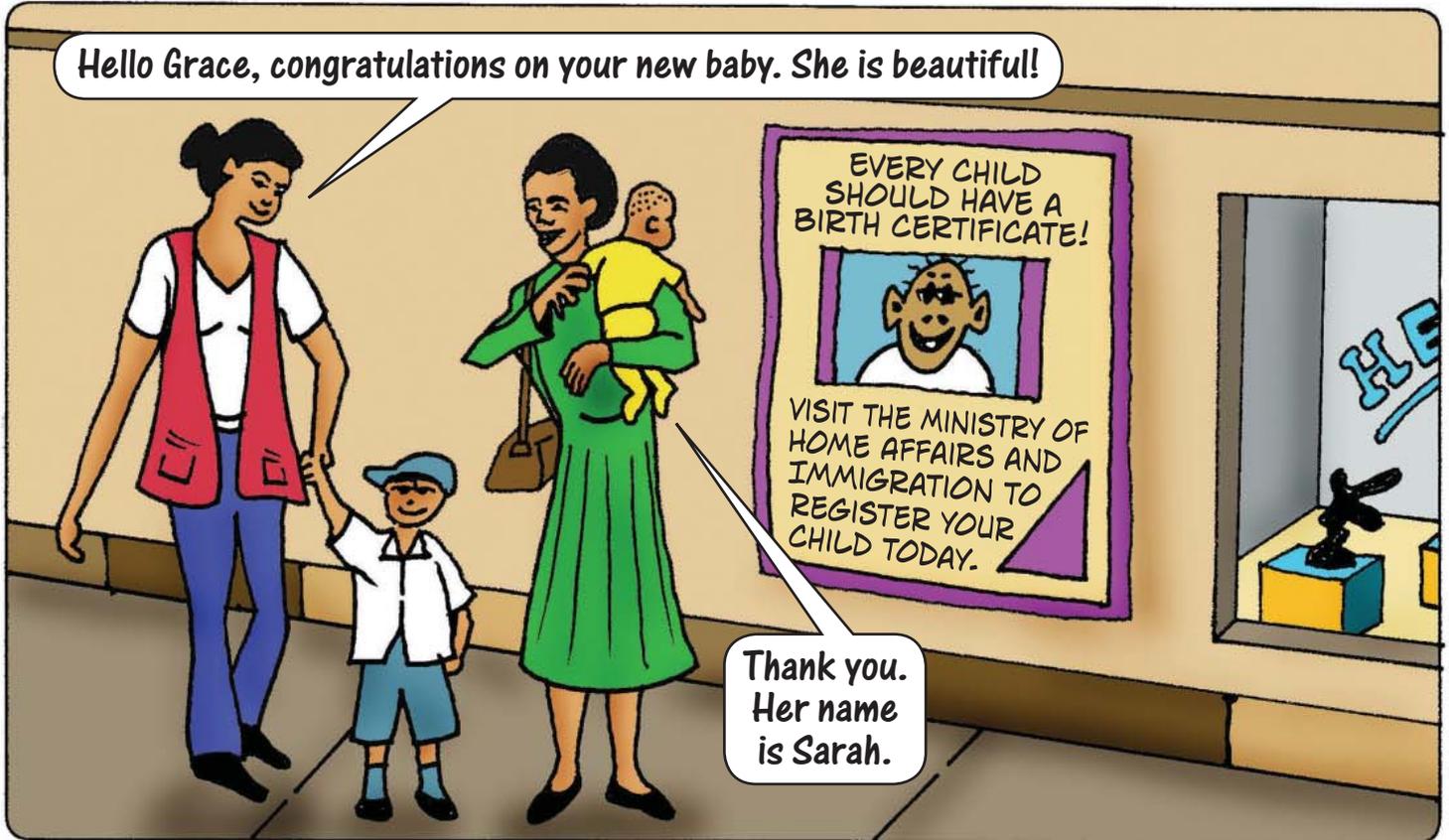


HOW TO REGISTER THE BIRTH OF YOUR CHILD





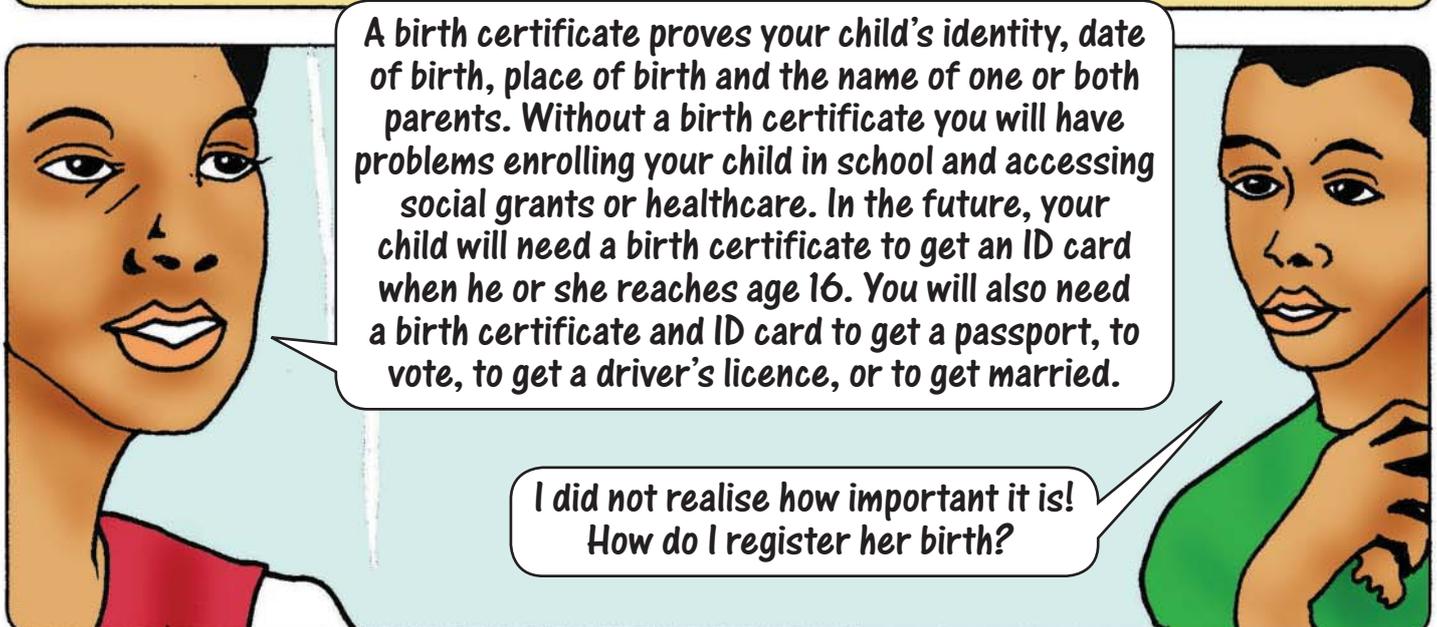
It is very important to register the birth of your child. Then Sarah will have a birth certificate. You should register your child as soon as possible after he or she is born.

Why does Sarah need a birth certificate?

SIX REASONS YOUR CHILD NEEDS A BIRTH CERTIFICATE

1. To access health services such as immunisation
2. To access social welfare grants
3. To enrol at school
4. To get an ID card or a passport
5. To get married
6. To vote

It is possible to do most of these things without a birth certificate, but it will be much harder because a birth certificate is the easier way to prove exact age.



A birth certificate proves your child's identity, date of birth, place of birth and the name of one or both parents. Without a birth certificate you will have problems enrolling your child in school and accessing social grants or healthcare. In the future, your child will need a birth certificate to get an ID card when he or she reaches age 16. You will also need a birth certificate and ID card to get a passport, to vote, to get a driver's licence, or to get married.

I did not realise how important it is!
How do I register her birth?

In some places, you can register at the hospital where you gave birth. If the hospital where you give birth does not have a facility, you should register the child at the nearest regional Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration office.



Does Sarah's father Luke have to come with me to register the birth? We are not in a relationship anymore.

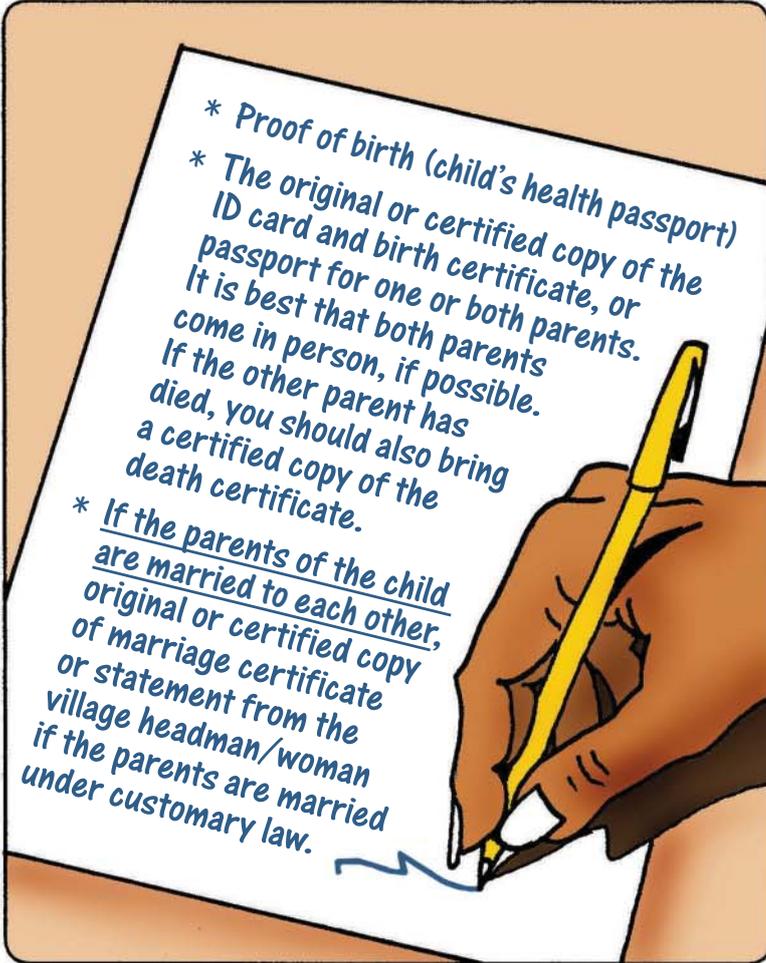
You need to speak to him about birth registration. You both need to agree if you want to include his name on the birth certificate. If he does not want his name on the birth certificate, you can still register Sarah on your own in your surname.

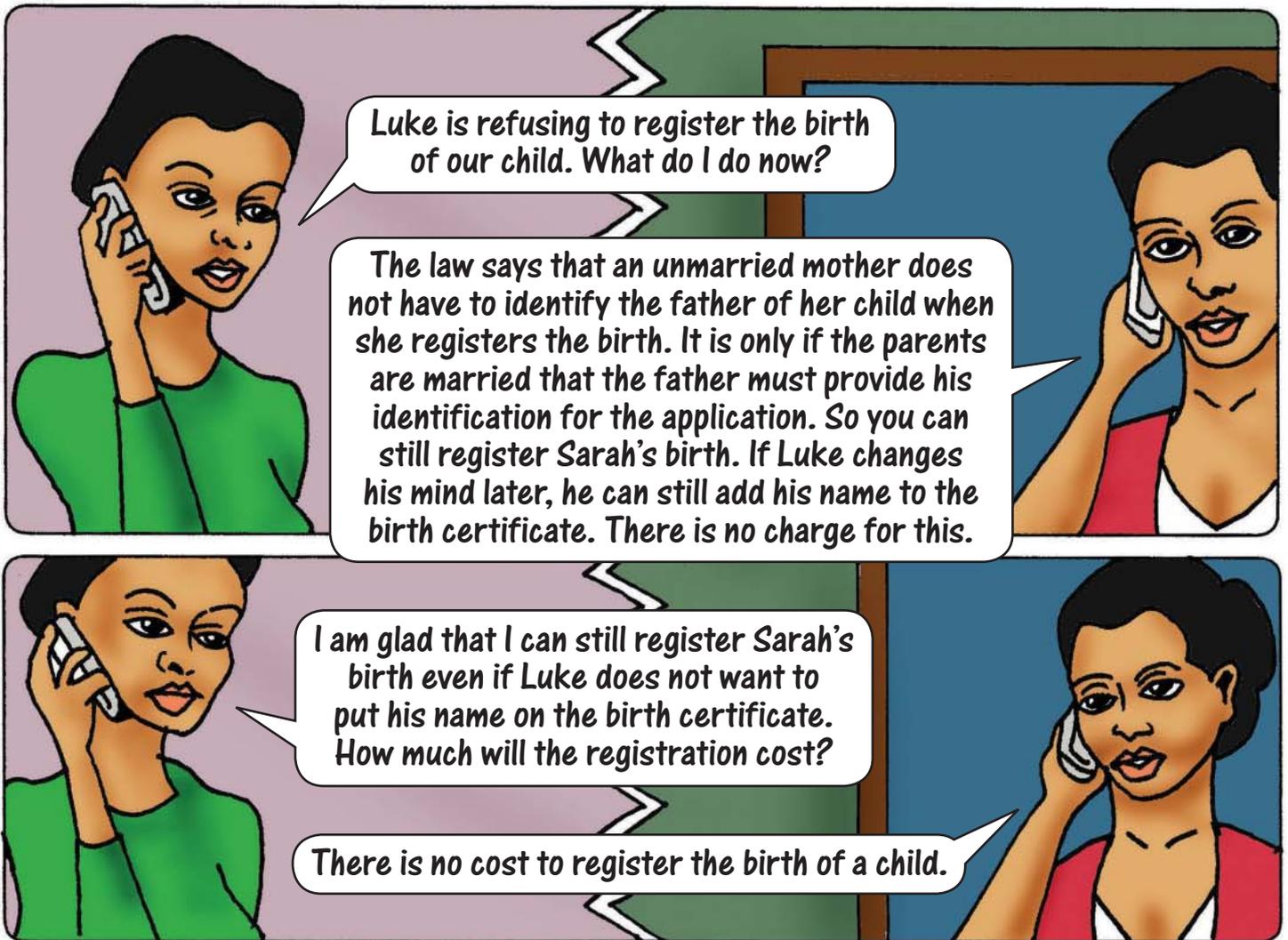
What information should I take with me?

I will write it down for you.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU DO NOT HAVE THE DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR BIRTH REGISTRATION

- If you have lost your child's health passport, you can get a copy from the hospital where you gave birth.
- If you do not have a birth certificate, you should register yourself through the late registration of birth process at the nearest regional Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration office. If you do not have an ID card but you do have a birth certificate, you should apply for an ID card. Then you can register the birth of your child.
- If you still have problems or do not have all the documents that you need, you should speak to the clerk at the Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration office for advice.

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- * Proof of birth (child's health passport)
 - * The original or certified copy of the ID card and birth certificate, or passport for one or both parents. It is best that both parents come in person, if possible. If the other parent has died, you should also bring a certified copy of the death certificate.
 - * If the parents of the child are married to each other, original or certified copy of marriage certificate or statement from the village headman/woman if the parents are married under customary law.



RULES ABOUT BIRTH REGISTRATION FOR UNMARRIED PARENTS

- (1) The mother cannot name a man as the child's father on the birth certificate without his consent. If the mother wants to name a man as the father on the birth certificate, the father must be present, or provide a sworn written statement (an affidavit) that he has consented to be listed as the father on the birth certificate. If the father is deceased, his name cannot be added after the initial registration.
- (2) The mother cannot be forced to give details about the child's father. If she does not want to give any details about the father, no one will be named as the child's father on the birth certificate. You can still add the father's details to the birth certificate later if you both want to do this. There is no charge for this.

Martha, how do you know so much about birth registration?

I learnt about it when I registered my son Joseph last year. There were some problems because I did not have proof of his birth, but the people at the Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration helped me.



But Joseph is 5 years old. Wasn't it too late to register him?

You should register your child as soon as possible after the birth - within 14 days of the birth is best. But if your child is more than one year old, you can still register the birth through a process called late registration of birth. If you do not have the child's health passport, you will need extra documents, such as the child's baptismal certificate. Late registration of birth is also free of charge, like registration at the time of birth. The hospital-based birth registration facilities do not do late registrations of birth.



WHAT TO DO IF YOU DO NOT HAVE PROOF OF YOUR CHILD'S BIRTH

If you do not have proof of your child's birth, you can show his or her baptismal certificate. You can also get a sworn statement from the principal of the first school your child attended or the headman of your village. If you cannot provide any documentation, two witnesses who are five years older than the child must come with you to give information about your child's age and identity. The child's parents can be the witnesses if there is really no one else who can give the necessary information. If you are registering the birth of a child who is over the age of 14, the Ministry requests that you bring the child along so that the child's fingerprints can be taken as a standard security measure.

The traditional leader is asking me to pay a lot of money for a sworn statement. What can I do?

You can get an affidavit from another person, such as the principal of the school that your child first attended.

So even if you do not have your child's health passport, you can still register the birth?



Yes, you can bring a sworn letter called an affidavit from someone such as the local headman or the principal of the child's first school instead. I was able to use my son's baptismal certificate.

You and the father are not married. Is the father's name on the birth certificate?



Yes, we both agreed that he should be listed, and we agreed that our son should have his father's surname.

What do I write for Sarah's surname? I am not in a relationship with the father, but what if he changes his mind and wants to give the child his surname?

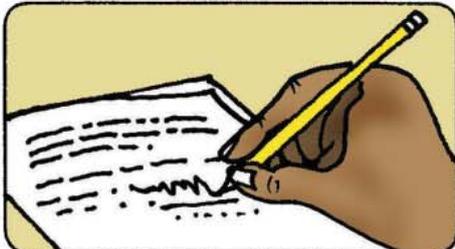


You cannot use his surname unless you both consent to this since you are not married. You must use your surname if he has not agreed to use his surname. If he wants the child to have his surname later, and you agree to this, you can change it on the birth certificate. There is no charge for this.



I am here to register my daughter's birth and get a birth certificate.

Here is the application form. I need to see proof of her birth and your identification please.



Everything is in order here. Here is your daughter's birth certificate.



That was easy! Thank you for your help. I am glad that I learned about my responsibility to register Sarah's birth.

It is important that all children in Namibia have birth certificates so that they can access services they need throughout life.

HOW TO APPLY FOR BIRTH REGISTRATION

NOTIFICATION OF BIRTH

When: At child's birth, or anytime up until the child is one year old.

Where: At the hospital where your child was born, if it offers this service, or at the nearest regional Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration office. Some magistrates' courts also register births.

LATE REGISTRATION OF BIRTH

When: Anytime after the child is one year old.

Where: Nearest regional Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration office. *A late registration is not possible in any hospital.*

To find the nearest Ministry of Home Affairs & Immigration office, contact the Ministry at **061-2922111**.

WHAT TO BRING FOR BOTH TYPES OF REGISTRATION:

1. Your child's health passport (baptismal certificate will be accepted for late registration if the health passport is missing).
2. ID card and birth certificate or passport for one or both parents.
3. *If the parents of the child are married:* Marriage certificate or statement from the village headman/woman if the parents are married under customary law.

WHOSE SURNAME SHOULD BE USED IF THE CHILD IS BORN OUTSIDE OF MARRIAGE?

1. *If it is only the mother registering the child's birth and the father is not listed on the birth certificate,* then the child must be given the mother's surname. The father does not have to consent if the mother wants to give the child her surname.
2. *If both parents are named on the birth certificate,* the child can be given either the mother's surname or the father's surname. The child can take the father's surname only if both the mother and the father consent to this.

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE CHILD'S PARENTS MARRY AFTER THE CHILD IS BORN?

The registration of birth can be changed to register the birth as if the parents had been legally married to each other when the child was born. The previous record will be removed from the government's files.

DO YOU
... HAVE A QUESTION?
... HAVE A COMMENT?
CONTACT US!

SMS: 081-4241591
Email: comic@lac.org.na
Fax: 088-613715
Post: P.O. Box 604 Windhoek

We would like to hear your feedback about this comic.

For more information, contact the Ministry of Home Affairs & Immigration (061-2922111).

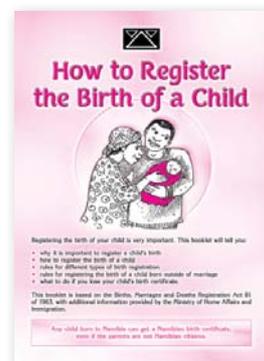


Text:
CHRISTINA BENINGER
Illustrations, design and layout:
DUDLEY VIALI and PERRI CAPLAN
Project supervision:
RACHEL COOMER and DIANNE HUBBARD
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The booklet pictured above also provides more information. It is available at the offices of the LAC and the Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration, and on the LAC website.