Birth Registration of Sama Bajaus in Zamboanga City
Mandate of the Civil Registrar

Carries out the civil registration program of the city

Develops plans and strategies particularly those which have to do with civil registry programs and projects

Accepts all registrable documents and judicial decrees/legal documents affecting the civil status of persons

Transmits to the Office of the Civil Registrar-General duplicate copies of registered documents

 Receives applications for the issuance of marriage license

Conducts educational campaigns for vital registration and assists in the demographic and other statistics information of the city.
Registration among indigenous population remains a challenge but at the same time an opportunity because it generally entails a recalibration of our thinking and a change of heart.

Challenges have allowed the CCRO to go beyond the call of duty by making it easier for indigenous peoples to have their births registered without setting onerous requirements.

Civil Registry Department exemplifies best practice in ensuring inclusion of minorities and indigenous peoples in the domains of civil registration as part of our efforts to address statelessness and lack of documentation in Zamboanga City.
The Sama Bajaus

Sea-faring Indigenous Peoples group who are mostly found in Mindanao and Southeast Asia

Identified as one of the populations at risk of statelessness in the Philippines due to itinerant lifestyle/frequent border-crossing and generations of non-registration of birth

Reasons for Non-registration of birth of Sama Bajaus:
- Lack of awareness on the importance of birth registration;
- Lack of confidence to access government services thus impeding basic transactions such as processing their birth records;
- Processing for birth registration is an added cost/financial burden for Sama Bajaus
Birth Registration of Sama Bajau in Zamboanga City

Started in 2015 in partnership with Community and Family Services International (CFSI), National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), and other Civil Society Organizations

In 2019, UNHCR and UNICEF also provided support to the initiative in line with the implementation of UNHCR-UNICEF Joint Strategy to End Childhood Statelessness.

Identified Vale Vista Phase 1&2 in Barangay Kasanyangan, Zamboanga City as its focus community.

This initiative demonstrates the commitment of Zamboanga City towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goal Agenda of leaving no one behind.

As of October 2021, a total of 4,287 Sama Bajaus were provided with birth certificates.
Key Stakeholders Involved

Government Agencies:
- Department of Justice (Lead Agency in the implementation of the NAP to End Statelessness)
- The National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) Region IX through its Zamboanga sub-office
- Local Government of Zamboanga

Civil Society Organizations/UN Agencies:
- Community and Family Services International (CFSI)
- Silsilah Dialogue Movement
- UNHCR
- UNICEF
The Process

Inter-agency team gathers data from the Sama Bajaus

Partner submits:
- NCIP Personal Sheet
- Family Listing
- Verification Slip

Civil Registrar verifies the list and returns the result to partner

Trained volunteers prepare the form for birth registration

Civil Registrar evaluates and registers the birth

Civil Registrar submits the birth record to the Philippine Statistics Authority
Challenges

The birth registration process takes time as this includes a verification process where Sama Bajaus are required to appear for interview with staff from the City Civil Registrar’s office.

Communication barrier between the interviewer and the Sama Bajau during the verification process.

Sama Bajaus’ cultural beliefs particularly with their names which they tend to change according to the health condition of an individual.

Lack of or no documentary evidences to establish the veracity of their identity.

Delays in the process and limitations in terms of movement due to the pandemic.
Strengths/Opportunities

Implementation of the initiative through a whole-of-society approach

Partners at the national, regional, local government and community levels have already established a good working relationship with each other.

Participation of the Sama Bajau community is ensured all throughout the process of implementation.
Ways Forward

Continue to engage with agencies in the conduct of birth registration-related initiatives for the Sama Bajaus.

Continue birth registration amid the pandemic.

Expand birth registration for the Sama Bajaus to other communities in Zamboanga City with Sama Bajau population.
MUCHISIMAS GRACIAS!