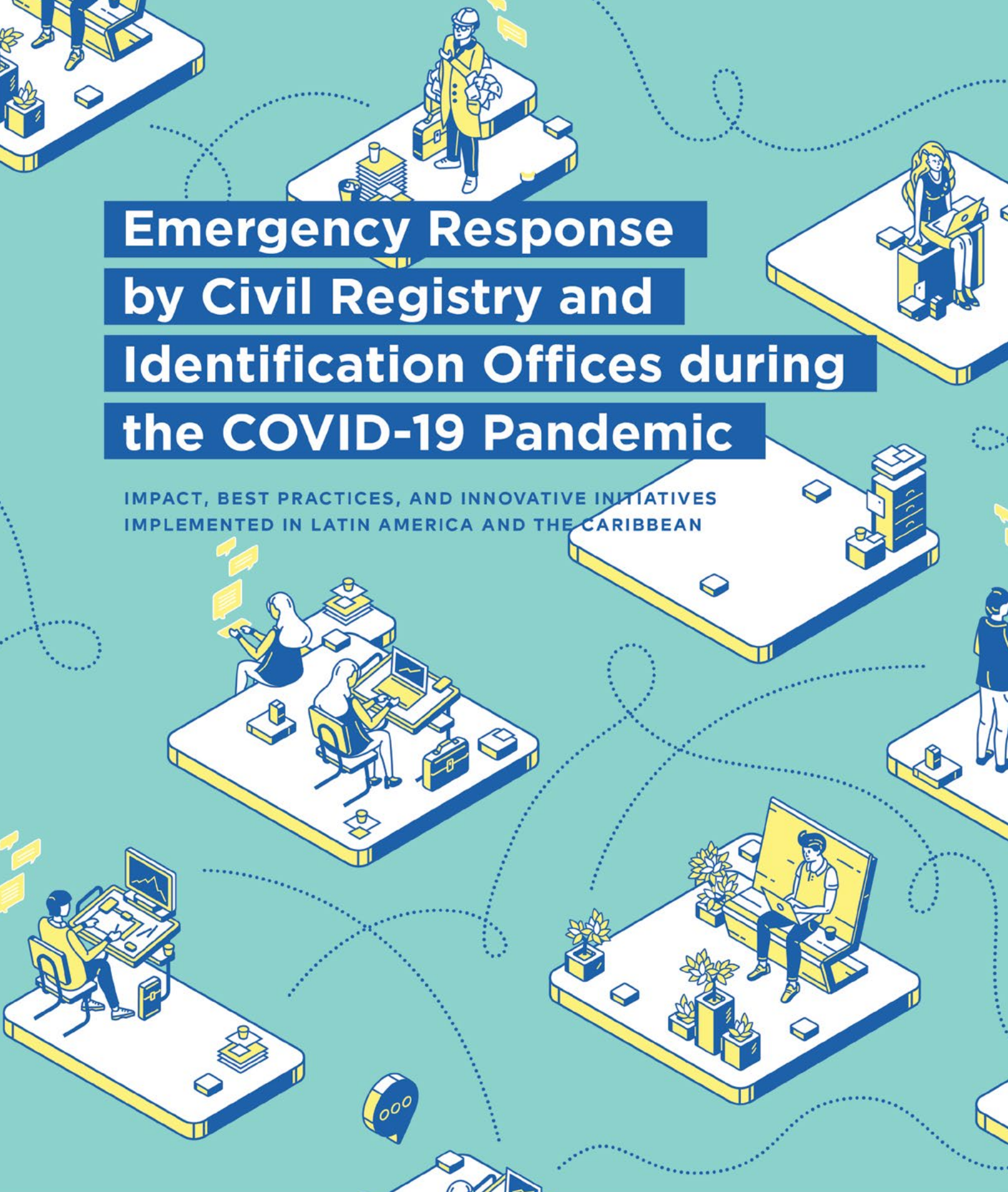


Emergency Response by Civil Registry and Identification Offices during the COVID-19 Pandemic

IMPACT, BEST PRACTICES, AND INNOVATIVE INITIATIVES
IMPLEMENTED IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN



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This document was prepared jointly by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Regional Office for the Americas, and the Universal Civil Identity Program in the Americas (PUICA) of the Department for Effective Public Management (DEPM) of the Organization of American States (OAS).

The arguments and opinions expressed herein pertain to the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of OAS or UNHCR member states. Reports, guidelines, and documents referring to statelessness may be consulted at www.acnur.org.

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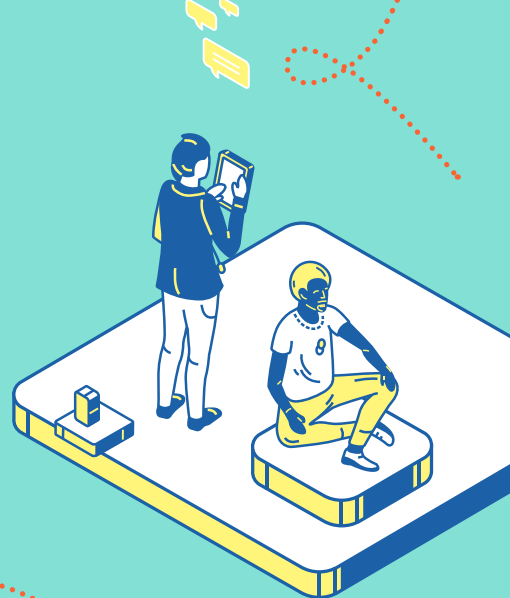
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Acronyms



UNHCR. United Nations High Commission for Refugees.

LAC. Latin America and the Caribbean.

ARPEN. National Association of Registrars of People - Brazil.

CLARCIEV. Latin American and Caribbean Council for Civil Registration, Identity and Vital Statistics.

COMAR. Mexican Commission for Refugee Aid.

CURP. Single Population Registry Key Code.

DGREC. National Civil Registry – Uruguay.

DIGERCIC. National Civil Registry, Identification and Issue of Identification Documents – Ecuador.

DNI. National Identity Document.

DNIC. Civil Identification Office – Uruguay.

DPI. Personal Identification Document – Guatemala.

DUI. Single Identification Document – El Salvador.

JCE. Central Electoral Board – Dominican Republic.

OAS. Organization of American States.

WHO. World Health Organization.

ONI. National Identification Office – Haiti.

PUICA. Universal Civil Identity Program in the Americas.

REC. Civil Registry – Paraguay.

RENAP. National Registry of Persons – Guatemala.

RENAPER. National Registry of Persons – Argentina.

RENAPO. General National Registry of Population and Identification – Mexico.

RENIEC. National Identification and Civil Status Register – Peru.

RNEC. National Civil Status Registry - Colombia.

RGD. Department of the Registrar General – Jamaica.

RNP. National Registry of Persons – Honduras.

RNPN. National Registry of Natural Persons – El Salvador.

SEGIP. General Personal Identification Service – Bolivia.

SERECI. Civil Registry Service – Bolivia.

SURI. Unified Registration and Identification Service.

UNICEF. United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund.

UDAPV. Vulnerable Population Attention Unit – Colombia.

VSU. Vital Statistics Unit – Belize.

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Introduction



As from February 2020 the first cases of the propagation of the virus SARS-cov-2, known as COVID-19 (hereafter COVID-19) began to be reported in several ALC countries, leading to a declaration of public health emergency in March; this in turn led to the establishment of exception status measures, quarantine, and social isolation periods, thus limiting the provision of services offered by government entities.

Civil registry and identification offices have promoted reforms and actions to continue guaranteeing the right to identity, legal status, and nationality to all persons¹. In a pandemic context, the role of State entities, whose job it is to manage population identity, have become even more relevant due to their role in duly obtaining and registering information on all vital events; especially when in health emergencies they require the data and statistics to permit States to establish measures to mitigate the emergency's impact.

The right to identity, to the recognition of legal status and nationality are non-derogable human rights². They cannot be legally suspended, not even when status exceptions are in force. This means that, even during the pandemic, all States must adopt the necessary measures to register all births in their territory, as well as to grant identity and nationality documents³. This means that civil registration and legal identification become essential services to ensure that all persons have an identity and are legally recognized.

In emergency contexts, inadequately functioning Civil Registry and Identification offices can lead to an increment of late registration of vital events, and an increase in birth non-registration rates. In this way, for certain vulnerable populations, among them those in human mobility situations, the risk of statelessness is higher. It also affects the timely production and publication of vital statistics. Having legal identification in pandemic times is necessary for individuals to be able to have access to public and private services, such as health services and special humanitarian and financial assistance programs which, during the pandemic, have been instituted as economic and social impact relief measures for individuals and families affected by the situation.

Additionally, States need the information provided by civil registries to base their appropriate public policies on. The importance of generating complete, precise, and timely vital statistics based on the registry system is of crucial importance when evaluating population characteristics to plan and evaluate pro-

¹ CLARCIEV. *First Encounter of Directors of Latin American and Caribbean Council for Civil Registration, Identity and Vital Statistics*. October, 2005.

² "Nationality is a fundamental right of human beings [...] and it is non-derogable pursuant to Art. 27 of the Convention (Ibid. Paragraph 136.)

³ "Birth registry services [...] must be considered an essential service, and must continue to function, with temporary modifications in operational agreements, as necessary and appropriate" ACNUR. [COVID-19's impact on stateless populations: policies and good practices recommendations](#), May 7, 2020.

grams and projects⁴. However, to base an analysis of the impact of the health emergency on the population, civil registries need to coordinate with other State institutions, such as the Ministry of Health, or the National Statistics Institute, to foster the timely registration of births and deaths, and have access to information which will contribute to formulating the protocols required for an appropriate pandemic management.

Thus, one of the main pillars for effective and timely humanitarian response in emergency contexts is an adequately functioning system of civil registries, identification, and vital statistics⁵, in particular because people must be provided with identity-proving tools and documents to enable their access to the various public and private services. In the same way, children born in this emergency context must continue to be registered and provided with birth certificates to avoid greater risks for their protection. Lack of a legal identity document leads to exclusion, and to a gradual perpetuation of conditions of poverty⁶.

For civil registry and identification offices to remain operative in an emergency context, they must be endowed with a robust institutional capacity that will allow them to propose immediate action plans to ensure their continuing and uninterrupted service provision. It is therefore necessary to strengthen technical, human and infrastructure capacities in registry institutions. An adequate response on the part of civil registries and identification offices in a context such as this, depends, in great measure, to the entity's capacity to adapt to ever-changing circumstances, to their response to the demand for specific services, to their ability to adapt their systems to make their procedures more flexible, in line with the context and needs demanded by an emergency situation, as long as they are aligned with current regulations⁷.

This means that civil registries and identification offices must be considered essential services, able to continue functioning not only for the duration of the pandemic, but in any other future emergency context. For this to happen, States should consider innovative strategies and flexible procedures for the registration of births, deaths and issue of documents, so that civil registry and identification services may continue to be provided within a health emergency context. They should also establish mitigating measures to avoid the risk of COVID-19 propagation. These measures, in turn, should not in any way prevent vital events from being registered.

The United Nations Legal Identity Agenda Task Force, focused on promoting and implementing the Legal Identity Agenda, has recommended that civil registries and identification offices take note of the following actions to be taken in the pandemic context:⁸

- Develop easy-to-follow operational guidelines for staff and users to be informed on the changes being made and the new modalities of customer service;
- Modify operational guidelines to adapt to the new context, simplifying processes, decreasing requirements, and ensuring that the registration of vital events is excellent;

⁴ UN. [Handbook on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems: Management, Operation and Maintenance](#). Revision 1. New York, 2018. p. 72.

⁵ UN. [Handbook on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems: Management, Operation and Maintenance](#). Revision 1. New York, 2018. p. 53.

⁶ Harbitz, Mia and Tamargo, María del Carmen. [The meaning of legal identity in poverty and social exclusion situations](#). Technical note. July, 2009.

⁷ United Nations Legal Identity Agenda Task Force. [Maintaining Civil Registration and Vital Statistics during the COVID-19 pandemic](#). April, 2020. Accessed: June 6, 2020.

⁸ Ibid.

- Present alternative service modes to respond to the change in volume of requests for registering vital events;
- Promote initiatives such as providing on-line civil registration for the population with internet connection, and establishing other modes of service provision for people living in remote areas or with zero internet access;
- Propose subsidies, eliminate tariffs and extend registration periods for vital events, promoting universal access to the civil registry;
- Establish appropriate communication channels so that the population can keep receiving information on changes in the civil registry;
- Guarantee regular provision of materials and supplies for staff personal protection for all staff, and regional offices;
- Guarantee data privacy and confidentiality when acquiring information and for the publication of statistics;
- Establish actions in coordination with other State entities for appropriate emergency management.

As in the region civil registration and identification offices have played an active role in guaranteeing access to a legal entity for all persons, ACNUR, in coordination with PUICA of the OAS, and CLARCIEV, suggested carrying out a regional study to compile and systematize the impact, the measures adopted, and the innovative initiatives implemented as emergency responses by civil registry and identification offices during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Methodology

This document presents a review and exhaustive analysis of three general areas:

- **The impact of COVID-19 in the provision of services** by ALC civil registries and identification offices;
- **Good practices** started by civil registry and identification offices;
- **Innovative initiatives** promoted to guarantee continuing registration of vital events and issuing of identity documents proving nationality, in emergency contexts.

In order to collect this information, a monitoring interactive tool was developed, containing twenty indicators common to all countries, which ensure a uniform, systematic and continuous data compilation aligned with global standards. The information provided by civil registries and identification offices between March

and December 2020 was documented as follows; (i) guideline and institutional changes; (ii) prioritization and continuity regarding provision of services by the civil registry and identification offices; and (iii) strategic and contingency plans in response to the health emergency.

For this study, information was obtained from 19 of the 21 CLARCIEV member states, as follows: the Argentine Republic (Argentina), Belize, the Plurinational State of Bolivia (Bolivia), the Federative Republic of Brazil (Brazil), the Republic of Colombia (Colombia), the Republic of Costa Rica (Costa Rica), the Republic of Ecuador (Ecuador), the Republic of El Salvador (El Salvador), the Republic of Guatemala (Guatemala), the Republic of Haiti (Haiti), the Republic of Honduras (Honduras), Jamaica, the United States of Mexico (Mexico), the Republic of Paraguay (Paraguay), the Republic of Peru (Peru), the Dominican Republic (Dominican Republic) and the Oriental Republic of Uruguay (Uruguay). As a primary source of information, requests for specific information were sent out, as well as interviews with, and compilation of data from, the representatives of civil registry and identification offices. These also validated the information contained in this document.

We should point out that for the civil registry offices of **Argentina, Brazil, El Salvador**, and **Mexico** requests for information were only made by the representatives of the central national entities coordinating activities with provincial and municipal civil registries in federation entities.

The results shown in detail in the present report are also part of the interactive monitoring tool published on the CLARCIEV website⁹.

⁹ Further information at www.clarciev.com.

TABLE 1. Countries and Civil Registry and Identification Entities Analyzed

COUNTRY	ENTITY NAME
Argentina	National Registry of Persons (RENAPER)
Belize	Vital Statistics Unit (VSU)
Bolivia	Civil Registry Service (SERECI) General Service for Personal Identification (SEGIP)
Brazil	National Association of Natural Persons Registrars (ARPEN – Brazil)
Chile	Civil Registry and Identification Service
Colombia	National Civil State Registry (RNEC)
Costa Rica	General Bureau of the Civil Registry
Ecuador	General Bureau of the Civil Registry, Identification and Identity Documents (DIGERCIC)
El Salvador	National Registry of Natural Persons (RNPN)
Guatemala	National Registry of Persons (RENAP)
Haiti	National Identification Office (ONI)
Honduras	National Persons Registry (RNP)
Jamaica	Registrar General's Department (RGD)
Mexico	General Bureau of the Registry of National Population and Identity (RENAPO)
Panama	Electoral Board National Civil Registry Bureau National Identity Documents Bureau
Paraguay	Civil Status Registry (REC)
Peru	National Identification and Civil Status Registry (RENIEC)
Dominican Republic	Central Electoral Board (JCE)
Uruguay	General Bureau of Civil Status (DGREC) National Bureau of Civil Identification (DNIC)

I.

COVID-19 impact and good practices adopted for provision of services in civil registries and identification offices



¹⁰ WHO. [Update to COVID-19 Strategies](#). April 14, 2020.

¹¹ Argentina. [Administrative decision 450/2020](#), dated April 3, 2020.

¹² Belize. [Measures taken by the Attorney General facing COVID-19](#), March 23, 2020.

¹³ Bolivia. [Supreme Decree No. 4199](#), March 21, 2020.

¹⁴ Brazil. [Normative Instruction No. 21](#), March 16, 2020.

¹⁵ Chile. [Presidential Cabinet's Communication No. 003](#), March 16, 2020.

¹⁶ Colombia. [Decree 457](#), March 22, 2020.

¹⁷ Costa Rica. [Executive Decree No. 42227](#), March 16, 2020.

¹⁸ Ecuador. [Executive Decree No. 1017](#), March 16, 2020.

¹⁹ El Salvador. [Legislative Decree No. 599](#), March 14, 2020.

²⁰ Guatemala. [Governmental Decree No. 5-2020](#), March 5, 2020.

²¹ Jamaica. [Order No. 2 for Management of Disasters and Risks](#), March 24, 2020.

²² Mexico. [Extraordinary measures in order to face the health emergency started by the SARS-CoV2 virus](#), March 31, 2020.

²³ Paraguay. [Decree No. 3.456/2020](#), March 16, 2020.

²⁴ Uruguay. [Decree No. 93/2020](#), March 13, 2020.

In the region civil registry and identification offices are the State entities charged with registering all vital events and emitting identification documents to prove nationality. Following the pandemic alert issued by the World Health Organization (WHO), several regulations and measures to contain COVID-19 were adopted, which included quarantine and social isolating, travel restrictions, border closures, restrictions to service providers, biosafety protocols, among others. Most of these measures respond to WHO recommendations, which indicate that countries must take early action to ensure basic health and social services for everyone, that they must guarantee the continuity of services connected to the food chain, public services, and the manufacturing of medical supplies¹⁰.

Faced with this scenario, the States issued various decrees to define which of the public sector services to be considered essential for the duration of the quarantine and health emergency period. Civil registry and identification offices were included in these regulations, with the management model to offer services to the population being affected. As we pointed out above, in emergency contexts it is necessary to declare the civil registry and identification services as essential to guarantee the continuity of vital events registration and access to identity, to forestall the possibility that the population, especially the more vulnerable sectors, find themselves facing restricted access, or exclusion, from any health, social or economic program which might be promoted during emergencies.

The countries which declared the civil registry and identification services essential were: **Argentina¹¹, Belize¹², Bolivia¹³, Brazil¹⁴, Chile¹⁵, Colombia¹⁶, Costa Rica¹⁷, Ecuador¹⁸, El Salvador¹⁹, Guatemala²⁰, Haiti, Jamaica²¹, Mexico²², Paraguay²³ and Uruguay²⁴**. However, this did not guarantee that the full range of service capacity was offered in response to demands. See below for the impact on institutional, management and provision of services, and management of human resources capacities as a result of the health emergency declaration.

Institutional capacity analysis

Institutional capacity refers to the political and administrative capacity of entities to set up goals and to reach management targets focused on more efficient operating and strengthening their accountability²⁵. For civil registry and identification offices, institutional capacity is measured when analyzing the strategies designed to adapt to the new pandemic context, and in changes to the provision of services.

In order to study the institutional capacity of civil registry and identification offices in the pandemic context, we enquired into the continuity of in-person service provision, the means used to disseminate information about operational changes, inter-institutional coordination to promote registration of vital events and publication of vital event statistics, and budget management. We also enquired into whether countries had set up contingency plans for emergency contexts and whether they had set up strategies for the management of an accumulation of vital events registration requests.

Continuity of in-person customer service at registration and identification offices

In March 2020 all countries in the region set out a series of measures to contain the propagation of the pandemic, with some countries prioritizing services which could be continued on a face-to-face basis, that is, at the corresponding offices. From the moment the emergency was declared, **Argentina, El Salvador, Honduras, Panama, Peru** and **Dominican Republic**, temporarily suspended provision of these services for the remaining weeks in March. In April, **Argentina** returned to in-person customer service; in June, **Honduras, Panama**²⁶ and **Dominican Republic** did likewise, and in July, **Peru** followed.

Most of the services prioritized were registrations of births and deaths, followed by issue of identification documents. As table 1 shows, each country defined which service would be provided at the corresponding offices throughout the period of the emergency currently under study.

²⁵ OCDE. *Supporting Capacity Development in PFM – A Practitioner’s Guide*. Volume I. 2011. p. 12-13.

²⁶ In March 2020, Panamá issued an order to close all of its offices, only offering biweekly issuance of identity documents. In April and May, 2020, the National Direction for Identity Documents opened the services of issuance of duplicates and renewals of identity documents, as long as the request was done through the institutional webpage.

TABLE 1. Services Prioritized at Civil Registry and Identification Offices²⁷

COUNTRY/ MONTH	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER
Argentina								
Belize								
Bolivia								
Brazil								
Chile								
Colombia								
Costa Rica								
Ecuador								
El Salvador								
Guatemala								
Haiti								
Honduras								
Jamaica								
Mexico ²⁸								
Panamá								
Paraguay								
Peru								
Dominican Republic								
Uruguay								

Births Registration Deaths Registration Identity documents Issued

Source: Author's compilation

²⁷ Auxiliary offices in hospitals or morgues not included.

²⁸ Chiapas and Veracruz were the only Civil Registry offices to suspend attention between March and May, 2020; in the rest of the country priority was given to births and deaths registration since the emergency declaration.

As indicated in the preceding table, **Bolivia, Ecuador** and **Paraguay** prioritized registration of deaths from the time when the pandemic was declared, partially suspending other services. **Belize, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Haiti, Jamaica, Mexico** and **Uruguay** continued offering registration of births, deaths, and documentation services in some of their offices, without interrupting customer service. The remaining countries gradually went back to customer service. In [the following section, on management analysis and provision of services](#), more details referring to the services prioritized between March and October 2020 are presented.

Information, communication and dissemination

Communications in public administration play a key role in keeping the population informed and promoting transparency and accountability. Today, States have the chance to communicate any administrative change through various communications channels, in line with their populations' new demands, especially when, in emergency contexts, it is essential to provide precise and timely information. Meeting people's requirement for information; adapting to their demands, differing needs and new information habits; offering customized information adapted to user needs; -these are some of the specifics government entities must take into account today when disseminating information regarding their services²⁹. It is therefore vitally important that entities have available communication strategies, especially when they have to inform of operative changes, adopted by institutions, which may affect the provision of their services.

Communication actions and the appropriate handling of information are crucial in every management process and risk reduction in emergencies, mainly because production and timely and precise circulation of information contributes to generating trust and credibility³⁰. **Every civil registry and identification office** involved in this study introduced changes to their services provision and disseminated information on these changes mainly via social networks, such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Another means used to inform the population was the institutional webpage for each entity. Only **Belize** and **Haiti** reported that their use of the institutional webpage is limited because their respective populations are more active on social networks. In **Argentina, Brazil** and **Mexico**, where civil registries services are undertaken by municipalities, provinces or federation entities, national coordination organisms provided information on their webpages explaining how users might communicate with their respective local offices.

Bolivia, Guatemala and **Panama** activated whatsapp lines to respond to questions; and all countries, excepting **El Salvador, Honduras** and **Dominican Republic**, published various press bulletins announcing the changes introduced by each office. Also, **Chile, Colombia, Guatemala** and **Honduras** opened on-line chats on their webpages to respond to users' queries. Finally, **Argentina, Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico** and **Peru** reported keeping communication lines active for local authorities and community leaders, to coordinate offices opening and future activation of mobile brigades.

²⁹ Gómez, Carmen. *The new communication forms of Public Administration*. Malaga U. p. 109.

³⁰ Pan American Health Organization. *Information and communication management in emergencies and disasters. Handbook for response teams*. 2009. p. 13.

TABLE 2. Means of Communication Used by Civil Registry and Identification Offices to Inform of Changes Introduced to Services Provision During the Health Emergency

	SOCIAL NETWORKS	INSTITUTIONAL WEBPAGE	WHATSAPP	PRESS BULLETINS	ONLINE CHATS	LOCAL LEADERS
Argentina	●	●		●		●
Belize	●			●		
Bolivia	●	●	●	●		
Brazil	●	●		●		
Chile	●	●		●	●	
Colombia	●	●		●	●	●
Costa Rica	●	●		●		
Ecuador	●	●		●		
El Salvador	●	●				
Guatemala	●	●	●	●	●	●
Haiti	●	●		●		
Honduras	●	●			●	
Jamaica	●	●		●		
Mexico	●	●		●		●
Panama	●	●	●	●		
Paraguay	●	●		●		
Peru	●	●		●		●
Dominican Republic	●	●				
Uruguay	●	●		●		

Source: Author's compilation

Mainly, the information disseminated focused on the following: (i) new customer service modalities, which included changes in opening hours; (ii): offices open to the public (iii): extension of administrative deadlines³¹; and (iv): changes introduced for paperwork, procedures and requirements³². **Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Peru** and **Uruguay**, additionally disseminated information on new services, mainly in connection with promoting on-line services. **Belize, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador** and **Panama**, disseminated information regarding registered vital events; publication of Vital Statistics was carried out by other State entities.

Interinstitutional coordination to promote birth, death and identification registration; and publication of vital statistics

Interinstitutional coordination encourages the development of public policies and development programs, seeking synergy among various institutions to establish, set limits to, and optimize combined support actions which might improve the impact of any interventions that may be carried out. Interinstitutional coordination also helps inter sector collaboration encouraging best possible management of public resources. For civil registries and identification offices, interinstitutional coordination is of primary importance to promote activities seeking to encourage the right to legal identification. In this sense, the Ministry of Health and entities in charge of social programs have traditionally been the great allies of registration offices.

During the health emergency, interinstitutional coordination acquired even greater relevance. Several countries created emergency committees in order to provide guidelines for appropriate pandemic management for all public and private sector entities. At the same time, collaboration agreements among institutions were re-activated to establish action plans. For civil registries, coordination with Health Ministries was focused on establishing how registration offices in hospitals were operating. It was noted that hospitals classified for, or devoted to, treatment of COVID-19 patients, requested temporary closing down of the Civil Registry auxiliary offices on their premises. Countries such as **Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico** and **Panama** set up working groups with health authorities to define protocols and special procedures for the registration of births and deaths.

In turn, **Chile, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Dominican Republic** and **Uruguay** reported having coordinated actions with forensic studies institutes, morgues and funeral services providers. Meanwhile, **Argentina, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras** and **Peru** created alternative mechanisms to simplify verification of the identities of people benefitting from Government-issued vouchers and financial aid during the pandemic. To do this, they coordinated with institutions in charge of social and economic programs to ensure they would accept as valid documents, the temporary documentation certificates issued to people who had lost their documents. We should point out that these certificates also permitted access to other services.

³¹ Only for countries which extended administrative deadlines for vital events registration, and the validity of identity documents.

³² Only for countries which established changes in procedures and substantive requirements for vital events registration or identity document issuance.

Regarding vital statistics, in order to assist national statistics institutions to produce precise data, civil registries require robust systems which will allow management of registration of vital events and response to demands for events, especially in the context of a health emergency, when an increase in deaths is highly probable. With reference to the information provided by the countries in this study, we found that **Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, Peru** and **Dominican Republic** coordinated actions among the Health Ministry, the National Statistics Institute and the Civil Registries for the production and publication of vital statistics. **Guatemala** and **Honduras** coordinated only with the National Statistics Institute, while in **Argentina, Belize, El Salvador, Jamaica, Paraguay** and **Uruguay** the production of vital statistics is coordinated between the Ministry of Health and the National Institute of Vital Statistics.

Budget management

The COVID-19 pandemic began when most of the countries in the region had just started to implement the budget assigned for 2020. Since then, several States have needed to carry out fiscal adjustments to respond to the health emergency. These adjustments were included in complementary budgets they drew up, in changes to the general budget, in the use of special contingency funds, and emergency decrees³³. The adjustments also affected civil registry and identification offices. **Belize, Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay, Peru** and **Uruguay** reported cuts to the offices' assigned budgets, which not only affected registries and identification offices, but also other State entities. Several of these reported a decrease in revenues due to the temporary suspension of income-generating services, as well as to the fact that people stopped going to the offices as in some cases, extended administrative deadlines exonerated them from obtaining an identification document, which is usually the service generating most income.

Countries reporting a decrease in revenues are **Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Panama, Paraguay, Peru** and **Uruguay**. The only countries reporting no budget cuts are **Haiti, Mexico** and **Dominican Republic**.

Although it is not possible to specify exactly how these cuts will impact on services provision, it is certain that working plans in civil registry and identification offices will be affected. One of the main concerns some countries pointed out, refer to the prioritization of special services which attend to the needs of the more vulnerable sections of the population. In normal conditions, civil registries periodically go out to, or send mobile brigades to meet the needs of people living in rural or difficult access areas. These actions may have to be suspended if there is not sufficient funding for the programs to continue.

³³ IMF. *Budget creation at times of crisis: handbook to prepare the 2021 budget*. June 28, 2020. p. 1.

Contingency plans for emergency contexts

Contingency plan refers to lines of action and measures set by institutions to contain an emergency and continue operating so reducing possible associated risks. In formulating these plans, States need to define the type of emergency, as not all disasters are the same. The United Nations distinguishes between two types of emergency: sudden-impact disasters and prolonged-impact disasters³⁴.

Sudden-impact disasters refer to events causing destruction and immediate damage, such as earthquakes, tsunamis, flooding, and other similar events. In these circumstances, the contingency plan requires focusing on establishing shortened-procedure guidelines to register vital statistics; send civil registry officials to the disaster area; and to set up itinerant offices in the emergency zone. Prolonged-impact disasters refer to situations likely to exist for a prolonged period of time, such as pandemic or epidemics. It will be necessary, in these cases, to develop contingency plans establishing: (i) adjustments to the legal framework in order to adapt services to the emergency context; (ii) solutions and initiatives which will ensure the correct functioning of the Civil Registry, which included shorter working hours, the number of available staff, and protection measures; and (iii) classifying the civil registry as an essential service, so that all offices will be issued with the appropriate resources for the activities adopted in the contingency plan to be fully operative³⁵.

In the context of COVID-19, contingency plans were drawn up in line with the response given by the State both for identification of suspicious, or confirmed, cases of COVID-19, as well as for the prevention of virus propagation. Although these measures were extremely necessary when first responding to the health emergency, it is recommended that State entities establish medium and long-term plans to continue providing public services for the duration of the emergency.

For this study, of the 19 countries only 7 stated they had specific contingency plans in place to continue offering their services in emergency contexts, as shown in table 3.

³⁴ Mrkić, Srdjan. *Civil registration: Maintaining international standards in emergencies*. United Nations Legal Identity Task Force New York. October, 2020. p. 18.

³⁵ *Ibid.* p. 18 – 19.

TABLE 3. Civil Registry and Identification Offices Contingency Plan

COUNTRY	SPECIFIC EMERGENCY CONTEXT CONTINGENCY PLAN
Brazil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulations to re-start for notaries and registration offices during the health emergency specifying mechanisms and instruments which might be used for user service³⁶.
Chile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coronavirus COVID-19 Preventive Operative Plan, which includes several guidelines to ensure continuing all public services. • Strategic Emergency Plan focused on protecting people's health, including State employees and service providers, and on continuing attending to the needs of citizens as required by registration services.
Ecuador	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protocol to re-start DIGERCIC services, aimed at establishing alternative operative possibilities in Civil Registry offices to provide services in emergency and post-emergency health situations³⁷.
Guatemala	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RENAP Coronavirus COVID-19 Contingency Plan to ensure continuing, uninterrupted, services everywhere.
Honduras	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan for AI opening of RNP offices, taking into account technical criteria to manage bulk paperwork, availability of staff, and service prioritization.
Paraguay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan for the gradual lifting of preventive general isolation, known as Phase 1 of Intelligent Quarantine, which establishes additional measures for attention to users of public services³⁸.
Peru	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan for the re-opening of agencies following the biosafety protocol, and according to cases reported per department in the country. • Institutional plan against COVID-19 which makes available a budget to modify offices and provide for all biosafety needs • RENIEC Re-Activation Plan, whose operative component includes opening registration offices and implementing on-line services.

Source: Author's compilation

We should indicate that the contingency plans described in the above table are not only centered on biosafety protocols implemented in all civil registry and identification offices part of this study, but also on specific actions and criteria to foster re-opening offices and so respond to demand for services.

³⁶ Brazil. [Provimento No. 95](#) dated April 1, 2020.

³⁷ Ecuador. [Protocol for resumption of General Direction of Civil Registry, Identification and Identity Documents](#). Plan of action. April, 2020.

³⁸ Paraguay. [Resolution No. 187/2020](#), May 3, 2020.

Strategies used to manage accumulated requests for registration of vital events

Pandemic impact is expected to lead to an increase in the number of deaths per country; for COVID-19, governments had to prepare to respond to this eventual increase in deaths. Social isolation measures, prolonged quarantine periods, mobility restrictions and temporary closure of some auxiliary offices in the civil reg-

istry and identification services, have led some to believe that the rate of late registration, of births as well as deaths, has risen, potentially leading to an increment in sub-registration. Although these estimates are still preliminary, as many countries established extended administrative deadlines for registrations, figures published by civil registries mainly in March, April, May, and June 2020 show that the percentage of vital events duly registered had decreased in comparison to 2019 data. From the information that countries were able to share, a decrease in birth registrations for 2020 is noted, in comparison with the previous year, as seen in table 4.

TABLE 4. Percentage of Births Registrations in 2020 Compared to 2019, for the Corresponding Period

MONTH/ COUNTRY	BOLIVIA	COLOMBIA	ECUADOR	HONDURAS	PARAGUAY
January					
February					
March					
April	-34%	-25%	-33%	-59%	-32%
May					
June					
July					
August					
September					

Source: Author's compilation

Additionally, **Colombia** reported that the births in communities beyond hospital centers are those which are not being reported on time. **Costa Rica** has indicated that, although they have not been able to ascertain a decrease in due registration of vital events, parents' tardiness in their registration has been noted. For example, in 2019, 100% of hospital births were registered within five days, now only 89.6%. In **El Salvador** registrations recorded in handwriting by municipalities have not yet been digitalized, but for the first semester in 2020, of the births reported by the Health Ministry, only 1.8% figure as registered in the RNP database. In **Guatemala**, following the registration of vital events plan set for March-August 2020, a decrease of 8% in registrations is reported. **Mexico** also reported a decrease in birth registrations³⁹.

³⁹ Tables about the decrease in birth registrations can be seen at the following [link](#).

Decrease in birth registrations is attributable to several causes. For example, several countries, **Belize, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru,** and **Dominican Republic** had to

temporarily suspend services in some of their auxiliary offices located in hospitals. Another cause may be related to the temporary closure of offices and mobility restrictions enforced in some countries; also, because some administrative deadlines were extended, parents might be delaying registration of births. The fact that many parents might not wish to go to registration offices for fear of contagion, cannot be discarded either.

Regarding registration of deaths, **Bolivia** showed an increase in June, July and August 2020 when compared to the previous year, while in April no deaths were registered⁴⁰. In **Colombia**, between January and June, a decrease of 16% in death registrations was reported, while vital statistics reported an increase of 9.6% in the number of deaths. In **Ecuador** an increase of 65% was noted in death registrations in the first seven months in 2020 when compared with the same period in 2019. **Mexico** reported an increase in death registrations, mainly in May, June, and July in comparison to the previous year⁴¹. **Peru** indicated that their rate of death registrations was stable.

⁴⁰ It is worth noting that over the months of March and April, the Civil Registry offices remained closed, while the number of deaths continued to grow.

⁴¹ Tables about the decrease in birth registrations can be seen at the following [link](#).

This scenario might indicate that births are not being registered within the usual time limits and that, at the same time, the demand for death registrations has increased due to the pandemic. This situation inevitably leads to an accumulation of requests for vital fact registrations. We focused on civil registry and identification offices to see whether they had set up any strategies to deal with this situation. Only 11 countries reported having a work plan, or specific activities, to allow them to respond to the increase in services demand, as shown in table 5.

TABLE 5. Actions Taken to Manage Accumulation of Registration Requests

COUNTRY/ ACTIONS	AWARENESS-RAISING AND SERVICES FOR VULNERABLE POPULATIONS CAMPAIGNS	SERVICE DECEN- TRALIZATION AND EXTENSION OF OPENING HOURS	INTERINSTITU- TIONAL COORDI- NATION	IMPLEMENTATION OF ONLINE SERVICE
Belize	●		●	
Bolivia		●		
Chile		●	●	●
Colombia	●	●	●	●
Ecuador	●		●	●
Guatemala		●		
Honduras			●	
Panama			●	●
Paraguay	●		●	●
Peru		●		●
Dominican Republic		●		

Source: Author's compilation

As in **Argentina, El Salvador** and **Mexico** responsibility for civil registries pertains to the local governments, we were unable to obtain detailed information on the actions to be taken at, respectively, provincial, municipal, and state levels. Nevertheless, coordinating organisms in each country are currently following-up the needs their local offices may be experiencing. In **Brazil**, where there is a high number of official civil registry offices, with high coverage levels, it was reported that request accumulations were being dealt with adequately. In spite of this, APEN-Brazil is cooperating with the Ministry of Social Assistance to coordinate actions to enable dealing with future demands in the Amazon area, where the highest numbers of non-registered people are usually concentrated.

The facts studied show that civil registry and the institutional capacity of identification offices was tested from the time of the emergency declaration, when it was necessary to rapidly ascertain what protective and preventive measures for COVID-19 would be needed, while at the same time deciding whether offices would be able to continue to operate using in-person channels.

[The following section](#) presents detailed information on the changes undertaken for service provision, and the implementation of new service modes carried out by ALC countries within the health emergency context.

Management and service provision analysis

Civil registry and identification offices provide services for both citizens and other entities from the private and public sectors. In emergency contexts, it is advisable that the services provided by entities are adapted to respond to different user needs, as sociocultural and economic factors demarcate the access to any service. Service provision models vary from entity to entity, but for these to be functional, they must regularly undergo transformation. A service provision model cannot be static, so it becomes necessary for entities to carry out periodical evaluations to see whether the services they offer are of high quality, easy access, economical, and user-friendly. In this section we shall only be analyzing services offered in the months of March to October 2020, centered on vital events, births and deaths, and the issue of nationality-proving identification documents.

Prioritized services using in-person channels

Prioritized services using in-person channels refer to those offered by central or auxiliary offices, which are a part of the service system pertaining to civil registry and identification offices. For this study, the following services were taken into account: (i) registration of births in offices; (ii) registration of births in hospitals; (iii) registration of deaths in offices; (iv) registration of deaths in hospitals, morgues, or funeral parlors; (v) copies of birth or death certificates (vi) issuance of identity documents.

i. Registration of births in offices

During March to October 2020, the births registration service was changed several times, from temporary suspension of services to substantive changes in requirements and deadlines for registrations. From the start of the health emergency in March, **Belize, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Haiti, Jamaica, Mexico** and **Uruguay** continued to register births in the corresponding offices. In April, **Argentina** returned to office service. In May, **Bolivia, Ecuador** and **Paraguay** followed suit; in June, **Honduras, Panama** and **Dominican Republic**; in July, **Peru**, and finally **El Salvador**, in August.

Various countries modified their service provision, which included requests for appointments prior to service, exoneration of substantive requirements, extended deadlines for due registration and ex-officio registration. The ACNUR issued a series of recommendations for this area⁴². Table 6 shows the changes the countries applied in their procedure.

⁴² ACNUR. *The impact of COVID-19 on stateless populations: recommendations for policies and good practices*. May 7, 2020. p. 3 and 4.

TABLE 6. Changes in Procedures for the Registration of Births

COUNTRY/ ACTIONS	EXTENSION OF DUE REGISTRATION DEADLINES	EXONERATION OF SUBSTANTIVE REQUIREMENTS	PRIOR APPOINTMENT REQUEST	EX-OFFICIO REGISTRATION
Argentina	●		●	●
Belize	No changes reported			
Bolivia			●	
Brazil	●	●	●	
Chile			●	
Colombia	●	●	●	
Costa Rica	●			●
Ecuador			●	
El Salvador	●			
Guatemala		●		
Haiti	●			
Honduras	●			
Jamaica	No changes reported			
Mexico		●	●	
Panama		●		●
Paraguay	No changes reported			
Peru	●	●	●	
Dominican Republic	●			
Uruguay			●	

Source: Author's compilation

Each country defined the extension of birth due registration deadlines in accordance with national guidelines. **Argentina** prorogued the decree regarding deadlines for birth registration, whereby timely registration may take place until age 18 years⁴³. **Brazil** extended the deadline to up to 15 days following the end of the emergency⁴⁴. **Colombia** stated that if parents or others registering the child are unable to register the birth within the stipulated legal period, they might do so later, without incurring in extemporaneous registration. **Costa Rica** decided to suspend all deadlines regarding paperwork, procedures, and electoral, civil or administrative internal or external proceedings until September 30th 2020⁴⁵.

In **El Salvador** several legislative decrees were adopted to suspend administrative, judiciary and procedural deadlines, between March 14th and July 5th 2020⁴⁶. **Honduras** suspended all administrative deadlines during the health emergency; the registration period for births thus began on 19th July 2020, when offices reopened⁴⁷. However, if a user does not register the birth, he or she may, as an exception and for the duration of the pandemic, do so at the office even beyond the deadline. In **Panama**, deadlines were suspended between March 25th and May 25th 2020, during which period civil registry offices were closed⁴⁸. **Peru** suspended all administrative procedures deadlines until December 31st 2020⁴⁹. In **Dominican Republic** vital events which occurred between January 21st and July 3rd 2020 will be registered as timely if due registration takes place within 60 days after July 3rd 2020⁵⁰.

Regarding exoneration of substantive requirements, the following changes were introduced: (i) the minor in question was not required to be present in **Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico**⁵¹ and **Peru**; (ii) Electronic means were used to send certificates or records documents in **Brazil** and **Mexico**⁵²; and (iii) Footprint impressions were no longer required in **Colombia** and **Peru**.

In **Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico**⁵³, **Peru** and **Uruguay** appointments may be requested beforehand via the institutional webpage. **Argentina, Bolivia**, and **Brazil**⁵⁴ set up new telephone lines. **Ecuador** and **Dominican Republic** set up an appointments system at corresponding service points, that is, the user must go to the appropriate registration office beforehand, to request an appointment. In **Haiti**, service was provided based on the circulation permits issued by the government, which stated that users would be served according to the first letter of their surname and the assigned day. On the other hand, in **Belize** it has been noted that users prefer to hire external agents to carry out paperwork on their behalf, so the number of requests accepted per agent is limited.

Regarding ex-officio registration, **Argentina** continued carrying out ex-officio registrations following the usual procedure, that is, if after 60 days parents have not declared the birth, registration is carried out by the Civil Registry official of the corresponding jurisdiction. **Costa Rica** used the declaration of birth made by mothers to medical staff at health centers, to proceed with the birth registration at the corresponding offices, later sending the parents a digital copy of the birth certificate. **Panama** continued using the ex-officio mode for birth registrations after 6 months, following the regular procedure.

⁴³ Argentina. [National Decree 285/2020](#). Administrative regime for birth registration, dated March 17, 2020.

⁴⁴ Brazil. [Provimento No. 92](#) dated March 25, 2020. Art. 1.

⁴⁵ Costa Rica. [Extraordinary Session No. 36](#), April 13, 2020. Art. 2.

⁴⁶ El Salvador. [Legislative Decree 673](#) dated June 22, 2020. Art. 1.

⁴⁷ Honduras. [Executive Decree, Communication CNBS 007/2020](#) dated March 23, 2020. Art. 1.

⁴⁸ Panamá. Decree 20 dated May 22, 2020. Art. 5.

⁴⁹ Peru. [Chief Resolution No. 000125-2020](#) dated September 5, 2020. Art. 1.

⁵⁰ Dominican Republic. [Decree 137-2020](#) dated March 16, 2020. Art. 2.

⁵¹ In the federal entities of Baja California, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo León, Quintana Roo, Sinaloa, Sonora and Veracruz.

⁵² In the federal entities of Campeche, Guanajuato and Sinaloa.

⁵³ Eleven federal entities including Baja California, Baja California Sur, Campeche, Chihuahua, Guanajuato, Michoacán, Nayarit, Nuevo León, Quintana Roo, Sinaloa, and Tabasco established electronic mechanisms and used digital platforms for receiving documents speeding up birth registration paperwork, including scheduling.

⁵⁴ Only in offices reporting a great number of users.

Additionally, in **Colombia** and **Peru**, live-birth certificates, or medical birth statements, may be used by citizens to carry out any procedure or gain access to any social programs.

ii. Birth registrations in hospitals

All countries in this study have auxiliary offices at health centers, to sensitize and promote due birth registration. Because of the health emergency, many of these offices had suspend attention to users due to high contagion risks for staff, or because the location was used to treat patients with COVID-19 symptoms.

As shown in table 7, public attention at birth registration offices at health centers was altered as follows:

TABLE 7. Birth Registry Attention at Hospital Centers per Month in 2020

COUNTRY/ MONTH	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPT.	OCTOBER
Argentina								
Belize								
Bolivia	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Brazil		x	x					
Chile								
Colombia	x	x	x					
Costa Rica	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Ecuador	x							
El Salvador	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Guatemala	x	x	x	x	x	x		
Haiti	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Honduras	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Jamaica								
Mexico								
Panama	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Paraguay								
Peru	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Dominican Republic	x	x	x					
Uruguay								

Open to the public x Attention suspended

Source: Author's compilation

Although some countries continued offering regular service, this did not imply that all hospital-based offices were operative. In **Argentina** the civil registry hospital-based offices were only operative if their space was not required for health emergency management. In **Belize** only 1 office had to suspend services, the remaining 6 continued operating. In **Chile** 5 out of 24 hospital-based offices were operative. **Jamaica** remained fully operative establishing a special protocol for the registration of newly born whose mothers had COVID-19 symptoms. **Mexico** has 364 hospital-based birth registration modules in 31 of the 32 federation entities. Following the emergency declaration 193 modules located in hospitals known as "COVID-19 Reconversion Hospitals" were mandated by corresponding health center authorities to suspend services; this has meant that 53% of the registration modules are not operative. In **Paraguay**, 4 out of 29 offices suspended in-person attention. **Uruguay** did not suspend attention at the public hospital where the office is located.

On April 20th 2020 **Ecuador** authorized 4 hospital-based offices; and in September a further 6 were added to the 31 existing at national level. **Brazil** closed its offices in April and May when the highest number of COVID-19 cases was reported. **Colombia** and **Dominican Republic** began gradual authorizing of services in June. **Guatemala** partially re-opened from September. **Costa Rica** removed all their auxiliary registrars from health centers; for the duration of the emergency these people work in the central offices. **El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Panama** and **Peru** suspended birth-registration services in all hospitals.

iii. Death registrations in offices

In the pandemic context, the registration of deaths will probably be one of the services with greatest demand. It is therefore recommendable that it is carried out promptly, that is to say, that the procedure should be simplified and substantive requirements easily obtained. The United Nations Task Force on the Legal Identity Agenda recommends the following for emergency situations: (i) extend eligibility regarding who can report a death to civil registrars, especially if the said death does not occur within a health center; (ii) establish special procedures for cases where relatives do not have full documentation; (iii) establish protocols to check the identity of the deceased among state entities; and (iv) suspend any kind of payment in connection with the procedures⁵⁵.

The death registry was one of the prioritized services in the region. **Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Jamaica, Mexico, Paraguay** and **Uruguay** did not suspend this service. By April 2020 **Argentina** and **El Salvador** had started offering this service. In **El Salvador**, the death registry operated only in municipal offices located at department capitals where hospitals attending COVID-19 patients were set up. **Honduras, Panama** and **Dominican Republic** went back to offering the service in June, and **Peru** did so in July.

Additionally, some countries adopted extraordinary measures to guarantee death registration. **Guatemala** resolved that the registry office located in Zone 1 of Guatemala City would carry out death registrations only, and open for business 24 hours. From April on, **Panama** adopted ex-officio death registrations once medi-

⁵⁵ United Nations Legal Identity Agenda Task Force. [Maintaining Civil Registration and Vital Statistics during the COVID-19 pandemic](#). April, 2020. Acceso: 06 de junio de 2020. Pág. 2-3.

cal notice was sent from hospitals to the civil registry offices. Also, juridical validity was assigned to the medical report so that relatives of the deceased might be able to carry out any necessary paperwork. This was also taken up in **Bolivia**. In **Paraguay** the central office implemented death registrations through the 24 hours. From June, **Peru** implemented ex-officio death registrations as a temporary measure until December 2021⁵⁶.

Changes in death registration procedures mainly concerned extending the registration deadline, substantive requirements exoneration, authorizing an extended number of people to announce the death, prior appointment request, and ex-officio registration, as shown in table 8.

⁵⁶ Peru. Management Resolutions No. 006 and 009-2020/GG/ RENIEC dated May 26, 2020.

TABLE 8. Changes in Death Registration Procedures

COUNTRY/ ACTIONS	EXTENSION OF DUE REGISTRATION DEADLINE	SUBSTANTIVE REQUIREMENTS EXONERATION	AUTHORIZATION OF AN EXTENDED NUMBER OF PEOPLE TO ANNOUNCE THE DEATH	PRIOR APPOINTMENT REQUEST	EX-OFFICIO REGISTRATION
Argentina				●	
Belize	No changes reported				
Bolivia		●		●	
Brazil	●	●			
Chile			●	●	
Colombia	●	●		●	
Costa Rica	●				●
Ecuador				●	
El Salvador	●				
Guatemala		●			
Haiti	No changes reported				
Honduras	●				
Jamaica			●		●
Mexico		●	●	●	
Panama		●	●		●
Paraguay	No changes reported				
Peru	●		●	●	●
Dominican Republic	●				
Uruguay				●	

Source: Author's compilation

In **Brazil** the registration deadline was extended for 60 days only for deaths caused by COVID-19. In **Colombia**, if death occurs within the health emergency period and cannot be registered within the legal time limit (2 days), then when registration does take place it will not be considered extemporaneous, and, therefore, an order issued by the police inspector will not be required. **Costa Rica** suspended deadlines related to open files, procedures, and internal or external paperwork, whether electoral, civil or administrative, until August 31st 2020⁵⁷. In **El Salvador**, the registration period for deaths occurring between March 14th and September 18th 2020, was extended so that deaths might be registered up to 60 days after September 18th 2020⁵⁸. **Honduras** suspended all administrative deadlines for the duration of the health emergency, which meant that the period for death registrations was taken from the opening of offices (19th June 2020)⁵⁹. However, if the user is unable to carry out the corresponding registration, as an exception and for the duration of the pandemic, the user may declare the death at any moment, even beyond the deadline. **Dominican Republic** suspended all deadlines and terms of administrative procedures, pointing out that they would commence enforcement once more 3 working days after the emergency is declared to have ended; that is, then, due registration of deaths occurring between 19th March and July 3rd 2020 took place up to three days after this last date. Finally, **Peru** suspended administrative procedural deadlines until December 31st 2020⁶⁰.

Regarding substantive requirements, in **Bolivia** the requirement of two witnesses for registration was eliminated. In **Brazil** past record documentation was accepted via electronic means, so that the person informing does not need to do so in-person⁶¹. In **Guatemala**, for those who died of COVID-19, the request form and the municipal maintenance tax receipt were waived for the declarant. Temporary exoneration of required certifications for death registration was also implemented. This exoneration applies when the deceased does not have a PID and death was caused by COVID-19. Free certifications include: (a) certification of personal identification document; (b) certified copy of the entry in the book of residence in the vicinity; (c) birth registration certification; (d) certification of registration as foreign resident, naturalized Guatemalan or Guatemalan-born. **Panama** permitted any relative, person or authority with knowledge of the occurrence of the death to report the fact and so register said death. They also eliminated the requirement "declarant's signature" for those registrations carried out once the Civil Registry receives the medical report from the hospital⁶².

Together with the usual procedures, **Chile** authorized civil registry officials in cemeteries to request registration in the Civil Registry in their respective jurisdictions when the deceased person's relative cannot do so, thus authorizing burial. In **Costa Rica** it was established that a doctor must carry out the death declaration, so that the document may be sent to the Civil Registry and officially registered. In **Mexico** 28 federative entities reduced requirements for death registrations and exhumation or incineration orders⁶³.

Regarding appointment requests, in **Argentina**⁶⁴, **Bolivia**, **Chile**, **Colombia**, **Ecuador**, **Peru** and **Uruguay**, the institutional webpage was made available to users

⁵⁷ Costa Rica. Communication STSE-0050-2020 dated July 30, 2020. Second provision.

⁵⁸ El Salvador. [Legislative Decree No. 701](#) dated September 18, 2020. Art. 1.

⁵⁹ Honduras. [Executive Decree. Communication CNBS 007/2020](#) dated March 23, 2020. Art. 1.

⁶⁰ Peru. [Chief Resolution No. 000125-2020](#) dated September 5, 2020. Art. 1.

⁶¹ Brazil. Provimento No. 92 dated March 25, 2020. Art. 2.

⁶² Panama. Decree 20 dated May 22, 2020. Art. 4.

⁶³ Including Baja California, Baja California Sur, Campeche, Coahuila, Colima, Chiapas, Chihuahua, Durango, Mexico State, Guanajuato, Guerrero, Hidalgo, Jalisco, Morelos, Nayarit, Nueva León, Oaxaca, Puebla, Querétaro, Quintana Roo, San Luis Potosí, Sinaloa, Tabasco, Tlaxcala, Veracruz, Yucatán and Zacatecas.

⁶⁴ Applicable to some provincial offices.

to request date and time. **Argentina, Bolivia** and **Brazil** also made telephone lines available.

Ecuador reported exonerating costs related to death registrations; **Jamaica** eliminated the cost of burial order-forms; and **Mexico** implement free certified death registration certificates and burial and cremation orders in 21 federative entities⁶⁵.

iv. Death registrations in hospitals, morgues, or mortuaries

Some countries implemented procedures for death registrations to be carried out from other locations. **El Salvador** authorized death registrations and issue of certificates at municipal cemeteries in San Salvador. In **Honduras**, from the declaration of the health emergency, the Civil Registry coordinated efforts with the Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences Institute for deaths to be registered at their buildings in Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula. Municipal registrations began to be carried out at morgues too. **Jamaica** coordinated efforts with the Health Ministry for registrations to be carried out from hospitals. The procedure was modified so that once the doctor filled out the death certificate stating the cause of death, the certificate could be automatically sent to the registry offices for official registration. In **Mexico** 94 % of federative entities established coordinated actions with hospital centers converted for COVID-19 special attention and treatment, in order to speed up death registrations.

v. Birth and death certificate copies

Birth and death certificate copies are documents often required by citizens in order to carry out specific paperwork. For example, birth certificates may be needed when enrolling children at schools, for access to social protection programs, and obtaining a national identity document, among others. A death certificate may be required to authorize a burial, have access to life insurance, stipulate pensions, etc. With the health emergency, obtaining these certificates has undergone modifications, as not all countries were able to prioritize an in-person service. Table 9 shows how civil registries organized the issue of birth and death certificates so that citizens might access them.

⁶⁵ Including Baja California, Baja California Sur, Campeche, Coahuila, Chiapas, Chihuahua, Durango, Mexico State, Guanajuato, Jalisco, Michoacán, Nueva León, Oaxaca, Querétaro, Sinaloa, Tabasco, Tamaulipas, Tlaxcala, Yucatán and Zacatecas.

TABLE 9. Issue of Birth and Death Registration Certificates. March – October 2020

COUNTRY/ MEASURE ADOPTED	IN-PERSON ISSUE OF CERTIFICATES	HOME-PRINTED CERTIFICATE (INSTITUTION WEBPAGE SERVICE)	ELECTRONICALLY REQUESTED CERTIFICATE (PICKED UP AT OFFICE)
Argentina	Issue re-instated from August 2020	Enabled ⁶⁶	
Belize	Enabled		
Bolivia	Issue re-instated from May 2020		
Brazil	Enabled	Enabled**	
Chile	Enabled	Enabled*	
Colombia	Enabled	Enabled** ⁶⁷	
Costa Rica	Suspended	Enabled**	
Ecuador	Issue re-instated from June 2020	Enabled*	
El Salvador	Issue re-instated from September 2020		
Guatemala	Enabled	Enabled*	
Haiti	Enabled		
Honduras	Issue re-instated from June 2020	Enabled ⁶⁸	
Jamaica	Enabled ⁶⁹		Enabled*
Mexico	Enabled	Enabled*	
Panama	Issue re-instated from June 2020 ⁷⁰	Enabled*	
Paraguay	Issue re-instated from May 2020		
Peru	Issue re-instated from July 2020	Enabled*	
Dominican Republic	Issue re-instated from June 2020		
Uruguay	Enabled	Enabled*	

*The service was in place in the country before the emergency

** New service created for the health emergency

Source: Author's compilation

⁶⁶ Available only for certificates that are digitized in Buenos Aires, Santa Fe and Pampa Provinces.

⁶⁷ The request must be sent to the email address indicated in the institutional webpage.

⁶⁸ Available only for birth certificates.

⁶⁹ Only the express service in which the copy may be obtained in 3 days was suspended. Only regular procedure in which the certificate takes 7 days from the request made by the user.

⁷⁰ Since the emergency declaration, birth certificates continued to be issued in the kiosks set up in supermarket and pharmacy chains.

As shown in table 9, **Belize, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Guatemala, Haiti, Jamaica, Mexico** and **Uruguay** continued to issue certificates for births and deaths from civil registry offices after the health emergency was declared. **Brazil, Colombia** and **Costa Rica** created a new service, the issue of birth and death certificates online. **Costa Rica** prioritized online certification services, not yet issuing these at the corresponding offices.

vi. Issue of identity document⁷¹

In 2020, several countries in the region had planned to hold elections⁷² or mass replacement of identity documents⁷³, so it was a priority to keep the service operative. The pandemic proved a challenge for countries unable to provide document issue normally, as, in some cases, it was also required that citizens show their document to be able to access special emergency plans, or circulation permits. Faced with this situation, identification offices had to adjust their work plans to guarantee that citizens would be able to have valid documents to be able to vote or access other services; especially because issuing an identity document means that the user must be present for biometric information and biographical data verification, the exceptions being duplicates which are copies of a previous document.

As pointed out in the [previous section](#), several offices suspended their identification services from the moment the pandemic was declared. **Argentina** enabled some offices to offer the service in April depending on contagion levels per city and authorizations extended by local governments. **Paraguay** re-opened services again in May, **Colombia, Ecuador** and **Dominican Republic** in June. **Panama** implemented a service to hand out corresponding duplicates and renewals, the same as that which required using the institutional webpage. From June they issued first-time identity documents and renewals. **Bolivia, El Salvador, Honduras** and **Peru** did so in July. Countries able to offer uninterrupted service were **Chile, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Haiti** and **Uruguay**.

Changes introduced by identification offices were centered on extending the period of validity for identity documents and preparing a system of prior appointment by request.

⁷¹ Since there is no unique identity document, Belize, Brazil, Jamaica and Mexico have not been analyzed in this section.

⁷² While some countries delayed elections several months, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Mexico (Hidalgo), Peru, Dominican Republic and Uruguay organized elections in 2020 after the health emergency declaration. Countries where elections are planned are Ecuador and Peru.

⁷³ Haiti and Honduras are undergoing a massive process changing their identity document. To this end, Honduras has been conducted enrolling procedures in order to generate the new database which will be part of the new identification system.

TABLE 10. Changes Introduced for Identity Documents

COUNTRY/CHANGE	VALIDITY DEADLINE EXTENDED	PRIOR APPOINTMENT REQUEST
Argentina	●	●
Bolivia	●	●
Chile	●	●
Colombia		●
Costa Rica	●	
Ecuador	●	●
El Salvador	●	●
Guatemala	●	●
Haiti		●
Honduras	●	
Panama	●	●
Paraguay	No changes	
Peru	●	●
Dominican Republic	●	
Uruguay	●	

Source: Author's compilation

Extension of identity document 's validity was carried out as follows: **Argentina** prorogued the expiry date for ids for up to 30 days after the end of the quarantine period⁷⁴. **Bolivia** extended the validity of ids which expired after November 2019 to December 2020. **Chile** fixed the extension of validity to one year from the expiry date for Chilean ids due to expire during 2020. However, expired ids are not valid documents for travel purposes⁷⁵. The validity period of ids for foreigners was also extended, if they were being used in request procedures for changes or prorogation of resident visas or permissions of residence, until December 31st 2020⁷⁶. **Costa Rica** fixed February 6th 2022 as the deadline for the validity of ids expiring between February 4th 2020 and February 5th 2020 inclusively⁷⁷. **Ecuador** extended the validity period for expired, or due to expire, ids to September 18th 2020⁷⁸. **El Salvador** established that the validity period for ids would be for the duration of the quarantine period, that is, June 30th 2020⁷⁹. In **Guatemala**, an expired document could be used only by beneficiaries of COVID-19 economic relief benefits⁸⁰. **Honduras** is in the process of refurbishing their identity documents, so expiry dates have been extended in the past years⁸¹. In **Panama**, the last extension date for identity documents and cards for foreigners and nationals, as

⁷⁴ According to the latest announcement of the Argentine Republic government, the quarantine will be extended until November 29, 2020. [Decree 875/2020](#) dated November 7, 2020. Social, Preventive and Mandatory Isolation and Social, Preventive and Mandatory Distancing. Art. 2.

⁷⁵ Chile. [Decree 32](#) dated March 23, 2020. Art. 1.

⁷⁶ Chile. [Decree 34](#) dated March 27, 2020. Art. 1.

⁷⁷ Costa Rica. [Decree No. 3-2020](#) dated June 18, 2020. Art. 1.

⁷⁸ Ecuador. [Resolution No. 063-2020](#) dated August 17, 2020. Art. 1.

well as permanent residence cards, was set for 31st January 2022⁸². **Peru** extended the validity period for all expired documents until December 31st 2020⁸³.

Prior appointments to obtain an identity document may be requested via institutional webpage in **Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Panama, Peru, Dominican Republic** and **Uruguay**. Additionally, **Bolivia, El Salvador, Guatemala** and **Panama** enabled whatsapp and call center lines to request an appointment. **Ecuador** and **El Salvador** enabled requests for appointments from attention centers. **Haiti's** system was based on assigning days according to the first letter of the user's surname.

Due to the restrictions existing for the issue of identity documents, some countries created new services to guarantee a valid document for their populations needing to access additional procedures in commercial, finance, or public areas. Among these services we would like to point out the certificate or written statement of identity document issued in **Argentina, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras**, and **Peru**. This certificate permitted temporary replacement of a lost or inexistent identity document for people who, because of the health emergency, were not able to go the corresponding offices to get a new one. Certifications carried bar codes, QR codes and digital signatures as security measures to guarantee authenticity. Certifications were obtainable from institutional webpages. In **El Salvador**, a telephone service was made available for users to collect certificates at the corresponding office. **Argentina** and **Peru** also encouraged the use of identity documents via a cell phone (Digital Identity) by means of applications designed by RENAPER and RENIEC respectively.

On-line services

Biosafety measures taken to prevent COVID-19 propagation, established strict criteria focused on social distancing and capacity control. This has meant that attention to the public in civil registry and identification offices has diminished, as in some cases, neither office nor window service has been possible. Encouraging the use of technology may be of use to reach populations with Internet connection, thus allowing entities to devote their resources to serve people who have no Internet access.

Based on the relevant information provided by civil registry and identification offices, on-line services are summarized in table 11.

⁷⁹ El Salvador. [Legislative Decree 599](#). Art. 1.

⁸⁰ Guatemala. [Decree 22-2020](#) of the Congress of the Guatemala Republic. Art. 11.

⁸¹ Since 2014, the National Congress of Honduras has extended the expiry date of the identity document due to a change and modernization process of said document. Due to the pandemic, validity of the document has been extended again to May 15, 2021.

⁸² Panama. Decree 30 dated July 29, 2020.

⁸³ Peru. [Chief Resolution No. 000125-2020](#) dated September 5, 2020. Art. 1.

TABLE 11. On-line Services

BIRTHS	Birth registration	Argentina ⁸⁴ Brazil	Costa Rica Mexico ⁸⁵	Panama
	Copy of birth certificate	Argentina ⁸⁶ Brazil Chile* Colombia	Costa Rica Ecuador* Guatemala* Honduras	Mexico* Panama* Peru* Uruguay*
	Request for appointment	Argentina Bolivia Chile	Colombia Ecuador México	Perú Uruguay
DEATHS	Death registration	Argentina ⁸⁷ Brazil Costa Rica	Ecuador Jamaica Mexico	Panama Peru Uruguay*
	Copy of death certificate	Argentina Brazil Chile* Colombia	Costa Rica Ecuador* Guatemala*	Mexico Panama* Peru*
	Request for appointment	Argentina Bolivia Colombia	Ecuador México Perú	Uruguay
IDENTIFICATION	Request for document duplicate	Colombia Guatemala*	Panama	Peru*
	Issue of certificate or written statement of document	Argentina Ecuador	El Salvador Honduras	Peru
	Request for appointment	Argentina Bolivia Colombia Ecuador	El Salvador Guatemala Panama Peru	Dominican Republic Uruguay
	Digital identity	Argentina	Peru	

*Service authorized before the pandemic

Source: Author's compilation

⁸⁴ Only for births in medical centers.

⁸⁵ In Mexico all digital services were enabled in Baja California, Baja California Sur, Campeche, Chihuahua, Guanajuato, Michoacán, Nayarit, Nuevo León, Quintana Roo, Sinaloa and Tabasco.

⁸⁶ For registrations carried out in Provinces of Buenos Aires, Santa Fe and la Pampa and which are digitalized.

⁸⁷ Only for deaths reported by a doctor.

Regarding on-line birth registration, **Argentina**, **Brazil** and **Mexico** enabled mechanisms for parents or whoever was reporting the birth to send, via email, the corresponding documents and any other substantive requirement needed for the registration. **Costa Rica** enabled the service only at their central office, once the mother's declaration at the health center, was received by the entity; in **Panama** registration was carried out via videoconference. For death registrations, **Mexico** and **Brazil** established virtual channels for the reception of documents required for registration. **Argentina**, **Costa Rica**, and **Jamaica** proceeded with registration every time their offices received certificates stating cause of death issued by hospitals. **Ecuador**, **Panama**, and **Peru** enabled this service via their virtual services platforms.

Services made available by telephone

Some countries made telephone lines available for user attention and for responding to questions on changes to procedures and services. **Argentina**, **Bolivia**, and **Guatemala** set up whatsapp lines to assign appointments and respond to questions referring to issue of identification documents and registrations of births and deaths. Some civil registry offices in **Brazil** and **El Salvador** opened telephone lines only for appointment assignation.

Costa Rica, **Guatemala**, **Haiti**, and **Mexico** set up call-centers for questions regarding registry procedures. **Costa Rica** also enabled a request for documents service only for people with disabilities, sick people, the elderly or people deprived of liberty.

Panama set up whatsapp lines to make birth and death declarations easier, while **Paraguay** guaranteed birth and death registrations via telephone calls.

Services made available through mobile units

From the moment the emergency was declared, all services offered by mobile units were suspended, except in **Chile**, where day-long identification sessions were held, to attend only the elderly, and **Haiti**, where their identification brigades continued to function. The main reason for suspending the service was to avoid the risk of COVID-19 contagion among both staff and communities, in particular because most mobile units attend vulnerable populations in distant locations of difficult access.

In the period studied, only a few countries have gone back to activities using mobile units. In July 2020, **Bolivia** re-activated their identity document brigades for children under 12 and adults over 65. From September 12th **Chile** began a campaign they named #lookafter your ID, activating 18 mobile units for day-long sessions to issue identification documents. From July 22nd 2020, **Colombia** began to carry out meetings with territory entities and indigenous authorities to plan mobile UDAPV sessions. Until October, 11 sessions in 7 departments and 11 municipalities had taken place. **Ecuador** activated birth registration brigades in August, and in September they organized solidarity brigades to attend to vulnerable communities and border zones. **Honduras** re-activated identification brigades and day-long enrolment sessions in August 2020. **Mexico** reported that 10 federative entities began carrying out birth registration campaigns, in coordination with public institutions that protect children's welfare, apply social policies, and attend to indigenous populations⁸⁸. **Paraguay** organized a day-long session in May to issue documents to elderly in their homes.

Additionally, **Belize**, with collaboration from ACNUR and UNICEF, announced the launch of a birth registration campaign which will allow registration in vulnerable populations, using mobile brigades. However, it is not yet certain when this campaign will reach the population. In general, the rest of the countries are involved in determining when and how to mobilize their units to populations which







⁸⁸ Baja California, Campeche, Durango, Guerrero, Jalisco, Querétaro, Sinaloa, Sonora, Tabasco and Veracruz.

have not been able to access civil registry and identification services during the pandemic; some have actually stated that probably mobile brigade services will be suspended for the rest of 2020.

Special services made available to attend to vulnerable populations

During the emergency period, civil registry and identification offices activated special services to attend to indigenous communities, human mobility, the elderly, mothers who are heads of families, and people with disabilities. **Belize, Chile, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Haiti** and **Mexico** continued to offer special services after the health emergency was declared. The rest of the countries temporarily suspended their special services, re-activating them once their offices were operative again and authorized by emergency committees and local authorities in their corresponding countries. Table 12 shows attention to vulnerable populations.

TABLE 12. Attention to Vulnerable Populations

 <p>THE ELDERLY</p>	<p>Argentina Belize Chile Colombia Costa Rica Guatemala</p> <p>Haiti Mexico Paraguay Dominican Republic</p>	 <p>HUMAN MOBILITY</p>	<p>Colombia Ecuador Mexico Peru</p>
 <p>PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES</p>	<p>Chile Costa Rica Guatemala</p>	 <p>INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES</p>	<p>Colombia Mexico</p>
 <p>HUMANITARIAN AID</p>	<p>Honduras Panama</p>	 <p>PREGNANT MOTHERS</p>	<p>Belize Guatemala</p>

Source: Author's compilation

Regarding attention to the elderly in **Argentina**, the certificate testifying the person is alive was eliminated when the federal platform "Digital Certificate of Vital Events" was created. This allows public organisms and private entities to obtain digital information in real time for procedures concerning health policies, pensions, identity, and financial inclusion⁸⁹. **Belize** prioritized office attention for the elderly and mothers with infants in arms, so that they would be the first served at the beginning of each working day. **Chile** favored in-situ services for the elderly and people with disabilities, as it was important for this population to have their identification documents for access to the "COVID-19 Emergency Vouchers". In August, **Colombia** and **Ecuador** went back to civil registry and identification attention for vulnerable populations with their mobile brigades. **Costa Rica** offered identification services to the elderly in cars parked in their central offices parking lot. They also prioritized identification tours for the attention only of people with disabilities. Guatemala prioritized attention in their offices for the elderly, pregnant women, and people with disabilities, implementing easy access to their premises so they would not have to queue up outside. **Haiti** continued with their day-long sessions issuing identity documents to the elderly living in rural areas. While their offices were closed, **Honduras** and **Panama** attended specific cases for humanitarian reasons, regarding birth and death registrations for expatriations of foreigners who died in their countries. Registrations were coordinated with the corresponding embassies and consulates. **Honduras** and ACNUR coordinated forces to register births and deaths in exceptional circumstances such as displacement forced by violence. **Mexico** continued to carry out campaigns for birth registration⁹⁰ and support actions with the Mexican Commission for Refugee Aid (COMAR) to assign refugees a Unique Code of Population Registration (CURP) and registration of their children. **Paraguay** simplified the issue of identity documents procedure for the elderly by visiting them in their homes. **Peru** activated information and sensitization campaigns on social media to provide specific information on the right to identity and nationality to children in human mobility populations, who were born in the country.

Changes in services provision, and their prioritization, are the mechanisms whereby the civil registry and identification offices have succeeded in responding to the demand, with all the risks involved in a pandemic. Notwithstanding the fact that the decisions taken by administrations were established following central government guidelines, this section shows the efforts made by countries to continue guaranteeing access to due registration of births and deaths, and identification.

However, it is necessary to point out that when services are modified, not only institutions are affected. Users too are affected, especially those in vulnerable situations, who do not have access to information on the changes, or who need personal assistance. Suspending services should not only be seen as a protection measure to prevent COVID-19 propagation. States must be able to cast a critical look when defining how withholding one service might affect access to others. For example, in the region, and in the countries which are part of this study, the importance of having an identity document to have access to emergency-context economic benefits programs, or circulation permits, is very clear.

⁸⁹ Argentina. [Joint resolution 6/2020](#) (03/09/2020). Art. 3.

⁹⁰ Mainly in Baja California, Campeche, Durango, Guerrero, Jalisco, Querétaro, Sinaloa, Sonora, Tabasco and Veracruz.

In spite of a variety of restrictions, the various changes implemented in services could be carried out thanks to the close coordination of authorities and staff in

civil registry and identification offices. In the [following section](#) we will show how human resources were managed in the COVID-19 context.

Analysis of Human Resources Management

Human resources are one of the main pillars sustaining entities offering public services. In them, users can see how the service is being offered, whether it manages to respond to needs, if response time is speedy, and whether attention is adequate. Human resources are an entity's visible face, and, in emergency contexts, it becomes necessary to protect, train, accompany, and guide members of staff, so that quality service constant.




As shown in the [previous section](#), the COVID-19 pandemic brought about several changes in the provision of services, which is also connected to human resources management. States had to establish protocols to define mechanisms so that public employees might continue working while at the same time protecting their health and welfare. All countries in this study studied their employees seeking to identify those who might be classified as at-risk population⁹¹, guided by the following classification: people over 60, pregnant women and women who were breast feeding, people with disabilities, people with serious health issues⁹². Regarding employees classified as at-risk, in-person office work has been limited, the result being that some of these people have been given special leave, and others are working via Internet from home.

⁹¹ Pan American Health Organization. [Outbreak of Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)-related illness.](#)

⁹² Including individuals with chronic conditions such as diabetes, kidney disease, hypertension, cancer; and infectious illnesses such as tuberculosis, or immunosuppressed.

Civil registry and identification offices activated three work modes: rotating shifts, teleworking, and special leave, as shown in Table 13.

TABLE 13. Work Modes

 <p>ROTATING SHIFTS</p>	<p>Argentina, Belize, Brasil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Dominican Republic and Uruguay.</p>
 <p>TELEWORK</p>	<p>Argentina, Bolivia, Brzsil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic and Uruguay.</p>
 <p>SPECIAL LEAVE</p>	<p>Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic and Uruguay.</p>

Source: Author's compilation

In **Belize**, working in rotating shifts took place during the first weeks of the quarantine period (March-April), after which all employees went back to office work. In **Bolivia** telework was assigned to mid-ranking public employees whose technical work could not be interrupted. At the same time, special permission was granted to at-risk staff to work remotely⁹³. The National Justice Council in **Brazil** enabled teleworking as well as the use of digital means to continue providing services⁹⁴. In **Chile**, 36% of employees have been providing on-line service and teleworking because they belong to the at-risk group⁹⁵. In **Colombia**, during the emergency period, working in shifts was implemented; while at the same time, technological tools were created in order to enable telework. In **Costa Rica** only 20% of the employees are physically active in state institutions, working in shifts, which means users must wait for long periods for services to be provided. 80% of employees working from home, do so in a goal-oriented remote work mode⁹⁶. In **Ecuador**, the number of employees carrying out in-person work or teleworking is modified according to COVID-19 alerts in the various cantons. Ecuador is organized so that 50% of the employees work in offices when the canton where the Civil Registry office is located, turns on a yellow traffic-light; and 70% when the traffic light in the corresponding canton point is green. In **El Salvador**, and exclusively for the identification office, in-person service was provided in shifts when the offices were closed, with a minimum number of staff; and the teleworking staff provided certificates to prove or disprove ID possession. **Guatemala** authorized teleworking for administrative staff, and high-risk staff were given special paid leave as from March 16th 2020, until further notice. **Haiti** rotated staff to limit the number of people per office, and instituted special leave for high-risk population. In **Honduras** 35% of the staff was identified as at-risk and so would not be able to go back to work; and staff able to provide in-person attention were divided into two groups working on alternate weeks. In **Mexico**, federative entities implemented telework as a job component. They have also established a variety of mechanisms to provide remote services to the public via digital platforms, webpages, email, and call centers. RENAPO also implemented telework mechanisms to be able to continue working, and at the same time, continue to coordinate actions with the civil registries in the country, holding weekly meetings via Internet with the 32 federative entities. The central office in **Paraguay** implemented teleworking especially for high-risk staff and rotation workdays for employees. Regional offices, which normally employ one administrative worker, have continued to provide in-person attention. Many of these people are in charge of several regional offices, due to which, opening hours have been altered, so services are provided on certain days in the week in each office. In Uruguay, the DNIC established a fortnightly staff rotation system.

As there were several operative changes, part of the support human resources were offered was centered on training and lectures for employees. These focused on three main themes: (i) biosafety; (ii) use of digital tools for telework; and (iii) new protocol for service provision, as shown in table 14.




⁹³ Bolivia. [Supreme Decree No. 4218](#) dated April 14, 2020.

⁹⁴ Brazil. [Provisional Measure No. 927](#) dated March 22, 2020.

⁹⁵ Chile. [Exempt Resolution No. 294](#) dated August 24, 2020.

⁹⁶ Costa Rica. [Communication STSE-0052-2020](#).

TABLE 14. Training in the Health Emergency Context

 <p>BIOSAFETY</p>	<p>Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic and Uruguay.</p>
 <p>USE OF DIGITAL TOOLS FOR TELEWORKING</p>	<p>Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama and Uruguay.</p>
 <p>NEW PROTOCOL FOR THE PROVISION OF THE SERVICE</p>	<p>Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic and Uruguay.</p>

Source: Author's compilation

Additionally, **Brazil** organized videoconferences on data protection and the adoption of new measures for registering people. **Colombia** took advantage of the quarantine period to implement on-line training sessions for UDAPV administrative staff, on appropriate management of biosafety protocols once the mobile brigades begin to operate. Also, training regarding documents and necessary requirements for the registration of births in vulnerable populations, especially of infants born to Venezuelan parents. **Honduras** implemented tutorials to guide health personnel and registration officials regarding filling out reports on deaths resulting from COVID-19, as these certificates were being filled out incorrectly.

Regarding biosafety protocols, all the countries taking part in this study followed the recommendations established by control organizations, which include:

- Mandatory wearing of facemasks at the workplace for both staff and users;
- Ongoing disinfection and sanitation of offices and service points;
- Adaptation of infrastructure to respect social distancing among staff and users;
- Alcohol gel available on all premises;
- Hand washing facilities for staff and users⁹⁷;
- Use of digital thermometers to measure staff and user temperatures⁹⁸.

⁹⁷ Only Jamaica and Peru have reported the existence of infrastructure in some of their offices for users to have access to hand washers.

⁹⁸ Ecuador, Haiti, Paraguay and Peru have not reported the existence of said equipment in their offices.

Haiti and **Uruguay** implemented additional measures, reporting that at their offices, facemasks are available free of charge for users. **Honduras** reported that their offices have doctors who carry out rapid COVID-19 tests mainly on administrative staff who attend the public, every 15 or 30 days, or per request from the office managers. **Peru**, too, reported that, on a monthly basis, they apply COVID-19 rapid detection tests to all their office staff.

Coordination, communication, and adaptation of job positions were key elements employees needed to understand regarding the new way to respond to users, both in offices and online. The most important impact in human resources management was with the at-risk members of the personnel, as some continued to telework but others stayed at home until the end of the health emergency. Although countries have said that these employees are still being paid their salaries, staff absences may affect service request response.

Emergency contexts also provide opportunities to improve and ensure access to services, and, despite COVID-19 difficulties, civil registry and identification offices have managed to promote innovative initiatives within an atmosphere of challenge. In the [next chapter](#) we provide a summary of the practices promoted by entities focused on reconnecting with, and improving, user service.

II.

Innovative Initiatives in Emergency Contexts





The pandemic has underscored, more than ever before, the importance of legal identification. The function of civil registry and identification offices is not only centered on providing documents, but rather on how these enable access to other services and transactions. Although the challenges faced by States show the need to have digitalized civil registry and identification services, it is also fundamental that mechanisms continue to be enabled so that the population without access to digital media is not excluded.

Regarding innovation, many times it tends to get confused with the creation of digital tools. So much so, that part of States' response to COVID-19 has been to implement digital tools to ease demand within several services⁹⁹. However, the region does not yet have the necessary technological infrastructure for massive use of digital or online services. According to the last survey measuring electronic government rates, 50% of ALC homes were found to lack Internet access¹⁰⁰, which could lead to a serious breach if only digital services are prioritized.



Reference to innovation suggests that initiatives will provide solutions in challenging contexts, so the following section summarizes the innovative practices promoted by civil registry and identification offices in the COVID-19 context. This summary refers to the creation of new services, the development of institutional strategies for an entity to be able to operate in emergency contexts, and the strengthening of human resources. These have all been prominent practices in the period under study.



⁹⁹ UN. [COVID-19 pushes more government activities online despite persisting digital divide](#). July 10, 2020.


¹⁰⁰ UN. [E-Government Survey 2020. Digital Government in the Decade of Action for Sustainable Development](#). Department of Economic and Social Affairs. 2020. p. 78.



COUNTRY	INITIATIVE	CHALLENGE	SOLUTION	IMPACT
Argentina	<p>DNI en tu celular (Identity Document in your Cellphone)</p> 	To guarantee that the population has their Identity Document during the emergency context to have access to services and programs offered by the Central.	<p>Identity Document in your Cellphone is an initiative developed in 2019, and serves the same functions as the physical Identity Document (DNI)¹⁰¹ since it has a high security level, thus becoming a new, reliable way for citizens to carry their identity document.</p> <p>Identity Document in your Cellphone is a service available to both Argentinian and foreign citizens with current residence, from age 14 up, and who have previously obtained the physical DNI. Since during the quarantine period the National Registry of Persons (RENAPER) have been suspended, Identity Document in your Cellphone has become an option for persons who, for some reason, lost their physical DNI, and makes available to them a valid identification document to have Access to services and everyday procedures.</p> <p>To have Identity Document in your Cellphone, the app My Argentina must be downloaded and an account must be created where the user's personal data are entered, including names, surnames, unique identification code, address and email address. After the information has been validated by the system, it is possible to sign in with the password created. The app then verifies the user's identity through facial biometrics. This verification occurs every time the user signs in. After validating the user's identity, in the app's menu the option "My Procedures" must be selected to activate the digital DNI service. It is worth noting that the My Argentina app integrates several services offered by the Government of the Nation and, in the pandemic context, Identity Document in your Cellphone has allowed users to speed the payment of the Emergency Family Income (<i>Ingreso Familiar de Emergencia</i>).</p>	As of 2020, 575,393 users are utilizing the Identity Document in your Cellphone initiative.
Belize	<p>Launch of the birth registration campaign</p> 	To sensitize on the importance of a birth certificate among vulnerable populations.	<p>The Unit for Vital Statistics, in collaboration with UNHCR and UNICEF, launched a campaign for birth registration including a humanitarian help component. Instead of a traditional approach with printed and digital media, the campaign will include basic messages regarding birth registration in the delivery of food and hygiene supplies particularly important in a COVID-19 context. This campaign is aimed at vulnerable populations, especially children born in indigenous communities, asylum seekers, refugees and migrants. In order to ensure the campaign is effective, messages are disseminated in Spanish, English, 'q'eqchi' and Mopan Maya with the distribution of aid packages.</p>	The campaign is expected to allow the creation of mobile brigades in at least 7 cities in the North of the country, 3 in the East and 11 in the South.


¹⁰¹ Except for voting and traveling abroad.



COUNTRY	INITIATIVE	CHALLENGE	SOLUTION	IMPACT
Brazil	Transparency Portal 	To digitalize the inscription of vital events carried out in all Civil Registry offices of the country.	<p>The transparency portal is a platform managed by ARPEN Brazil (National Association of Natural Persons Registers) and has been developed with the aim of providing citizens with information and statistical data on births, deaths and marriages.</p> <p>This initiative required the coordination of over 7,600 Civil Registry offices at the national level in order to: (i) standardize the information and registration of vital events, (ii) digitalize services and certificate issuances; and (iii) interoperate among all offices.</p> <p>The statistical information published on the Transparency Portal is obtained from the Information Center for Civil Registration, a system used by all civil registry offices to carry out the inscription of vital events. During the sanitary emergency, the portal has allowed to obtain real-time information about the number of death registration across all offices. This information can be classified by cause of death, place of death, date, sex and age group.</p>	As of October, 2020, the transparency portal has collected information from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 7,667 civil registry offices - 177,772,046 records - 10,861,543 cadasters of natural persons (CPF)
Chile	Strategic Emergency Plan 	To guarantee registration of vital events in emergency contexts	<p>The Strategic Emergency Plan of the Civil Registry and Identification Services has been created with the aim of protecting the health of individuals, workers and servants of the State, as well as to continue to serve the needs of citizens with respect to the demand of registry services. The Plan prioritizes four pillars of action:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interinstitutional coordination: focused on improving interoperational mechanisms between hospitals, cemeteries, emergency organisms and regional governments, for validation, verification and dissemination of relevant information. 2. Emergency offices opening: in regional and provincial capitals, in order to guarantee the delivery of services and to continue recording vital events in-situ. 3. Reassignment and training of human resources: in which employees who had not carried out registry functions are instructed as to how to cover the service's demand and to serve the public both in the brigades and in the emergency offices. 4. Creation of virtual channel services, which can be performed from the institutional web page. This does not preclude the possibility for these services to be carried out face-to-face, facilitating Access for populations with limited knowledge of digital tools use. <p>The Strategic Emergency Plan continues to be carried out and has allowed all registry services (vital events and identification) to be available during the emergency.</p>	<p>The Civil Registry and Identification Service offers 17 types of services online, including: free birth, death and marriage certificates; ID card blocking; appointment making; passport blocking; marriage certificate duplicates; non-married certificate request; online registry consultation; certificate verification, among others.</p>



COUNTRY	INITIATIVE	CHALLENGE	SOLUTION	IMPACT
Colombia	<p>Specialized training for UDAPV (Unit of Attention to Vulnerable Population)</p> 	To promote continuity of services to vulnerable populations using mobile units.	<p>The National Civil Status Registry includes UDAPV, which is in charge of making available civil registry and identification services in the farthest places of the country and providing services to nationals, indigenous and Afro-descendant communities, children, teenagers, displaced or at risk of displacement population or vulnerable populations. The main objective of UDAPV is focused on reducing the number of individuals without a birth registration or identity documents.</p> <p>Due to the COVID-19 context, mobile identification events were suspended in order to minimize contagion risk for workers and vulnerable populations. However, this allowed UDAPV workers to update their knowledge, for which they received virtual training in issues related to civil registry and identification. This training was necessary in order to understand requirements: (i) registration in the Civil Registry of persons born in Venezuela to Colombian parents; and (ii) children of Venezuelan parents born in Colombia. Besides, workers received training in biosafety protocols and all measures to take into account to resume events.</p>	On July 22, 2020 mobile events were resumed. As of October 15, 2020 11 events have taken place in 7 departments and 11 municipalities.
Costa Rica	<p>Digital certifications</p> 	To make available civil registry services to citizens through digital tools.	<p>The General Direction of Civil Registry undertook a campaign to encourage the use of the Civil Registry digital services, especially those related with the certification of vital events. To this end, an exclusive webpage was created where users may obtain birth, death and marital status certifications in a digital format, equally valid as paper certifications.</p> <p>To obtain any kind of certification, the user must select the type of certificate requested, enter the relevant information, and, upon confirmation of the data, the system requests an email address and the corresponding payment. After processing has been done, the user receives a code via email allowing them to access the certificate requested within 30 calendar days.</p>	<p>Between March and October 15, 2020, 132,046 certifications were requested:</p> <p>Births: 77,028 Deaths: 16,538 Marriages: 19,482 Marital Status: 18,998</p>


COUNTRY	INITIATIVE	CHALLENGE	SOLUTION	IMPACT
Ecuador	<p>Online death inscription</p> 	<p>To records deaths during the quarantine and social distancing periods.</p>	<p>The General Direction of Civil Registry (DIGERCIC) offers a new digital service: death inscription request. This service has been created with the aim of contributing to simplifying procedures and complying with the Government's provision to stay home.</p> <p>This service is available for all death causes, without the user having to do the paperwork in person. Users must access the virtual agency and select the option "Inscription request" in order to enter the data of the deceased, attaching the Statistical Report of General Deaths issued by the corresponding healthcare institution.</p> <p>The time established by DIGERCIC to respond to the request is one hour maximum: the platform automatically sends the request entered by the user to the Unified System of Registry and Identification (SURI) so that the staff in charge may revise and analyze the request. If the information entered is complete, the process goes on to authorize the inscription of the death and all of the data of the deceased are registered in the SURI system based on the Statistical Report of General Deaths. Once the information has been entered into the SURI system, death inscription records are printed and legalized by the signature of the service operator who carried out the inscription and the Area Coordinator or Technical Office Coordinator, who are authorized by the top authority of DIGERCIC to sign records. Once the certificate is ready, it is sent to the email address indicated by the user.</p>	<p>This new service is available 24/7. Between April and October 16, 2020 31,603 records have been made.</p>

COUNTRY	INITIATIVE	CHALLENGE	SOLUTION	IMPACT
El Salvador	<p>Identity Document (DUI) certifications</p> 	<p>To provide documents verifying the legal identity of citizens so that they can access to social protection programs and other services.</p>	<p>DUI certifications were created with the aim to continue to guarantee the right to identity and identification of all Salvadorian citizens with worn out, expired or lost dui's, and who, due to the health emergency, had not been able to obtain a new document since centers authorized to issue dui's were temporarily closed.</p> <p>Thus, two certifications are created:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digitally signed DUI certifications, so that a citizen may identify themselves before any entity of the public or private sectors. This certification includes a barcode allowing the receiving entity to verify its truthfulness in the RNPN database created to this end. These certifications allowed citizens to identify themselves in order to receive social welfare packages and financial aid, as well as obtaining circulation permits and carrying out banking transactions, among others. • Non-DUI Certifications for young individuals who became 18 years old during the emergency and have not been able to obtain their DUI due to DUI centers being closed. These individuals can use this certification before services requiring proof of identity, as well as continuing to their study-related paperwork requesting their DUI. <p>DUI certifications could be requested directly at the National Registry of Natural Persons (RNPN) offices or via email.</p>	<p>Until August 11, 2020, 47,047 DUI certifications and 1,630 non-DUI certifications were issued.</p>
Guatemala	<p>Unique data capture screen</p> 	<p>To facilitate Personal Identification Document (DPI) issuance by the National Registry of Persons (RENAP) to Guatemalan individuals living abroad.</p>	<p>In July, 2020, RENAP signed the addendum to the Inter-institutional Cooperation Agreement for Documenting Guatemalans Abroad alongside the Governance Ministry and the Foreign Affairs Ministry, with the aim of speeding up procedures for nationals abroad. This led to the project named Unique Data Capture Screen, which will serve to unify several offices technologically, obtaining documents such as passports, consular cards and DPI in the same procedure. This initiative shall benefit Guatemalans living abroad, reducing transaction costs since offices will be mutually connected to facilitate information verification and legal documentation issuance.</p>	<p>This initiative shall benefit over 3.5 million Guatemalans living abroad.</p>

COUNTRY	INITIATIVE	CHALLENGE	SOLUTION	IMPACT
Honduras	Intelligent Reopening Plan 	<p>To reactivate National Registry of Persons (RNP) services with protection measures to avoid risk of contagion.</p>	<p>The Intelligent Reopening Plan is a proposal that has allowed RNP to resume registration of vital acts and facts, as well as issuance of identification documents, since the health emergency offices had had to suspend face-to-face attention.</p> <p>The Intelligent Reopening Plan proposed the following actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Opening of municipal civil registries according to the following criteria: (a) volume of paperwork and income generated by each Civil Registry; (b) staff available to offer face-to-face services; (c) COVID-19 incidence by municipality; and (d) services to provide in the context of the emergency. Controlled opening schedule establishing office functioning by stages: In the first stage the 21 offices generating the greatest paperwork volume were opened. In the second stage, 13 additional offices were opened, and in the third stage 25 further offices were prioritized. Back-to-work process for user attention, cleaning, security and administrative staff: With the aid of the Human Resources department workers who could offer face-to-face services were identified and those who belonged to risk groups and were exempted from work. Likewise, work schedules were adapted, biosecurity equipment was given to all staff, furniture was adapted to offer social distancing between workers, and transportation was offered to staff to commute (stages 1 and 2). Also, cleaning and disinfection of all offices were intensified. <p>The Intelligent Reopening Plan has allowed for RNP to supply its services as demanded, and, since September, to program home visits to attend vulnerable population.</p>	<p>The criteria established for reopening Municipal Civil Registries have allowed 59 registries to be prioritized out of the 298 existing civil registry offices. Those 59 registries collect 80% of the institution's income.</p>

COUNTRY	INITIATIVE	CHALLENGE	SOLUTION	IMPACT
Jamaica	Electronic burial order 	To speed up and simplify death registration.	<p>Burial order is a document required to authorize funerals, burials or cremation of a deceased person, as well as one of the requirements for death registration.</p> <p>Before the pandemic, a doctor completed a cause of death certificate. This document was then given directly to the family so that they could obtain the burial order and carry out the death registration. Due to the pandemic the Registrar General's Department (RGD), supported by the Ministry of Health, created a new protocol so that once the doctor has completed the cause of death certificate, this information is sent to the civil registry offices. As a result, RGD has been able to receive information allowing it to create the burial order and to register the death. It should be noted that this service has been enabled for deaths occurring in hospitals. Once the Civil Registry officer enters the information of a cause of death certificate into the system, the electronic burial order is generated and sent to the next of kin via email, whatsapp or SMS to notify them that the document is available. This order can be printed and is free.</p> <p>Electronic burial orders avoid users to approach offices while allowing them to go ahead with any paperwork or service related to the death of their family member. The order has a code to check its veracity online.</p>	Electronic burial orders are issued for deaths occurring in health centers. It has limited the number of users at offices, taking into account capacity limitations established for each office.
Mexico	National Register and Identity System 	To have a unique registry of civil status facts and acts.	<p>With the aim of guaranteeing the human right to identity several federal entities started to use the National Register and Identity System (SID), an initiative driven by the General National Registry of Population and Identification (RENAPO) seeking to create a digital unique register of civil status facts and acts of persons in Mexico and abroad. Through a platform interconnecting various offices, among them Civil Registry courts, Consulates and RENAPO accurate information about registrations has been instantly available, providing the population with a quality service.</p> <p>SID facilitates registration of registry acts so that Civil Registry and family registry offices may have access to that information promptly.</p>	As of October 16, 2020, 12 federal entities have been using SID (Baja California, Baja California Sur, Campeche, Hidalgo, Jalisco, Morelos, Nayarit, Nuevo León, Oaxaca, Quintana Roo, Tabasco and Sonora). Two others are undergoing an implementation process (Mexico State and Veracruz).

COUNTRY	INITIATIVE	CHALLENGE	SOLUTION	IMPACT
Panama	<p>With-You registration offices</p> 	To digitize the services of the Registration Offices so that citizens and residents can perform paperwork from their computer or mobile device.	<p>"With-You" is the new online platform to access the digital services of the Registration Offices. It was created with the aim of modernizing, decentralizing and automating services offered to citizens related to obtaining records; identification documents, vital events certification and persons' legal acts. "With-You Registration Offices" have online attendance channels through mobile applications, self-service kiosks and digital tools, and are available both for Panamanian citizens and foreigners with a permanent resident document.</p> <p>Services offered by the platform include: online duplicate and renewal of identity document; search for lost or in-process identity documents; birth declarations; death declaration; search for death records; appointment requests to issue an identity document for the first time; duplicates for correction and renewal in 9 of the 16 regional offices, among others.</p>	In August, 2020 the online platform "With-You Registration Offices" was launched and its use is expected to become massive.
Peru	<p>Mobile facial RENIEC</p> 	To create a new attention channel to carry out paperwork and inquiries.	<p>Mobile facial RENIEC (National Registry of Identification and Civil Status) is a mobile device app allowing access to all services that the entity offers users. Users need to enter their DNI number and to accept use terms and conditions. The camera of the device must be on so that the app performs a facial biometry capture, which will be required later for signing in. The app also requests a cellphone number and an email address.</p> <p>Mobile facial RENIEC allows to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - See an image of the front and back of a physical DNI. - Access paperwork requirements including: (i) first-time registration; (ii) DNI registration for minors; (iii) regular DNI registration and belated DNI registration; (iv) DNI duplicates; (v) data modification; and (vi) renewal due to expiry. - Start duplicate DNI paperwork, modification of address or willingness to donate organs, verifying again the user's identity through facial biometry. - Inform about the latest DNI paperwork and whether the user is exempt from suffrage (pending fines). - Verify availability of registration records in the RENIEC databases. - Search for namesakes in the RENIEC database. - Inquiries to RENIEC agencies at the national level. 	As of October, 2020 over 500,000 app installations have been recorded.

COUNTRY	INITIATIVE	CHALLENGE	SOLUTION	IMPACT
Uruguay	Commands 	To inform staff about operational changes, with a humanistic approach.	<p>At the beginning of the pandemic, the National Direction of Civil Identification (DNIC) implemented a project for staff management named "Commands". The main objective of "Commands" was focused on keeping staff duly informed on the health crisis as well as new attention modes. This initiative helped facilitate communication among colleagues, since during the initial months of the declaration of the health emergency staff worked in 15-day rotating shifts. Therefore, before working for 15 consecutive days, the worker left notes and communications for the incoming worker with the same function for the next 15 days. This included welcoming, encouragement and user management messages. Likewise, Commands use was focused on reinforcing biosecurity measures for user attention and administrative management within the offices. This aspect has been most relevant, since all workers are now working face-to-face and compliance with biosecurity protocols needs to be strict.</p>	"Commands" have been established as a proposal also providing staff with psychological and emotional support in emergency contexts.

Conclusions and recommendations



The COVID-19 pandemic brought about several challenges to be faced by entities and institutions providing services to persons, also affecting civil registry and identification offices. In the information shown in this analysis, what stands out is the effort made by the States to continue operating and to communicate to their populations the operative changes, opening of offices, deadline extensions, and new services implemented in this period. The majority of offices have used the support of institutional social networks and webpages to inform the population, and, to a lesser degree, through press bulletins. Also, interinstitutional coordination with Ministries of Health, institutions in charge of social and economic programs, and local governments, has been essential to ensure continuing registration of births and access to identity documents, and defining new protocols of attention especially in hospitals where civil registry services were suspended. This coordination has also managed to establish alternatives to providing identity documents to people who during the emergency had lost their identification documents and needed to have them to access new benefit programs.

Another outstanding aspect is the creation of new online services, such as birth and death registrations, certification copies, requests for identification document duplicates, and certificates confirming ownership of an identity document. These four services were the most replicated in the region, allowing users who had internet connection to carry out procedures from their homes or offices.

Changes in procedures were implemented in order to simplify procedures and gradually meet service demands. Half the countries established extended deadlines for administrative and procedural processes, extending the period for due registration of births and deaths. Countries extended too the validity period for the identity document, so people would not be denied access to procedures and services if they did not have a valid document. In addition to these changes, some substantive requirements were exonerated with other people being authorized for declarations and official registrations, which, though replicated in fewer countries, are nevertheless good practices focused on simplifying registration of vital events.

In spite of these efforts, the impact of the pandemic on civil registry and identification offices was clear when they had to temporarily close, when services were interrupted in hospitals, when limited attention was given to vulnerable populations, and restrictions on in-person attendance were imposed. Although

from July 2020 all the entities in the countries in this study were already offering in-person services, these were not operating to full capacity. As was mentioned earlier, some countries had to give their employees special leave, and not all have the infrastructure needed to permit teleworking.

Also, because of social distancing restrictions, capacity in offices had to be reduced, meaning that fewer people than usual are served. As well, depending on the service the user needs to access, prior appointments are being assigned, restricting access to some services not only for members of the public who have no knowledge of the appointments system, but also for those who are not able to obtain appointments because these are limited in number.

Budget cuts in entities are worrying, as this might affect the continuity of initiatives focused on the attention of vulnerable populations, and, although service requests continue to be made, restrictions to in-office attention are still enforced. Fewer resources might lead to suspending other support programs for vulnerable populations, such as the mobile brigades. As this study shows, the brigades are partially functioning in a few countries, while others cannot say whether they will be reactivated for the remaining months of 2020, not only to avoid contagion risk, but also because of resources availability.

Faced with this situation, we are concerned about being able to determine whether births and deaths are, effectively, being duly registered, especially births which do not take place in hospitals.

Bearing in mind the situations described and having analyzed the strategies countries have developed to respond to requests for the services, it is recommended that countries define how they will continue to guarantee legal identification to vulnerable populations, which include those people with no access to electronic media, especially because the pandemic is producing a social and economic crisis that might augment inequality levels.

For this, it is necessary to plan for communication mechanisms for information on operative and administrative changes to reach this population. Seeking support from interinstitutional collaboration with local authorities and even community leaders is important so that they will keep their communities informed, especially if identification services take some time to arrive. Work plans might be implemented for community leaders to collect information regarding people who were unable to be registered during this period, so that later, the Civil Registry can formally register them. Temporary suspension of administrative deadlines and costs for people who cannot go to the offices, might be implemented too, as because of the context of pandemic, several communities have had to isolate, and circulation permits have been restricted.

To encourage due registration of vital events, especially of deaths, it is important to strengthen interinstitutional coordination mechanisms. Only a few countries have coordinated with forensic studies institutes or morgues to enable due registrations of deaths. Although this study did not analyze the death sub-registration rate, in the region it is still necessary that countries obtain due information

to allow them to adjust their public policies and update their data and electoral registers. But also, and especially in emergency contexts, due registration simplifies the analysis and comparison of death data reported by the ministries of health and those registered in civil registries.

Efforts made to continue guaranteeing nationality and legal identity to the populations must continue. While the health emergency alerts are active, States will be facing new challenges. That is why it is important that civil registry and identification entities be able to document their contingency plans and clearly define medium- and long-term strategies to manage accumulated requests for registration of vital events and issue of identity documents. Countries are committed to attaining target 16.9 of the sustainable development objectives, of providing access to a universal juridical identity by 2030, but, for this, they need to continue to coordinate actions with other allied institutions and organisms to enable due registration of vital events and issue of identity documents proving nationality. This way, they will also contribute to preventing new cases which might lead to high-risk statelessness, or total statelessness. The mechanisms and initiatives implemented are proof of the commitment States have undertaken. However, the region must remain alert to see how COVID-19 might affect the right to nationality and to legal identity.

Annex

Country profiles



Argentina

National Registry of Persons (RENAPER)

After the emergency declaration in March, 2020 establishing mandatory social isolation, civil registry and identification services were temporarily suspended until April 3, 2020, when face-to-face attention for births and deaths registration, as well as DNI issuance, were prioritized.

INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY		
Interinstitutional coordination for the promotion of births, deaths and identification registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ministry of Health → Local governments → Institutions in charge of social and economic programs 	
Budget management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Reduction in service collection 	
SERVICE MANAGEMENT AND PROVISION		
Services prioritized by face-to-face channels	Births registry in offices	April-October, 2020
	Births registry in hospitals	April-October, 2020
	Deaths registry in offices	April-October, 2020
	Deaths registry in hospitals, morgues or funeral homes	April-October, 2020
	Birth certificate copy	August-October, 2020
	Death certificate copy	August-October, 2020
	Issuance of identification document	April-October, 2020
Online-available services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Appointment request → Birth registration → Death registration → Birth certificate copy → Death certificate copy → Issuance of certificates or proofs of identification documents → Digital identity 	
Phone-available services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Appointment request 	
Changes to birth registry procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Appointment request → Extended deadlines for opportune registration → Ex-officio registry 	
Changes to death registry procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Appointment request → Extended deadlines for opportune registration 	
Changes to obtain identity document	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Appointment request → Validity date extension 	
HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT		
Working mode	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Rotating work shifts → Telework → Special leaves of absence 	
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Biosecurity → Digital tools for telework → Information on the new protocol for service provision 	
Biosecurity measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Mandatory use of masks or face shields → Office disinfection and sanitation → Social distancing → Gel alcohol availability → Hand washer enabling → Digital thermometer use → Infrastructure modification 	



Belize

Vital Statistics Unit (VSU)

After the emergency declaration in March, 2020, the General Attorney Minister established the measures to consider for as long as the sanitary emergency is in place, informing that VSU would continue to offer civil registration services while following biosecurity protocols.

INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY		
Interinstitutional coordination for the promotion of births, deaths and identification registration	→ Ministry of Health	
Budget management	→ Decrease in service collection → Cut in budget allocation	
SERVICE MANAGEMENT AND PROVISION		
Services prioritized by face-to-face channels	Births registry in offices	March-October, 2020
	Births registry in hospitals	March-October, 2020
	Deaths registry in offices	March-October, 2020
	Deaths registry in hospitals, morgues or funeral homes	March-October, 2020
	Birth certificate copy	March-October, 2020
	Death certificate copy	March-October, 2020
Special services enabled to serve vulnerable populations	→ Senior citizens → Gestating mothers	
HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT		
Working mode	→ Rotating work shifts	
Training	→ Biosecurity → Information on the new protocol for service provision	
Biosecurity measures	→ Mandatory use of masks or face shields → Office disinfection and sanitation → Social distancing → Gel alcohol availability → Hand washer enabling → Digital thermometer use → Infrastructure modification	



Bolivia

Civil Registry Service (SERECI) General Identification Services (SEGIP)

After the emergency declaration in March, 2020, a total quarantine was established from March 21, 2020 to June 30, 2020. Civil registry and identification services were declared essential, prioritizing deaths registration. The births registration service was enabled in May, 2020, while issuance of identity documents was resumed on July 20, 2020.

INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY		
Interinstitutional coordination for the promotion of births, deaths and identification registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ministry of Health → Local governments → Institutions in charge of social and economic programs → Forensic sciences institutes 	
Interinstitutional coordination for publication of vital statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ministry of Health → National Statistics Institute → Civil Registry Service 	
Budget management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Decrease in service collection → Cut in budget allocation 	
SERVICE MANAGEMENT AND PROVISION		
Services prioritized by face-to-face channels	Births registry in offices	May-October, 2020
	Deaths registry in offices	March-October, 2020
	Birth certificate copy	May-October, 2020
	Death certificate copy	May-October, 2020
	Issuance of identification document	July-October, 2020
Online-available services	→ Appointment request	
Phone-available services	→ Appointment request	
Services enabled by mobile units	→ Issuance of identification documents	
Changes to birth registry procedures	→ Appointment request	
Changes to death registry procedures	→ Appointment request	
	→ Exoneration of substantive requisites	
Changes to obtain identity document	→ Appointment request	
	→ Validity date extension	
HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT		
Working mode	→ Telework	
	→ Special leaves of absence	
Biosecurity measures	→ Mandatory use of masks or face shields	
	→ Office disinfection and sanitation	
	→ Social distancing	
	→ Gel alcohol availability	
	→ Hand washer enabling	
	→ Digital thermometer use	
	→ Infrastructure modification	



Brazil

National Association of Natural Persons Registrars (ARPEN – Brazil)

After the emergency declaration in March, 2020, establishing mandatory social isolation, deaths registration was prioritized as an essential service. Nevertheless, births registration continued to be done. On March 25, 2020, electronic delivery of documents was established for registration requests so that services were not suspended.

INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY		
Interinstitutional coordination for the promotion of births, deaths and identification registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ministry of Health → Local governments → Institutions in charge of social and economic programs 	
Interinstitutional coordination for publication of vital statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ministry of Health → National Statistics Institute → National Registrars of Natural Persons Association 	
Contingency plan for emergency contexts	→ Proviment No. 95 dated April 1, 2020: Provision on the functioning of notary and registry offices during the Health Emergency	
SERVICE MANAGEMENT AND PROVISION		
Services prioritized by face-to-face channels	Births registry in offices	March-October, 2020
	Births registry in hospitals	March and June-October, 2020
	Deaths registry in offices	March-October, 2020
	Deaths registry in hospitals, morgues or funeral homes	March and June-October, 2020
	Birth certificate copy	March-October, 2020
	Death certificate copy	March-October, 2020
Online-available services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Birth registration → Death registration → Birth certificate copy → Death certificate copy 	
Phone-available services	→ Appointment request	
Services enabled by mobile units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Birth registration → Death registration → Issuance of identification documents 	
Changes to birth registry procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Appointment requests → Exemption of substantive requirements → Extended deadlines for opportune registration 	
Changes to death registry procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Exemption of substantive requirements → Extended deadlines for opportune registration 	

(Continued on the next page)



HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT	
Working mode	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Rotating work shifts→ Telework→ Special leaves of absence
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Biosecurity→ Digital tools for telework→ Information on the new protocol for service provision
Biosecurity measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Mandatory use of masks or face shields→ Office disinfection and sanitation→ Social distancing→ Gel alcohol availability→ Hand washer enabling→ Digital thermometer use→ Infrastructure modification



Chile

Civil Registry and Identification Service

After the emergency declaration in March, 2020, establishing mandatory social isolation, vital events and identification services were considered essential, so that they were prioritized according to Protocol No. 2 of the Civil Registry and Identification Service. Services were not suspended.

INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY		
Interinstitutional coordination for the promotion of births, deaths and identification registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ministry of Health → Local governments → Institutions in charge of social and economic programs 	
Interinstitutional coordination for publication of vital statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ministry of Health → National Statistics Institute → Civil Registry and Identification Service 	
Budget management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Decrease in service collection → Cut in budget allocation 	
Contingency plan for emergency contexts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Coronavirus COVID-19 Operative/Preventive Plan → Strategic Emergency Plan 	
SERVICE MANAGEMENT AND PROVISION		
Services prioritized by face-to-face channels	Births registry in offices	March-October, 2020
	Births registry in hospitals	March-October, 2020
	Deaths registry in offices	March-October, 2020
	Birth certificate copy	March-October, 2020
	Death certificate copy	March-October, 2020
	Issuance of identification document	March-October, 2020
Online-available services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Appointment request → Birth certificate copy → Death certificate copy → Issuance of burial order 	
Services enabled by mobile units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Issuance of identification documents 	
Changes to birth registry procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Appointment request 	
Changes to death registry procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Appointment request → Extension of legitimate persons who may notify a death 	
Changes to obtain identity document	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Appointment request → Validity date extension 	
Special services enabled to serve vulnerable populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Senior citizens → Disabled people 	

(Continued on the next page)



HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT	
Working mode	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Rotating work shifts→ Telework→ Special leaves of absence
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Biosecurity→ Digital tools for telework→ Information on the new protocol for service provision
Biosecurity measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Mandatory use of masks or face shields→ Office disinfection and sanitation→ Social distancing→ Gel alcohol availability→ Hand washer enabling→ Digital thermometer use→ Infrastructure modification



Colombia

National Registry of Civil Status (RNEC)

After the emergency declaration in March, 2020, only notary offices with registration functions were authorized to offer face-to-face attention between March and June, 2020. As from June 8, 2020 it was authorized that in municipalities without notary offices with registration functions, civil registry services will be provided at the registry offices. Attention in all registry offices at the national level was resumed on September 1, 2020.

INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY		
Interinstitutional coordination for the promotion of births, deaths and identification registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ministry of Health → Local governments → Institutions in charge of social and economic programs 	
Interinstitutional coordination for publication of vital statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ministry of Health → National Statistics Institute → National Civil Registry Status 	
Budget management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Decrease in service collection 	
SERVICE MANAGEMENT AND PROVISION		
Services prioritized by face-to-face channels	Births registry in offices	March-October, 2020
	Births registry in hospitals	June-October, 2020
	Deaths registry in offices	March-October, 2020
	Deaths registry in hospitals, morgues or funeral homes	June-October, 2020
	Birth certificate copy	March-October, 2020
	Death certificate copy	March-October, 2020
	Issuance of identification document	June-October, 2020
Online-available services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Appointment request → Birth certificate copy → Death certificate copy → Duplicates of identification documents requests 	
Services enabled by mobile units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Birth registration → Death registration → Issuance of identification documents 	
Changes to birth registry procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Appointment request → Exoneration of substantive requirements → Extended deadlines for opportune registration 	
Changes to death registry procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Appointment request → Exoneration of substantive requirements → Extended deadlines for opportune registration 	
Changes to obtain identity document	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Appointment request 	
Special services enabled to serve vulnerable populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Indigenous communities → Individuals in human mobility → Senior citizens → Disabled people 	

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HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT	
Working mode	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Rotating work shifts→ Telework→ Special leaves of absence
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Biosecurity→ Digital tools for telework→ Information on the new protocol for service provision
Biosecurity measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Mandatory use of masks or face shields→ Office disinfection and sanitation→ Social distancing→ Gel alcohol availability→ Hand washer enabling→ Digital thermometer use→ Infrastructure modification



Costa Rica

General Civil Registry Direction

After the emergency declaration in March, 2020, the civil registry service and identification was declared essential and it was established that State entities and administrative offices must take all necessary measures to simplify or eliminate general procedures or requirements, as well as facilitating attention to all population. The Civil Registry prioritized vital events registration and issuance of documentation, while certifications started to be issued electronically.

INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY		
Interinstitutional coordination for the promotion of births, deaths and identification registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ministry of Health → Local governments → Institutions in charge of social and economic programs 	
Interinstitutional coordination for publication of vital statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ministry of Health → National Statistics Institute → General Civil Registry Direction 	
Budget management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Cut in budget allocation 	
SERVICE MANAGEMENT AND PROVISION		
Services prioritized by face-to-face channels	Births registry in offices	March-October, 2020
	Deaths registry in offices	March-October, 2020
	Issuance of identification document	March-October, 2020
Online-available services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Appointment request → Birth registration → Death registration → Birth certificate copy → Death certificate copy 	
Phone-available services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Duplicates of identification documents requests 	
Changes to birth registry procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Extended deadlines for opportune registration → Ex-officio register 	
Changes to death registry procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Extended deadlines for opportune registration → Ex-officio register 	
Changes to obtain identity document	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Validity date extension 	
Special services enabled to serve vulnerable populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Senior citizens → Disabled people 	
HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT		
Working mode	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Rotating work shifts → Telework → Special leaves of absence 	
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Biosecurity → Digital tools for telework → Information on the new protocol for service provision 	
Biosecurity measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Mandatory use of masks or face shields → Office disinfection and sanitation → Social distancing → Gel alcohol availability → Hand washer enabling → Digital thermometer use → Infrastructure modification 	



Ecuador

General Direction of Civil Registry and Identification (DIGERCIC)

After the emergency declaration in March, 2020, a state of exception due to a public disaster was decreed while guaranteeing public services, including registration of vital events and identification. Priority was given to registration of deaths, and since May, 2020 the service of birth registrations was enabled. In June, 2020 personal identity document services were resumed.

INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY		
Interinstitutional coordination for the promotion of births, deaths and identification registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ministry of Health → Institutions in charge of social and economic programs → Forensic sciences institutes 	
Interinstitutional coordination for publication of vital statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ministry of Health → National Statistics Institute → General Direction of Civil Registry and Identification 	
Budget management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Decrease in service collection → Cut in budget allocation 	
Contingency plan for emergency contexts	→ Protocol for resuming services	
SERVICE MANAGEMENT AND PROVISION		
Services prioritized by face-to-face channels	Inscripción de nacimiento en oficinas	De mayo a octubre, 2020
	Inscripción de nacimiento en hospitales	De abril a octubre, 2020
	Inscripción de defunción en oficinas	De marzo a octubre, 2020
	Copia del certificado de nacimiento	De junio a octubre, 2020
	Copia del certificado de defunción	De junio a octubre, 2020
	Emisión del documento de identificación	De junio a octubre, 2020
Online-available services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Appointment request → Death registration → Birth certificate copy → Death certificate copy → Issuance of certificates or proofs of identification documents 	
Services enabled by mobile units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Birth registration → Issuance of identification documents 	
Changes to birth registry procedures	→ Appointment request	
Changes to death registry procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Appointment request → Extension of legitimate persons who may notify a death 	
Changes to obtain identity document	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Appointment request → Validity date extension 	
Special services enabled to serve vulnerable populations	→ Individuals in human mobility	

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HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT	
Working mode	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Rotating work shifts→ Telework→ Special leaves of absence
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Biosecurity→ Digital tools for telework→ Information on the new protocol for service provision
Biosecurity measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Mandatory use of masks or face shields→ Office disinfection and sanitation→ Social distancing→ Gel alcohol availability→ Hand washer enabling→ Infrastructure modification

El Salvador

National Registry of Natural Persons (RNPN)

After the emergency declaration in March, 2020, services offered by family civil registries were not declared essential and there was a temporary suspension of registration of all vital events until August, 2020. Nevertheless, services of RNPN, the entity in charge of identifications, was in fact declared essential, since it was necessary to identify beneficiaries of the special emergency bonus.

INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY		
Interinstitutional coordination for the promotion of births, deaths and identification registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ministry of Health → Institutions in charge of social and economic programs 	
Budget management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Decrease in service collection → Cut in budget allocation 	
SERVICE MANAGEMENT AND PROVISION		
Services prioritized by face-to-face channels	Births registry in offices	August-October, 2020
	Deaths registry in offices	April-October, 2020
	Birth certificate copy	August-October, 2020
	Death certificate copy	August-October, 2020
	Issuance of identification document	July-October, 2020
Online-available services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Appointment request → Issuance of certificates or proofs of identification documents 	
Phone-available services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Appointment request 	
Changes to birth registry procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Extended deadlines for opportune registration 	
Changes to death registry procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Extended deadlines for opportune registration 	
Changes to obtain identity document	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Appointment request → Validity date extension 	
HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT		
Working mode	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Rotating work shifts → Telework → Special leaves of absence 	
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Biosecurity → Information on the new protocol for service provision 	
Biosecurity measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Mandatory use of masks or face shields → Office disinfection and sanitation → Social distancing → Gel alcohol availability → Hand washer enabling → Digital thermometer use → Infrastructure modification 	



Guatemala

National Registry of Persons (RENAP)

After the emergency declaration in March, 2020, it was established that all entities and offices which are part of the Executive Organism must guarantee to the population that essential public services will be available. Thus, services related to a right to identity were declared essential, and their offices continued working.

INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY		
Interinstitutional coordination for the promotion of births, deaths and identification registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ministry of Health → Local governments → Institutions in charge of social and economic programs → Forensic sciences institutes 	
Interinstitutional coordination for publication of vital statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ministry of Health → National Statistics Institute → National Registry of Persons 	
Budget management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Decrease in service collection → Cut in budget allocation 	
Contingency plan for emergency contexts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → RENAP'S Contingency Coronavirus COVID-19 Plan 	
SERVICE MANAGEMENT AND PROVISION		
Services prioritized by face-to-face channels	Births registry in offices	March-October, 2020
	Births registry in hospitals	September-October, 2020
	Deaths registry in offices	March-October, 2020
	Deaths registry in hospitals, morgues or funeral homes	September-October, 2020
	Birth certificate copy	March-October, 2020
	Death certificate copy	March-October, 2020
	Issuance of identification document	March-October, 2020
Online-available services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Appointment request → Birth certificate copy → Death certificate copy → Issuance of the burial order for emission of duplicates of the identification document 	
Phone-available services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Appointment request → Request for the emission of duplicates of the identification document 	
Changes to birth registry procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Exoneration of substantive requirements 	
Changes to death registry procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Exoneration of substantive requirements 	
Changes to obtain identity document	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Appointment request → Validity date extension 	
Special services enabled to serve vulnerable populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Senior citizens → Disabled people → Gestating mothers 	

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HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT	
Working mode	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Rotating work shifts→ Telework→ Special leaves of absence
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Biosecurity→ Information on the new protocol for service provision
Biosecurity measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Mandatory use of masks or face shields→ Office disinfection and sanitation→ Social distancing→ Gel alcohol availability→ Hand washer enabling→ Digital thermometer use→ Infrastructure modification



Haiti

National Identification Office (ONI)

After the emergency declaration in March, 2020 establishing mandatory social isolation, civil registry and identification services were declared essential and services continued to be offered.

INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY		
Interinstitutional coordination for the promotion of births, deaths and identification registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ministry of Health → Local governments → Institutions in charge of social and economic programs → Forensic sciences institutes 	
SERVICE MANAGEMENT AND PROVISION		
Services prioritized by face-to-face channels	Births registry in offices	March-October, 2020
	Deaths registry in offices	March-October, 2020
	Birth certificate copy	March-October, 2020
	Death certificate copy	March-October, 2020
	Issuance of identification document	March-October, 2020
Services enabled by mobile units	→ Issuance of identification documents	
Changes to birth registry procedures	→ Appointment request	
Changes to obtain identity document	→ Appointment request	
Special services enabled to serve vulnerable populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Communities living in rural areas → Senior citizens 	
HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT		
Working mode	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Rotating work shifts → Special leaves of absence 	
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Biosecurity → Information on the new protocol for service provision 	
Biosecurity measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Mandatory use of masks or face shields → Office disinfection and sanitation → Social distancing → Gel alcohol availability → Hand washer enabling → Infrastructure modification 	

Honduras

National Registry of Persons (RNP)

After the emergency declaration in March, 2020 establishing mandatory social isolation, civil registry and identification services were temporarily suspended until June 19, 2020. After the latter date, face-to-face attention was prioritized for registering vital events and issuing identity documents.

INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY		
Interinstitutional coordination for the promotion of births, deaths and identification registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ministry of Health → Local governments → Institutions in charge of social and economic programs → Forensic sciences institutes 	
Interinstitutional coordination for publication of vital statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → National Statistics Institute → National Registry of Persons 	
Budget management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Decrease in service collection → Cut in budget allocation 	
Contingency plan for emergency contexts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Intelligent reopening plan 	
SERVICE MANAGEMENT AND PROVISION		
Services prioritized by face-to-face channels	Births registry in offices	June–October, 2020
	Deaths registry in offices	March–October, 2020
	Birth certificate copy	June–October, 2020
	Death certificate copy	June–October, 2020
	Issuance of identification document	June–October, 2020
Online-available services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Birth certificate copy → Issuance of certificates or proofs of identification documents 	
Services enabled by mobile units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Issuance of identification documents 	
Changes to birth registry procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Extended deadlines for opportune registration 	
Changes to death registry procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Extended deadlines for opportune registration 	
Changes to obtain identity document	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Validity date extension 	
Special services enabled to serve vulnerable populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Beneficiaries of humanitarian aid 	
HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT		
Working mode	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Rotating work shifts → Telework → Special leaves of absence 	
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Biosecurity → Information on the new protocol for service provision 	
Biosecurity measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Mandatory use of masks or face shields → Office disinfection and sanitation → Social distancing → Gel alcohol availability → Hand washer enabling → Digital thermometer use → Infrastructure modification 	



Jamaica

Registrar General's Department (RGD)

After the emergency declaration in March, 2020, the government indicated the social distancing conditions which government offices must apply in order to continue offering services. Under this protocol, civil registration services continued to be offered to the public.

INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY		
Interinstitutional coordination for the promotion of births, deaths and identification registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ministry of Health Forensic sciences institutes 	
Budget management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Decrease in service collection 	
SERVICE MANAGEMENT AND PROVISION		
Services prioritized by face-to-face channels	Births registry in offices	March-October, 2020
	Births registry in hospitals	March-October, 2020
	Deaths registry in offices	March-October, 2020
	Deaths registry in hospitals, morgues or funeral homes	March-October, 2020
	Birth certificate copy	March-October, 2020
	Death certificate copy	March-October, 2020
Online-available services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Death registration → Burial order issuance 	
Changes to death registry procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ex-officio register → Extension of legitimate persons who may notify a death 	
HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT		
Working mode	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Telework → Special leaves of absence 	
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Biosecurity → Digital tools for telework → Information on the new protocol for service provision 	
Biosecurity measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Mandatory use of masks or face shields → Office disinfection and sanitation → Social distancing → Gel alcohol availability → Digital thermometer use → Infrastructure modification 	



Mexico

General Direction of the National Registry of Population and Identity (RENAPO)

After the emergency declaration in March, 2020 extraordinary measures were established, considering as an essential activity the operation of the Government's social programs. This was how 21 federal entities issued agreements, decrees, guidelines and communications regarding actions and extraordinary measures for Central Offices and Civil Registry Offices, including Baja California, Baja California Sur, Campeche, Coahuila, Chiapas, Chihuahua, Durango, Guerrero, Hidalgo, Jalisco, Morelos, Nayarit, Nueva León, Oaxaca, Puebla, Quintana Roo, San Luis Potosí, Tabasco, Tlaxcala, Veracruz and Yucatán. In the 11 remaining entities guidelines were not issued, but measures were implemented to guarantee services would continue to be delivered.

INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY		
Interinstitutional coordination for the promotion of births, deaths and identification registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ministry of Health Local governments Institutions in charge of social and economic programs Forensic sciences institutes 	
Interinstitutional coordination for publication of vital statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ministry of Health National Statistics Institute General Direction of the National Registry of Population and Identity Civil registries of federal entities 	
SERVICE MANAGEMENT AND PROVISION		
Services prioritized by face-to-face channels	Births registry in offices	March-October, 2020
	Births registry in hospitals	March-October, 2020
	Deaths registry in offices	March-October, 2020
	Deaths registry in hospitals, morgues or funeral homes	March-October, 2020
	Birth certificate copy	March-October, 2020
	Death certificate copy	March-October, 2020
Online-available services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Appointment request → Birth registration → Death registration → Birth certificate copy → Death certificate copy 	
Phone-available services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Birth registration → Death registration 	
Services enabled by mobile units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Birth registration 	
Changes to birth registry procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Appointment request → Exoneration of substantive requirements 	
Changes to death registry procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Appointment request → Exoneration of substantive requirements → Extension of legitimate persons who may notify a death 	
Special services enabled to serve vulnerable populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Indigenous communities → Individuals in human mobility → Senior citizens → Disabled people → Gestating mothers 	

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HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT	
Working mode	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Rotating work shifts→ Telework→ Special leaves of absence
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Biosecurity→ Digital tools for telework→ Information on the new protocol for service provision
Biosecurity measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Mandatory use of masks or face shields→ Office disinfection and sanitation→ Social distancing→ Gel alcohol availability→ Hand washer enabling→ Digital thermometer use→ Infrastructure modification

Panama

Electoral Tribunal National Direction of the Civil Registry National Direction of Identity Documents

After the emergency declaration in March, 2020, in which a curfew state was declared, it was established that Civil Registry services were to be suspended from March 25, 2020 to May 25, 2020. During this period issuance of identity documents was maintained, as well as delivery of birth and death clinical statements, and issuance of Civil Registry certificates through supermarket chains.

INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY		
Interinstitutional coordination for the promotion of births, deaths and identification registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ministry of Health → Institutions in charge of social and economic programs → Forensic sciences institutes 	
Interinstitutional coordination for publication of vital statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ministry of Health → National Statistics Institute → National Direction of the Civil Registry 	
Budget management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Decrease in service collection → Cut in budget allocation 	
SERVICE MANAGEMENT AND PROVISION		
Services prioritized b face-to-face channels	Births registry in offices	June-October, 2020
	Deaths registry in offices	June-October, 2020
	Birth certificate copy	June-October, 2020
	Death certificate copy	June-October, 2020
	Issuance of identification document	March-October, 2020
Online-available services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Appointment request → Birth registration → Death registration → Birth certificate copy → Death certificate copy → Duplicates of identification documents requests 	
Phone-available services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Appointment request → Birth registration → Death registration 	
Changes to birth registry procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Exoneration of substantive requirements → Extended deadlines for opportune registration 	
Changes to death registry procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Exoneration of substantive requirements → Ex-officio register → Extension of legitimate persons who may notify a death 	
Changes to obtain identity document	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Appointment request → Validity date extension 	
Special services enabled to serve vulnerable populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Beneficiaries of humanitarian aid 	

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HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT	
Working mode	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Rotating work shifts→ Telework→ Special leaves of absence
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Biosecurity→ Digital tools for telework→ Information on the new protocol for service provision
Biosecurity measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Mandatory use of masks or face shields→ Office disinfection and sanitation→ Social distancing→ Gel alcohol availability→ Hand washer enabling→ Digital thermometer use→ Infrastructure modification



Paraguay

Civil Status Registry (REC)

After the emergency declaration in March, 2020 establishing mandatory social isolation, Civil Registry services were declared essential, so that REC doors remained open for death registrations only. Since May, 2020 the birth registration service is resumed.

INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY		
Interinstitutional coordination for the promotion of births, deaths and identification registration	→ Ministry of Health	
Budget management	→ Decrease in service collection Cut in budget allocation	
Contingency plan for emergency contexts	→ Plan for the gradual lifting of general preventive isolation	
SERVICE MANAGEMENT AND PROVISION		
Services prioritized by face-to-face channels	Births registry in offices	May-October, 2020
	Births registry in hospitals	March-October, 2020
	Deaths registry in offices	March-October, 2020
	Deaths registry in hospitals, morgues or funeral homes	May-October, 2020
	Birth certificate copy	May-October, 2020
	Death certificate copy	May-October, 2020
	Issuance of identification document	May-October, 2020
Phone-available services	→ Birth registration Death registration	
Services enabled by mobile units	→ Issuance of identification documents	
Special services enabled to serve vulnerable populations	→ Senior citizens	
HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT		
Working mode	→ Rotating work shifts → Telework → Special leaves of absence	
Training	→ Biosecurity → Information on the new protocol for service provision	
Biosecurity measures	→ Mandatory use of masks or face shields → Office disinfection and sanitation → Social distancing → Gel alcohol availability → Hand washer enabling → Infrastructure modification	



Peru

National Identification and Civil Status Registry (RENIEC)

After the emergency declaration in March, 2020 establishing mandatory social isolation, RENIEC services were suspended until July 1, 2020, when face-to-face attention was resumed to offer services which cannot be completed through the institutional webpage. This is how vital events registration and DNI issuance were prioritized.

INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY		
Interinstitutional coordination for the promotion of births, deaths and identification registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ministry of Health → Local governments → Institutions in charge of social and economic programs 	
Interinstitutional coordination for publication of vital statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ministry of Health → National Statistics Institute → National Registry of Identification and Civil Status 	
Budget management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Decrease in service collection 	
Contingency plan for emergency contexts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Agency reopening plan → Institutional plan against COVID-19 → Reactivate RENIEC plan 	
SERVICE MANAGEMENT AND PROVISION		
Services prioritized by face-to-face channels	Births registry in offices	July-October, 2020
	Deaths registry in offices	July-October, 2020
	Birth certificate copy	July-October, 2020
	Death certificate copy	July-October, 2020
	Issuance of identification document	July-October, 2020
Online-available services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Appointment request → Death registration → Birth certificate copy → Death certificate copy → Duplicates of identification documents requests → Issuance of certificates or proofs of identification documents → Digital identity 	
Phone-available services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Issuance of certificates or proofs of identification documents 	
Changes to birth registry procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Appointment request → Exoneration of substantive requirements → Extended deadlines for opportune registration 	
Changes to death registry procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Appointment request → Extended deadlines for opportune registration → Ex-officio register → Extension of legitimate persons who may notify a death 	
Changes to obtain identity document	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Appointment request → Validity date extension 	
Special services enabled to serve vulnerable populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Individuals in human mobility 	
HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT		
Working mode	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Telework → Special leaves of absence 	
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Biosecurity → Information on the new protocol for service provision 	
Biosecurity measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Mandatory use of masks or face shields → Office disinfection and sanitation → Social distancing → Gel alcohol availability → Infrastructure modification 	



Dominican Republic

Central Electoral Office (JCE)

After the emergency declaration in March, 2020 establishing mandatory social isolation, civil registry services were temporarily suspended until May 25, 2020.

INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY		
Interinstitutional coordination for the promotion of births, deaths and identification registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ministry of Health → Forensic sciences institutes 	
Interinstitutional coordination for publication of vital statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ministry of Health → National Statistics Institute → Central Electoral Office 	
SERVICE MANAGEMENT AND PROVISION		
Services prioritized by face-to-face channels	Births registry in offices	June-October, 2020
	Births registry in hospitals	June-October, 2020
	Deaths registry in offices	June-October, 2020
	Deaths registry in hospitals, morgues or funeral homes	June-October, 2020
	Birth certificate copy	June-October, 2020
	Death certificate copy	June-October, 2020
	Issuance of identification document	June-October, 2020
Online-available services	→ Appointment request	
Phone-available services	→ Appointment request	
Changes to birth registry procedures	→ Extended deadlines for opportune registration	
Changes to death registry procedures	→ Extended deadlines for opportune registration	
Changes to obtain identity document	→ Appointment request	
Special services enabled to serve vulnerable populations	→ Senior citizens	
HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT		
Modalidad de trabajo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Rotating work shifts → Telework → Special leaves of absence 	
Capacitaciones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Biosecurity → Information on the new protocol for service provision 	
Medidas de bioseguridad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Mandatory use of masks or face shields → Office disinfection and sanitation → Social distancing → Gel alcohol availability → Hand washer enabling → Digital thermometer use → Infrastructure modification 	

Uruguay

General Direction of Civil Status Registry (DGREC) National Direction of Civil Identification (DNIC)

After the emergency declaration in March, 2020, DGREC services continued to be available to the population. DNIC prioritized the issuance of identity documents and temporarily suspended passport issuance.

INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY		
Interinstitutional coordination for the promotion of births, deaths and identification registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ministry of Health Institutions in charge of social and economic programs Forensic sciences institutes 	
Budget management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Decrease in service collection Cut in budget allocation 	
SERVICE MANAGEMENT AND PROVISION		
Services prioritized by face-to-face channels	Births registry in offices	March-October, 2020
	Births registry in hospitals	March-October, 2020
	Deaths registry in offices	March-October, 2020
	Deaths registry in hospitals, morgues or funeral homes	March-October, 2020
	Birth certificate copy	March-October, 2020
	Death certificate copy	March-October, 2020
	Issuance of identification document	March-October, 2020
Online-available services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Appointment request Birth certificate copy Death certificate copy 	
Changes to birth registry procedures	→ Appointment request	
Changes to death registry procedures	→ Appointment request	
Changes to obtain identity document	→ Appointment request	
HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT		
Working mode	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Rotating work shifts → Telework → Special leaves of absence 	
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Biosecurity → Digital tools for telework → Information on the new protocol for service provision 	
Biosecurity measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Mandatory use of masks or face shields → Office disinfection and sanitation → Social distancing → Gel alcohol availability → Hand washer enabling → Digital thermometer use → Infrastructure modification 	

