Digital identity, Legal identity, and the CR-ID link
The World Bank estimates **1 billion people** around the world lack any foundational ID, such as a national ID card/number or birth certificate.

McKinsey Global Institute estimates **an additional 3.4 billion people** have a foundational ID, but limited ability to use it in a digital world.

They face **major barriers** to access services, exercise their rights, and to benefit from the opportunities being created by the digital economy.
Legal identity and related concepts

**Legal identity:** Basic characteristics of an individual's identity – e.g. name, sex, place and date of birth – conferred through registration and the issuance of a certificate by an authorized civil registration authority following the occurrence of birth. In the absence of birth registration, legal identity may be conferred by a legally-recognized identification authority.

**Foundational ID systems:** Intended for general purposes, including for providing proof of legal identity and a basis for issuing functional IDs. Examples are national ID systems, population and civil registries.

**Functional ID systems:** Intended for specific use cases or transactions. Examples include passports, voter IDs, driving licenses.
Trust

Historically, identity has been verified – and trust created – through familiarity and by taking physical documents on face value.

With the 4th Industrial revolution, and societies and economies becoming wider and more digital, we need new mechanisms for creating that trust – people need to be able to reliably prove who they are online.

“On the Internet, nobody knows you’re a dog.”

Figure 1: Drawing by P. Steiner (© 1993, The New Yorker Magazine, Inc.).
It is an evolution as use cases emerge

- Local society and economy
  - Very many

- National/Global society and economy
  - Very few

- Digital society and economy
  - Very many

Uses for identification:

- Village or local IDs
- National ID or similar
- Network IDs (e.g. Facebook) not linked to legal identity
- Federated IDs linked to foundational ID
- Digital ID / e-ID integrated with the foundational ID

Adapted from Identification Revolution: Can Digital ID be Harnessed for Development? (Gelb & Metz, 2018)
Digital identity

“A set of electronically captured and stored attributes”...

...which means something different to different people.

Online persona / social media

Internet logins

Proving our legal identity online

Secure authentication for e-services

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ID-card

You need an ID-card reader and a valid ID-card to log in. Insert your ID-card into the card reader and click "Continue".

Continue

NONE OF THESE ARE WRONG
The CR-ID link

- **Why?**: Timely updating of ID system records based on CR is critical for the integrity of data and avoiding costly re-registration/updating campaigns
- **Births**: Issuing an ID system credential at the time of birth registration (e.g. a national ID number)
- **Deaths**: Notifying deaths to ‘deactivate’ the person’s record in the ID system
- **Marriages/Divorce/etc.**: Notifying changes of name

*Note: It does not have to be the same system or institution, as long as link is legally, operationally and technologically enabled*
The ‘Stock and Flow’ model for registration

**The Stock** (People alive today)
Registered with birth certificate / record as evidence, if they have one.
Alternative evidence accepted to prevent exclusion. Retroactive birth registration not required.

**The Flow** (Children today [e.g. up to 5 years] and born from tomorrow)
Record in ID system created at the time of birth registration.
Biometrics collected at appropriate age, if necessary.

ID system

Civil registry

Registration of deaths.

Registration of other vital events
Key messages

1. One size fits all does not work: Definitions and conceptualizations will be different in every country – reflecting unique political, social, cultural, and economic realities.

2. “Digital identity” is an opportunity – not a threat – for CRVS: It creates a new and important investment case and opportunity to streamline CR processes.

3. Check out ID4D materials, including the Practitioner’s Guide.