IDEMIA

Why are trusted identities key to sustainable social & economic growth in Africa?

 # IDENTITY

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⟫ African countries are looking to provide legal identity to all of their citizens so they can step up their continuous development.

⟫ Setting up an integrated national identity management ecosystem is the most sustainable way to provide a reliable and trusted legal identity to all.

⟫ The benefits of an integrated national identity management ecosystem in Africa go beyond national borders.

One of the fundamental rights of any individual is to have a trusted identity, regardless of origin or social status. Today, 1.1 billion people in the world are currently without any form of state-recognized legal identification, either paper-based or digital. The **UN has made it its priority to give every human being on earth a legal ID by 2030** and IDEMIA is there to support governments in achieving that goal. This issue disproportionately affects women and children from poor, rural areas in Africa, but the continent is changing at a fast pace.

Africa is in full transition

Today, legal identity is a concern for many countries in Africa. Registering a country's population in a national population register is important for many reasons— fair and equal elections, making sure that all social aids go to the right people, limiting fraud, sustaining development and economic growth, making macroeconomic decisions, and so much more. Currently, there is a limited number of countries with a national population registry and a significant part of the population is without legal ID. The World Bank stresses that giving legal IDs to the world's population is important for sustaining economic development, especially in Africa.

The solution is an integrated ID management ecosystem

To achieve this, we need to create a national ID management system that gives a legal identity to each citizen from birth and throughout life. In other words, we need to build a bridge between the civil registry, which records vital events (birth/death, marriage/divorce), the national population registry, which provides individuals with their unique legal identity and functional registries, which make use of an identity for different uses like issuing passports, producing electoral lists, etc. This infrastructure must be sustainable, remain up-to-date and ensure that any individual is well identified as the same person in every registry. Since everyone's biological identity is unique and specific, biometrics is an effective tool for building such a system. It provides the means to set up a trusted ID management ecosystem for securing reliable information management and prevent fraud. As demographic aspects also need to be taken into consideration, mobile devices have to be used so we can enroll people in even the remotest areas.

National benefits of a reliable ID management system

Wherever you live or whatever your social status, everyone should have the right to a legal identity so that they can vote, have access to education, social care, financial services and welfare benefits. Creating an integrated identity management ecosystem is also important for reinforcing a fair and just democratic electoral process, supporting an efficient administration by granting its citizens the rights and benefits they are entitled to and providing ID documents (i.e. ID cards, driving licenses, passports, resident cards, vehicle registration cards, etc.), so that governments and policymakers can confirm identity and collect reliable data, in order to improve citizens' quality of life. Additionally, legal ID makes it easier to open bank accounts, get mobile subscriptions, apply for insurance, and so many other benefits that are good for economic and infrastructure growth.

Benefits of a reliable ID ecosystem beyond borders

A border control management system connected to an integrated National ID ecosystem can provide more robust, reliable and trusted identities of the entire population present on the territory: citizens, but also residents and visitors. In terms of international development, a country who can demonstrate its ability to efficiently control and manage the identity of who is getting in and who is getting out, is sending a message of assurance and confidence to the world, resulting in more international travel, trade and economic growth. In addition, governments benefit from facilitated administrative processes by avoiding to duplicate efforts in managing identities. It also increases the reliability and accuracy of data, which in turn dramatically enhance territorial security operations and border protection. And for travelers, visa purchases, land/sea/air border entry/exit systems, potential e-gates for easy passenger travel, can all be much easier to manage and more efficiently accessible for them. A very user-friendly travel experience is the best publicity a country can give to any new or regular visitors, or citizens going abroad.

At IDEMIA we are convinced that providing a legal ID to all, being able to sustainably manage their identity ecosystem, and linking it to an efficient border control implementation, are the fundamentals for most African nations to continue their development. We are committed to support them all along the way to achieve that ambition.