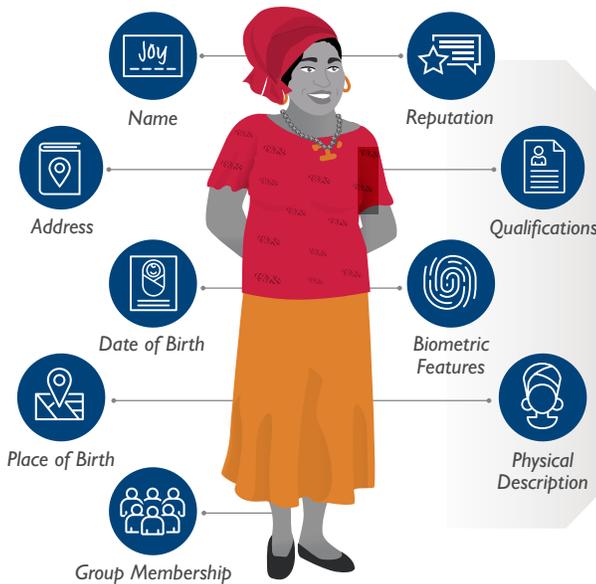# DIGITAL IDENTITY AND INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT

There may be no single factor that affects a person's ability to share in the gains of global development as much as having a reliable identification (ID). Identity unlocks formal services as diverse as voting, financial account ownership, loan applications, business registration, land titling, and school enrollment. Robust identity systems can also curb illegal border crossings and fraudulent financial transactions while guarding against human trafficking and child marriage.

Digitization of ID systems, using a variety of technologies, offers numerous benefits to individuals and institutions. Thoughtful design choices, deliberate approaches for relevant data collection and management, and effective rollout all contribute to ensuring that potential harms of digital IDs are minimized and the benefits are truly realized. The example below of Joy's journey helps to illustrate how these pieces fit together. By becoming aware of these systems and tradeoffs, the development community can be a responsible and effective steward of this technology.
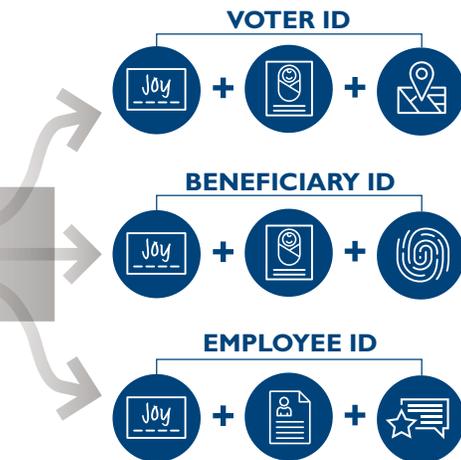
FEATURES OF JOY'S IDENTITY

Multiple different features together create a unique identity for Joy.

Name
Reputation
Address
Qualifications
Date of Birth
Biometric Features
Place of Birth
Physical Description
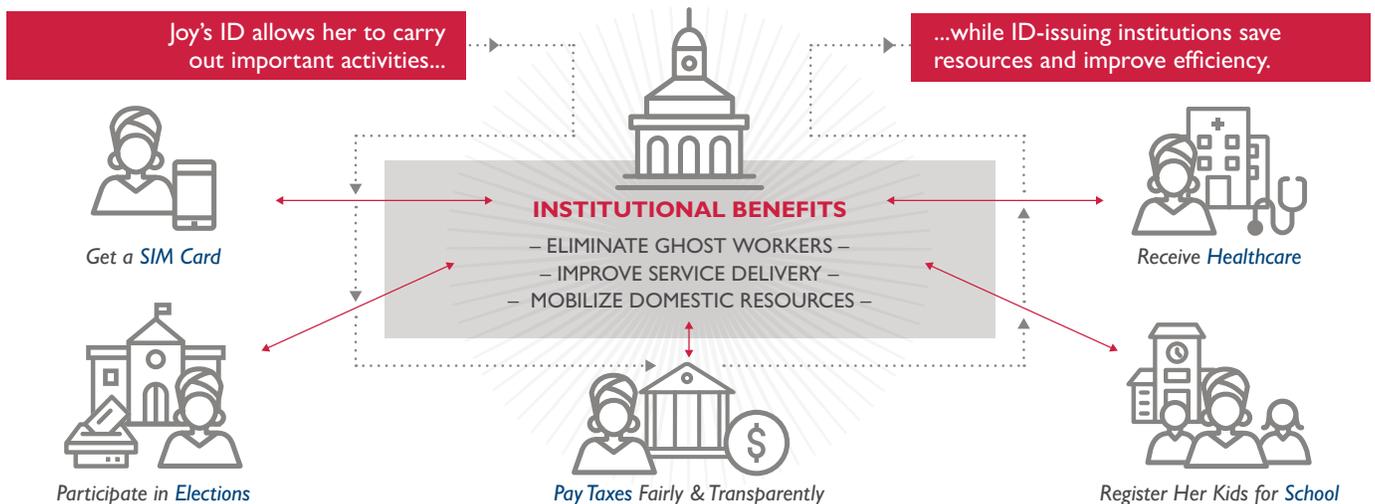Group Membership

CAPTURING JOY'S IDENTITY FEATURES TO CREATE ID SYSTEMS

Select features of Joy's identity can be captured, stored and accessed to verify her eligibility for receiving different services

VOTER ID

Joy + 🗎 + 📍

BENEFICIARY ID

Joy + 🗎 + 🌀

EMPLOYEE ID

Joy + 🗎 + 💬

As Joy navigates through life, she relies on different aspects of her identity to access various services.
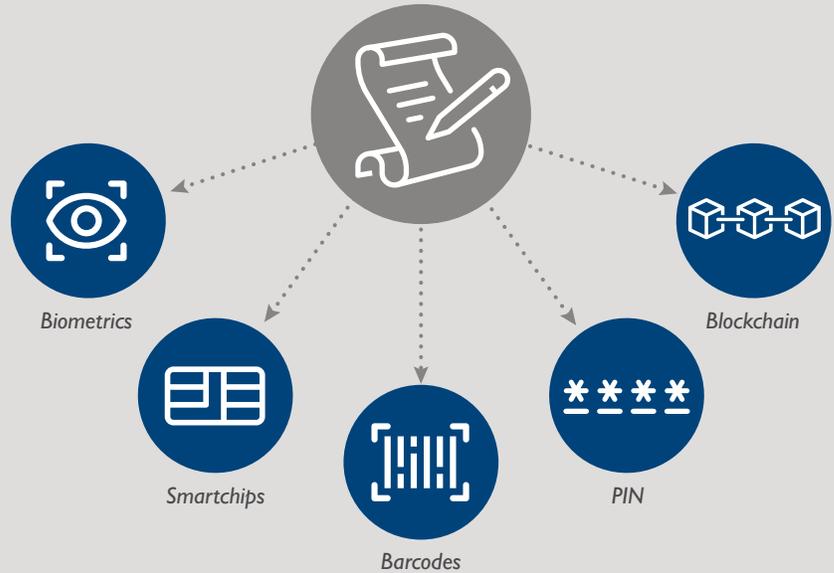
THE BENEFITS OF DIGITAL ID SYSTEMS

When created and used with appropriate safeguards, digital ID systems can provide numerous benefits to individuals and institutions across sectors.

Joy's ID allows her to carry out important activities...

...while ID-issuing institutions save resources and improve efficiency.

Get a *SIM Card*

Receive *Healthcare*

INSTITUTIONAL BENEFITS
– ELIMINATE GHOST WORKERS –
– IMPROVE SERVICE DELIVERY –
– MOBILIZE DOMESTIC RESOURCES –

Participate in *Elections*

Pay Taxes Fairly & Transparently

Register Her Kids for *School*

ADAPTING TO INCREASINGLY DIGITAL ID SYSTEMS

The way Joy asserts her identity is shifting as ID systems incorporate digital technologies.

Biometrics

Smartchips

Barcodes

PIN

Blockchain

DIGITAL ID AND SELF-RELIANCE

Choices about the purpose, design, implementation and maintenance of digital ID systems can either empower individuals and institutions or restrict their freedoms and abilities. Depending on these critical choices, digital ID systems will either bolster or hinder a country on its journey to self-reliance.

RESPONSIBLY DESIGNED DIGITAL ID SYSTEMS

↗ Access to government services
↗ Financial inclusion
↗ Resilient voting systems
↗ Institutional efficiencies

JOURNEY TO SELF RELIANCE

POORLY DESIGNED DIGITAL ID SYSTEMS

↙ Data misuse and weakened privacy
↙ Surveillance of individuals/groups
↙ Bespoke systems
↙ Fueling political tensions
↙ Weakening trust and transparency between individuals and institutions

USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

TO LEARN MORE about digital ID systems in development, please see **USAID's** other resources: *Identity in a Digital Age: Infrastructure for Inclusive Development*, and *How to: Create Digital ID for Inclusive Development.*