Inter-American Development Bank Institutional Capacity and Finance Sector Institutional Capacity of the State Division Working Paper This working paper explores the importance of legal identity from both a theoretical and operational point of view. The need to investigate and deepen the understanding of the implications of being sans papiers in relation to social exclusion and governance issues is highlighted. Lack of identity documents or legal identity can be connected to poverty and vulnerability, as well as to the absence of transparent and efficient processes in public administration. Those who lack identity face considerable barriers to access many social and private benefits such as school certificates, health services, conditional cash transfers, pensions, banking services, voting rights, among others. At the same time, if governments lack accurate information about its citizenry, they will face greater difficulties in policy planning. These challenges are illustrated with examples from field research carried out in Latin American and Caribbean countries and this paper argues that proof of an adequate and secure identity document is not only the base of a democratic society and obligation of all governments, but also a fundamental citizenship right.

Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Knowledgebase