly between years 2015 and 2016.

Graph 1: completeness in birth registration and certification (2011-2016)



24 births that occurred during the enumeration period are excluded from the 2016 analysis

Birth registration by island and village

Tongatapu the main island had the highest number of babies without birth certificates [369], followed by Vava'u [54], Ha'apa [32] and Eua [17]. A distribution of uncertified births by village (see table), shows that Kolofo'ou village had the highest number of uncertified births [31], followed by Ma'ufanga [30] and Kolomotu'a [26].

Children aged <5 without birth certificates by village (2011-16)		
Name of village	Number	%
Kolofo'ou in Tongatapu	31	6.5
Ma'ufanga	30	6.3
Kolomotu'a	26	5.4
Fua'amotu	24	5.0
Tofoa	23	4.8
Havelu	21	4.4
Utui	20	4.2
Ha'akame	19	4.0
Lapaha	18	3.8
Vaini	16	3.3
Others	252	52.5
TOTAL	480	

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Limitations of the census data in estimating birth registration completeness

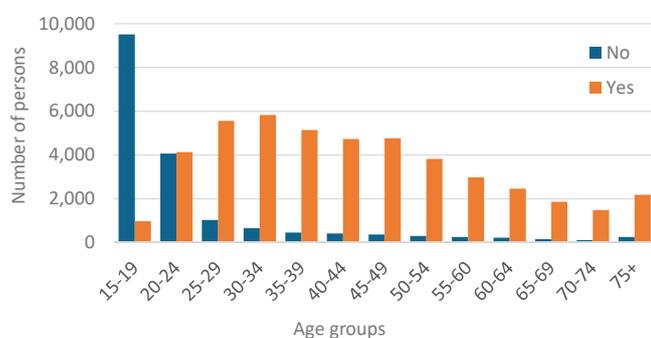
There are three main limitations of this data in estimating birth registration completeness namely: (i) the data collected was limited to the last child born and therefore does not account for registration in cases of multiple births; (ii) the rates provided depend on how well the question was perceived by the respondents (and in particular the term registration). In some cases, the administrative recording of a child's details in a hospital after birth could be mis-interpreted to mean registration and; (iii) there is a possibility of birth notification forms being perceived to be birth certificates.

Given that the census was defacto, and that the question was applied in reference to the last child born, the data includes the registration status of babies born outside of Tonga, whose registration is not a primary responsibility of the civil registration office of Tonga.

Possession of a national identification card

The census further sought to investigate the proportion of the population in possession of a national identity card. This question was asked for persons aged 15 years and above. 72% of persons aged 15+ were reported to be in possession of a national identity card. A distribution of ownership of identification cards by age reveals that the youngest age groups 15-19 and 20-24 had the highest numbers of persons without identification cards.

Graph 2: Possession of a national identification card



Where can I get more information?

Check out the other fact sheets at: www.pacific-crvs.org and www.getinthepicture.org or contact the **Statistics for Development Division** at SPC at crvs@spc.int.

ii) Participation in governance processes

Equal opportunity to participate in national governance processes is one of the key drivers of peaceful and inclusive societies, and access to justice for all as envisioned by the 2030 SDGs agenda.

The census collected data on the number of persons that had registered to participate in Tonga's 2017 elections, and reasons behind non-registration. 85% of persons aged 21 years and above had been registered as voters. Disability was among the reasons provided by the respondents as an impediment to voter registration. 65 persons cited the lack of an identification document (birth certificate or national identification card) as the major reason behind their failure to register as voters.

85% aged 21+ were registered as voters



65 Persons cited the lack of an ID document as failure to election registration

Conclusion and forward

The data collected by the Tonga Census provides an indicative picture of the status of legal identification in the country. This data will allow for a more comprehensive assessment of birth and death registration completeness in the country through a record linkage study that will seek to match civil registration, health and census records.