Ageing in Africa

Issue 36 March 2011

Inside:

Editorial

Over the past years, there has been an unprecedented level of economic growth and a reduction in income poverty. Despite this growth, poverty in sub-Saharan Africa has stubbornly remained as one of the challenges faced by governments in the continent seeking progressive development with the absolute number of those falling into poverty increasing too. Clearly economic growth alone is not sufficient to tackle poverty and other measures have to be considered if a reduction in destitution is to be sufficiently addressed.

In recent years, poverty reduction strategies have focused on social protection instruments to address this state. Several sub-Saharan African and Latin American countries have put in place these measures including universal social pensions to address poverty among older people who are usually some of the poorest.

This issue of Ageing in Africa looks at social protection. A social pension for older people is recognized as an instrument with the potential to not only provide preventive measures for older persons and their households, but for its transformative and promotive ability. In Southern African countries where universal social pensions have been instituted, its impacts are highly variable ranging from promotion of human development capacities to improvement in the performance of the local economy.

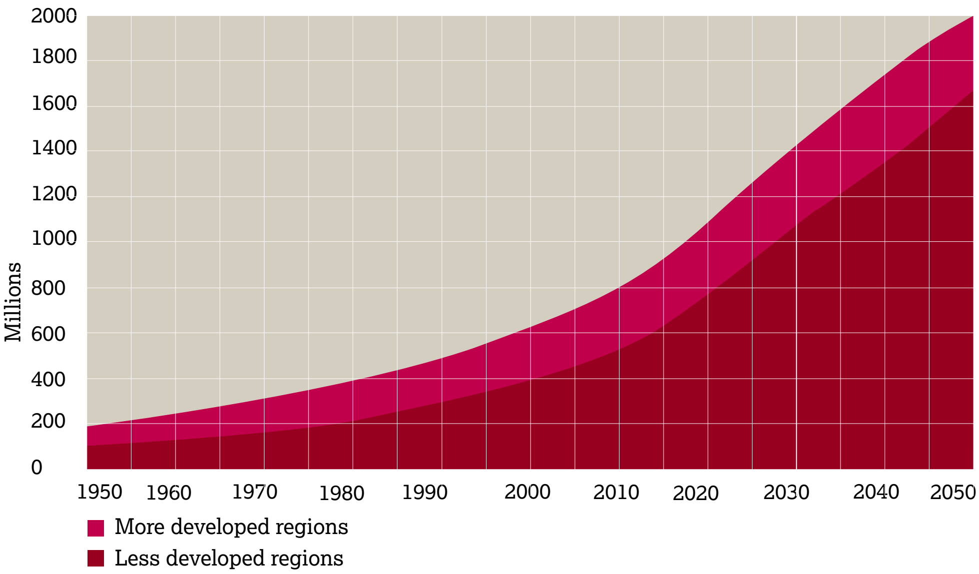
However, governments are usually concerned about the affordability and sustainability of such cash transfer programmes but evidence shows that when the programmes are properly designed and delivered they are affordable even low income countries and that affordability is more pegged to a society's willingness to finance universal social pensions.

Poverty in old age:

the starting point for a national social protection system in Africa

Marion Ouma, HelpAge International

Population over 60 by region



Source: World Population Prospects. The 2004 revision population database. UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Figure 1: World Population over 60 by region

Over the past years, mortality rate in Africa have declined with birth rates falling significantly. Data indicates that in the next 20 years in spite of the current youth gap, there will be a shift in age structures from young to older populations. In Africa, the ageing population will be a problem too and therefore the need for planning and central policy-making.

Though Africa will remain relatively young up to 2050, its young dependency burden will be reduced by 57 per cent while its old age dependency burden will increase by 93 per cent within the same period.

Though Africa will remain relatively young up to 2050, its young dependency burden will be reduced by 57 %

The African traditional forms of caring for older people are breaking down.

HelpAge International
age helps

Poverty remains one of the key impediments to the support of older people. Poverty in intergenerational households more often than not results in families de-prioritizing older people in favour of other age groups. Increasing urbanization is exacebarating this trend. Older people themselves are increasingly taking on the role of carers in old age as a result of the devastating effect that the HIV and AIDS pandemic in sub-Saharan Africa. In Southern Africa it is estimated that 50 per cent of double orphans are cared for by older people (HelpAge/UNICEF).

Kakwani and Subarrao (2005) indicate that households with older people and children are on average poorer than other household types in Africa.

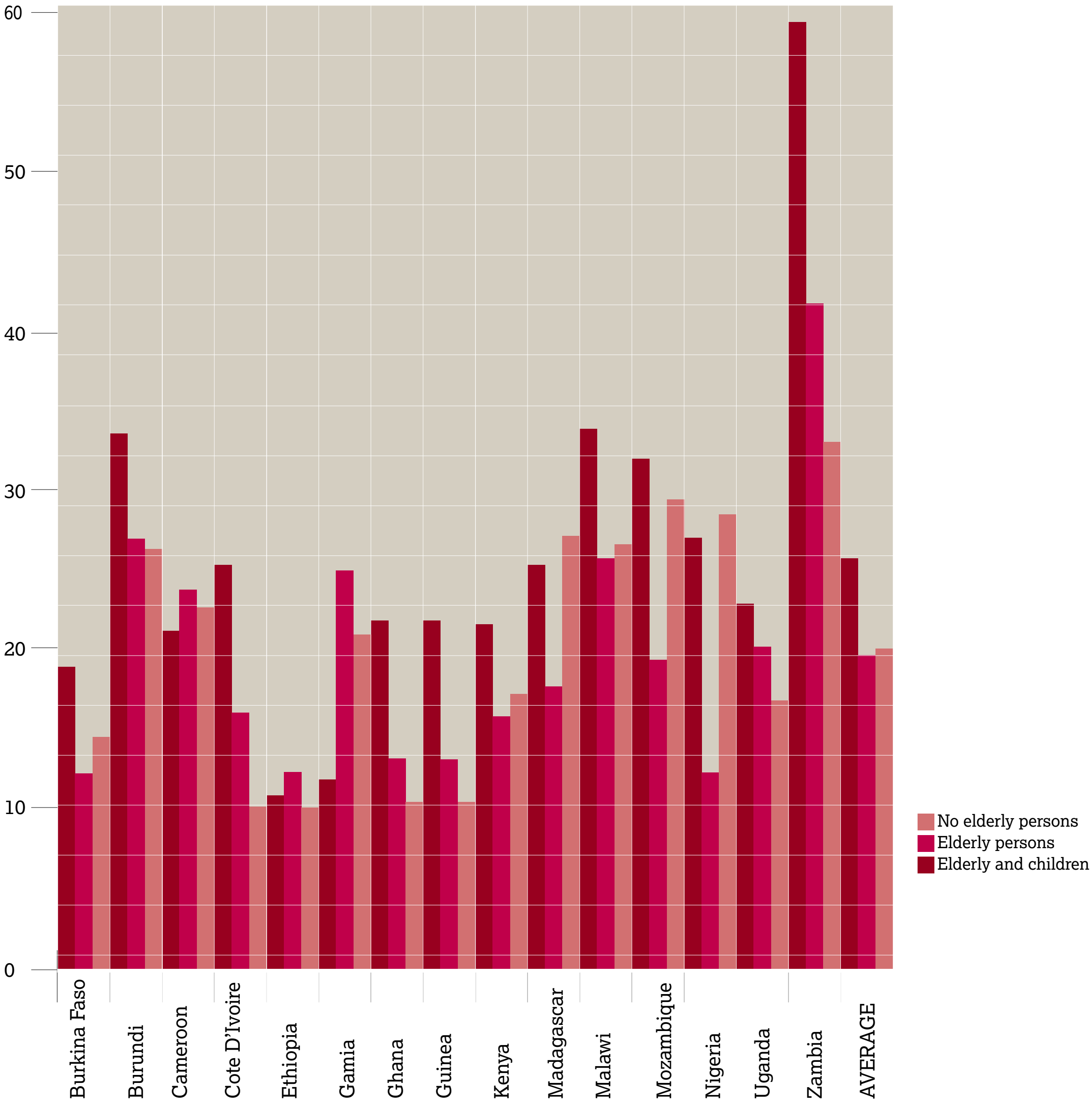
Addressing poverty and social development through social pensions

Pensions play two essential roles. First, they provide a minimum income in old age which is best provided by a non-contributory pension which is paid for out of government revenue.

Pensions also provide consumption-smoothing (saving during one's economically active years to have a stable path of consumption in retirement). Saving during working life through contributory pension schemes enables people to receive income in old age. A contributory scheme allows people to share the risk of living a long life with others. This can be facilitated by government or undertaken privately.

Social pensions should be embedded as part of national pension systems in a bid to alleviate old age poverty and to provide a route for the ending of intergenerational transmission of poverty. This is particularly important in Africa where contributory schemes cover very few people due to the informality of most livelihood activities and employment. While in developed countries social pensions have been provided for

> Social pensions should be embedded as part of national pension systems



Source: Kakwani and Subarrao (2005)

> A contributory scheme allows people to share the risk of living a long life with others.

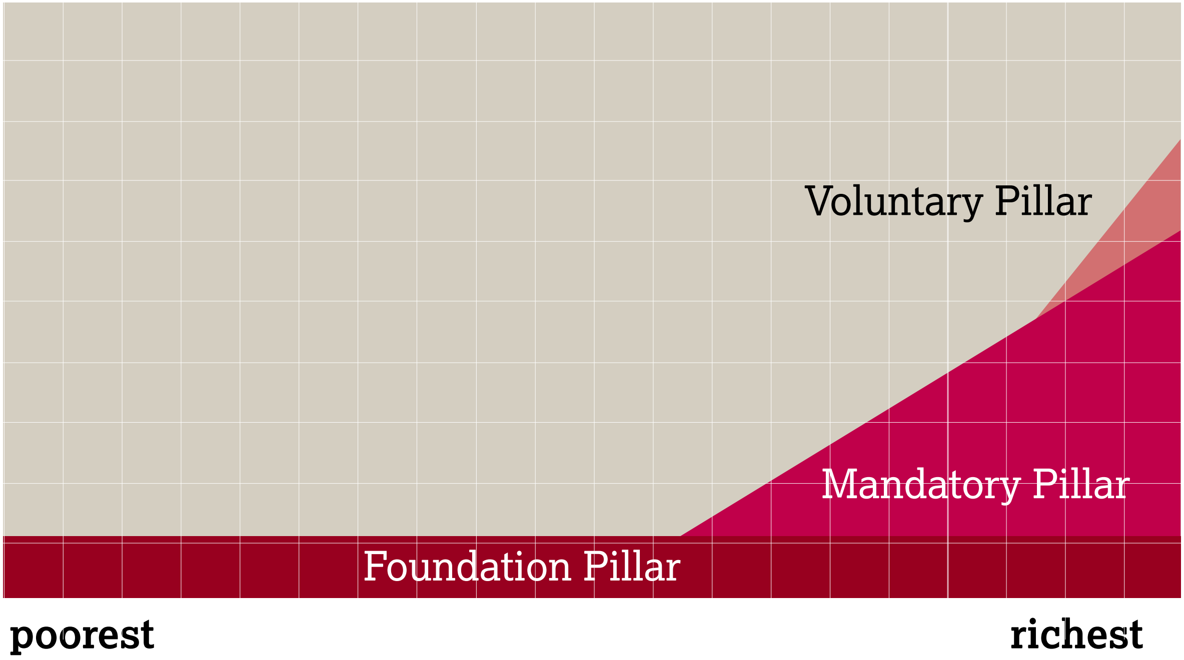


Figure 2: Social Pensions as part of national pension systems

a while, progress has been slow in Africa. Through advocacy and at times through the initiative of governments themselves, several countries in Africa have instituted social pensions as part of their poverty reduction programmes and as a response to the deepening poverty of older people as a result of HIV and AIDS.

Impact of social pensions to older people on poverty

Social pensions have been known to have a multiplier effect beyond older persons themselves. This is because a pension in the hands of an older person has a trickle-down effect to the rest of the members of the household. In Mauritius, the poverty rate among households containing an older person would be 30 per cent compared to the current 6 per cent in the absence of the universal pension (Kaniki 2007). In Lesotho where older people over 70 years old receive a social pension, the proportion to those who reported that they "never went hungry" increased from 19 per cent to 48 per cent. In Zambia where the government is implementing a social pension in one district, the percentage of households subsisting on one meal per day fell from 19.3 per cent to 13.3 per cent while in Namibia, where the government provides a pension for those over 60 years, 12 per cent of households headed by older people rely on pension as the only source of income.

Impact on economies and markets

Social pensions do not just impact on households but also on local economies and markets. Cash put in the hands of older people stimulates demand of goods and services. The "wheels of local economy begin to turn on pension day" in Namibia and it is said that without the pension, half the shops in the rural areas would close. Pensions are used to purchase basic necessities and for this reason, the cash is used for the purchase of locally-produced goods. In Zambia, 70 per cent of the cash provided to older persons is spent on locally-produced goods whereas in South Africa, new business opened because of pensions as the balance of spending shifted from imported goods to locally produced goods.

Social pensions and investment in productive activities

In South Africa, pensions support access to credit and capital equipment for older people to engage in livelihood activities. Families are able to have more cash available for investment as less is spent on older relatives and more willing to invest in more risky activities with higher returns.

Impact on children

The burden of care on older people has increased as they have had to take on looking after children as a result of the HIV and AIDS pandemic. Pensions have been associated with a 3 – 4 cm increase in height among children in South Africa due to better nutrition. Access to education, which is a key human development indicator, has been promoted in places where there are pensions. There has been reported increase in school enrolment and a higher retention rate. School attendance, especially by girls who are sometimes marginal-

Social pensions have been known to have a multiplier effect beyond older persons themselves.

Social pensions do not just impact on households but also on local economies and markets.

ized in African societies, has increased.

Pensions and fertility

Parents with children face two significant demands on their income: the need to save for old age and the desire to invest in their children. In countries that have limited pension coverage, the main strategy adopted by parents is to have more children in the hope that at least one will survive and look after them in old age. This notion leads to higher fertility rates, child poverty and mortality (Holmqvist). In contrast, when governments are able to guarantee all older people a minimum income, the dilemma is removed as parents are therefore able to direct a higher proportion of their income to caring for their children.

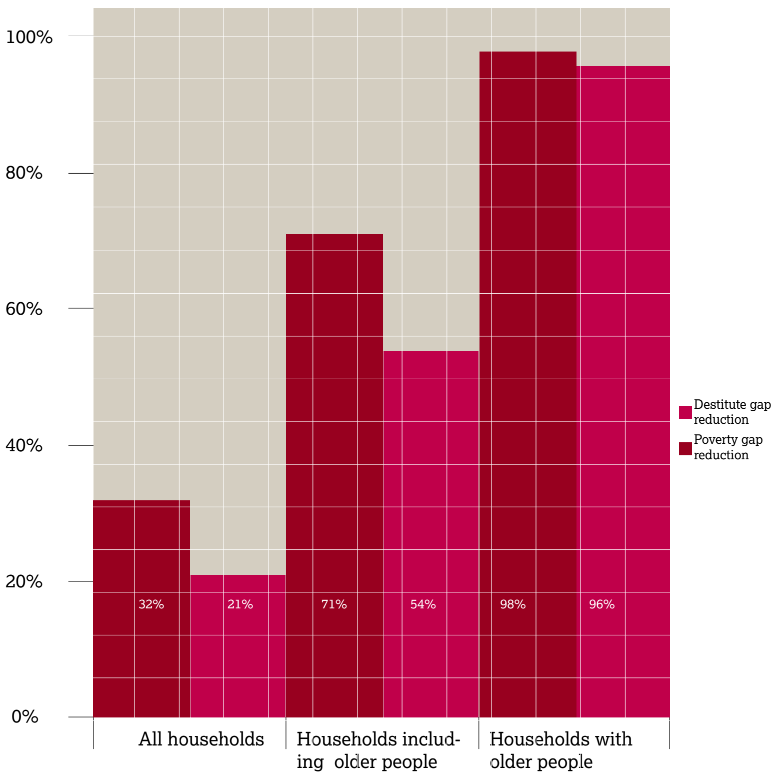


Figure 3 Impact of social pensions on poverty in South Africa

> Parents with children face two significant demands on their income

Good practices to ensure cash transfers support good governance

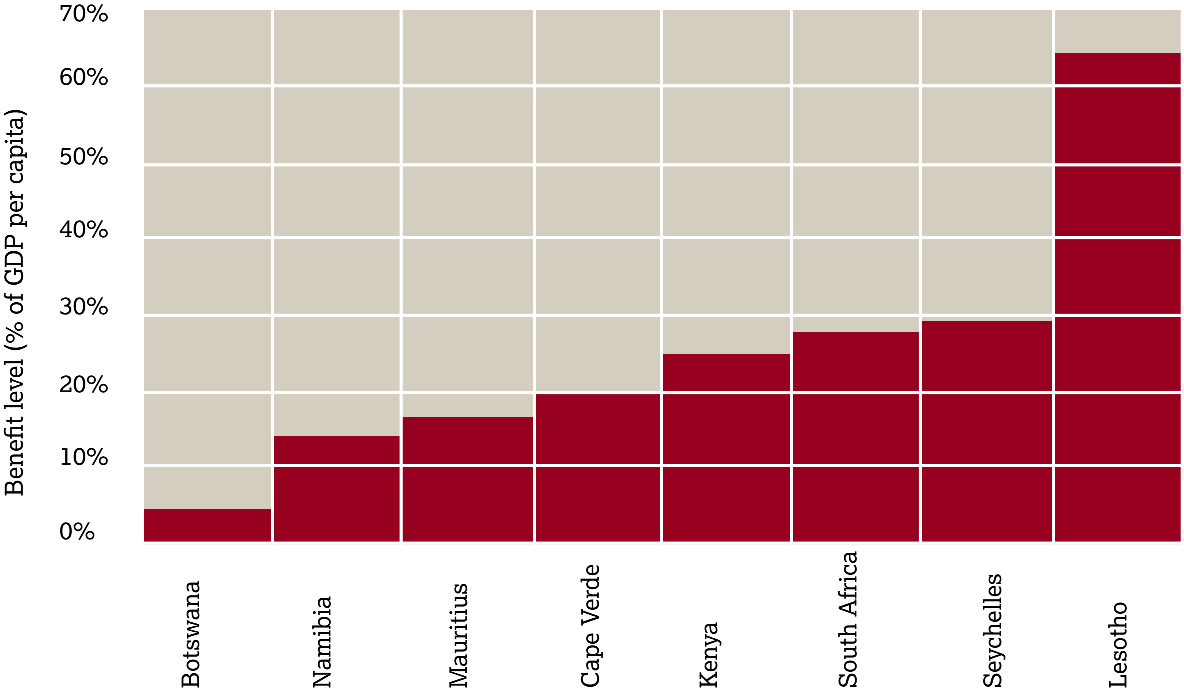
Wale Osofisan, HelpAge International

The role of social protection in fragile states is a growing area of interest globally. Understanding the extent to which cash transfers contribute to social cohesion and nation building and identify some good practices that can support good governance has been the focus of recent research by HelpAge. The findings were discussed by government officials and stakeholders from Sierra Leone, Kenya and Sudan, the focus countries of the research, in a two day workshop in Nairobi in February 2011. The table was generated to depict good practices in fragile contexts and the contribution of cash transfers to the good governance agenda in fragile states.

State fragility: is a continuum of time, geography and severity	In order to address fragility Social Protection/Cash Transfers can contribute to the following:	Principles and good practices for Cash Transfer schemes in fragile contexts:
• High levels of poverty • Poor access to basic services • Weak institutional capacity • Poor infrastructure	Good Governance: Strengthening 'state – citizen relationship' is critical to nation building, peacebuilding and enhanced social cohesion.	Government led or at least government involvement to build ownership & capacity at all levels of governance & across mandates Design & Implementation: • Multi-stakeholder participatory approach • Simple design • Grievance mechanism • Targeting based on life-cycle and clear categorical approaches A legal & policy framework for Social Protection emanating from a national political discourse and multi-stakeholder inter-agency consultations engagement Build evidence base and take into account the context in which fragility occurs Build relationships in order to develop social protection champions Invest in effective communication mechanism Use innovative ways to deliver cash transfers through the private sector Build on and harmonise existing schemes Link cash transfers to other complementary social protection services such as health and education

Income security for older people

Is a basic human right



Source: HelpAge International, Pension-watch database

Figure 1: Benefit levels of social pensions in Africa (per cent of GDP/capita

Ultimately decisions over the age of eligibility and the transfer level are political

Are universal pensions affordable in Africa?

Charles Knox-Vydmanov, HelpAge International

It can be argued that the universal model of social pensions has been pioneered in Africa, a southern approach to ensuring income security of older people. The largest concentration of universal pensions in the world is in southern Africa and smaller universal pensions are being piloted elsewhere in the region (Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania).

Despite the demonstrated impact of universal pensions, there has been reluctance on the part of government to implement these schemes at a national level elsewhere in the continent. One of the biggest fears of governments is their cost and whether they are affordable in the medium and long term or will negatively affect the sustainability of a government's budget.

In other regions of the world, low income governments have put in place universal pensions despite having smaller economies than many African countries. The GDP of Bolivia (USD 17 billion) is less than that of Kenya (USD 30 billion), Tanzania (USD 22 billion) and Ethiopia (USD 33 billion). Around two-thirds of African countries have higher average income per person than that of Nepal (USD 427 per year).

The cost of a universal pension is variable

The cost of a universal pension is dependent on the transfer level of the pension and the size of the population receiving the benefit (determined by the age of eligibility, for example over 60, 65 or 70).

Figure 1 shows a comparison of the current transfer levels in African social pensions (not all are universal). The average level is around 20 per cent of a person's average income in each country.

Ultimately decisions over the age of eligibility and the transfer level are political decisions.

Even low transfer levels have an impact. The Kwa Wazee cash transfer in northern Tanzania gave benefits to older people equal to just 11 per cent of average income with additional benefits also given to each child cared for by an older person equal to half of this amount. Despite the seemingly low benefit, the cash transfer was found to have a wide range of impacts including improved nutrition and that it "more than doubles the cash available to the average older person"[1].

1. Hofman et al, 2008.

cash transfer was found to have a wide range of impacts including improved nutrition

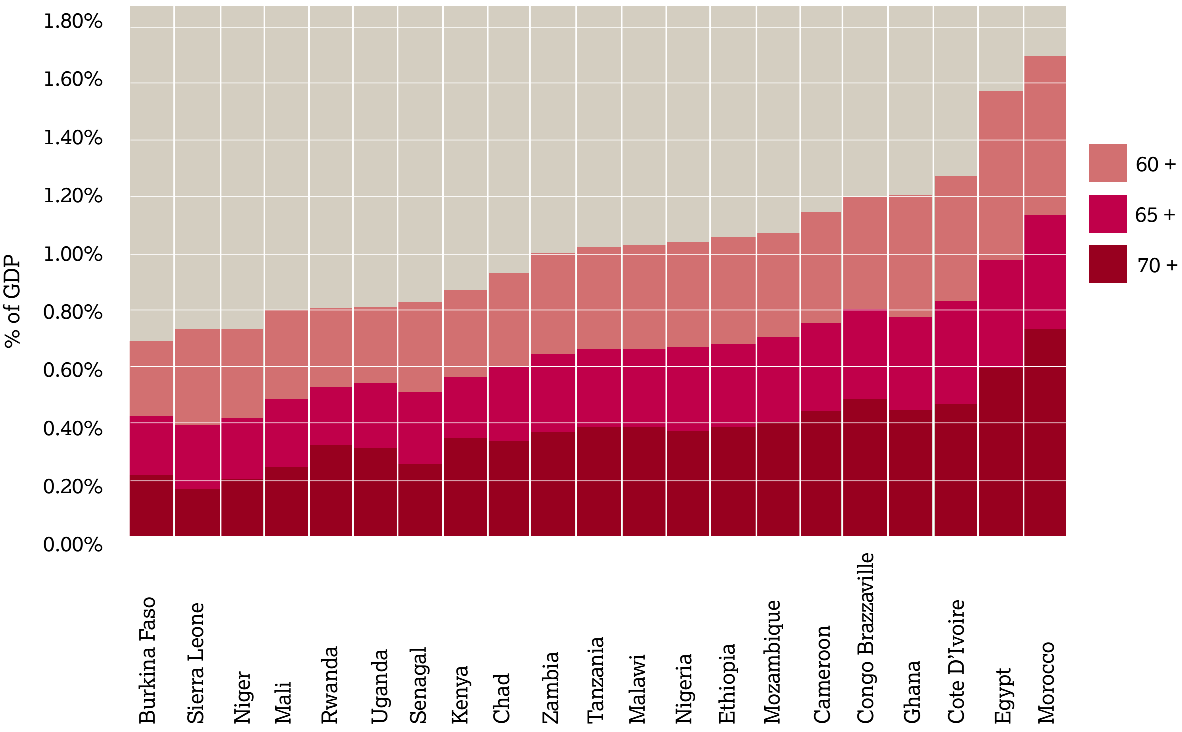


Figure 2: Cost of a universal pension with a benefit level of 20 per cent of average income

Lesotho has one of the most generous social pensions in the world.

Is the cost around 1 per cent of GDP?

Figure 2[2] shows the cost of a universal pension for a range of African countries. The graph shows the cost of a universal pension at 20 per cent of the country's average income that goes to everyone over 60, 65 and 70 years of age. Pensions to everyone over 60 cost more because they go to more people. However, even going to all older people (60 years and over as defined by UN), this would still cost just around 1 per cent of the country's economy.

Lesotho has one of the most generous social pensions in the world. After making the decision to fund the scheme 100 per cent from government resources (despite being one of the poorest countries in Africa), the government has chosen to increase the level of the transfer significantly over time. Another strategy could have been to keep the transfer level the same and reduce the age of eligibility so that more of the older population are eligible to benefit.

Mexico, South Africa[3], Bolivia and Nepal have all reduced the age of eligibility to include more recipients over time. This may also be an affordable strategy for African states. Given the trends of economic growth in the region, implementing a pension to a higher age group could be a feasible first step, after which the allocation of resources to more people can be made when more resources become available.

2. The cost is calculated by multiplying the number of recipients as a proportion of the total population and the size of the grant. These costs include additional 5 per cent for administrative costs. This is in line with international evidence on the cost of implementing universal pensions (Willmore 2007)

3. Men only from 60 to 65. Now men and women are both entitled to benefit at the age of 60, Furthermore, at the recent ISSA international conference the Minister for Social Development announced a commitment of her ministry to remove the affluence test (which attempts to exclude a minority of rich people) to make it universal to all.

Costs in context

One way to contextualise the cost of a universal pension is to compare the cost to other areas of social spending. Although one fear may be that social pensions could crowd out other essential spending areas (such as health and education), in practice, there is little reason to see health, education and social protection as competing.

Cash transfers add value to services in a way that cannot be achieved by the service itself. For example, while it is possible to scrap school fees, this will not deal with the potential income a child will lose by not being able to use the same hours to earn cash for the family. A cash transfer can help to reduce the need for children to work, as has been seen in countries such as Zambia[4].

In the end, the question should not be either/or, but rather what is the balance of spending in these areas (and other key service areas such

4. HelpAge International, 2008.

A cash transfer can help to reduce the need for children to work, as has been seen in countries such as Zambia.

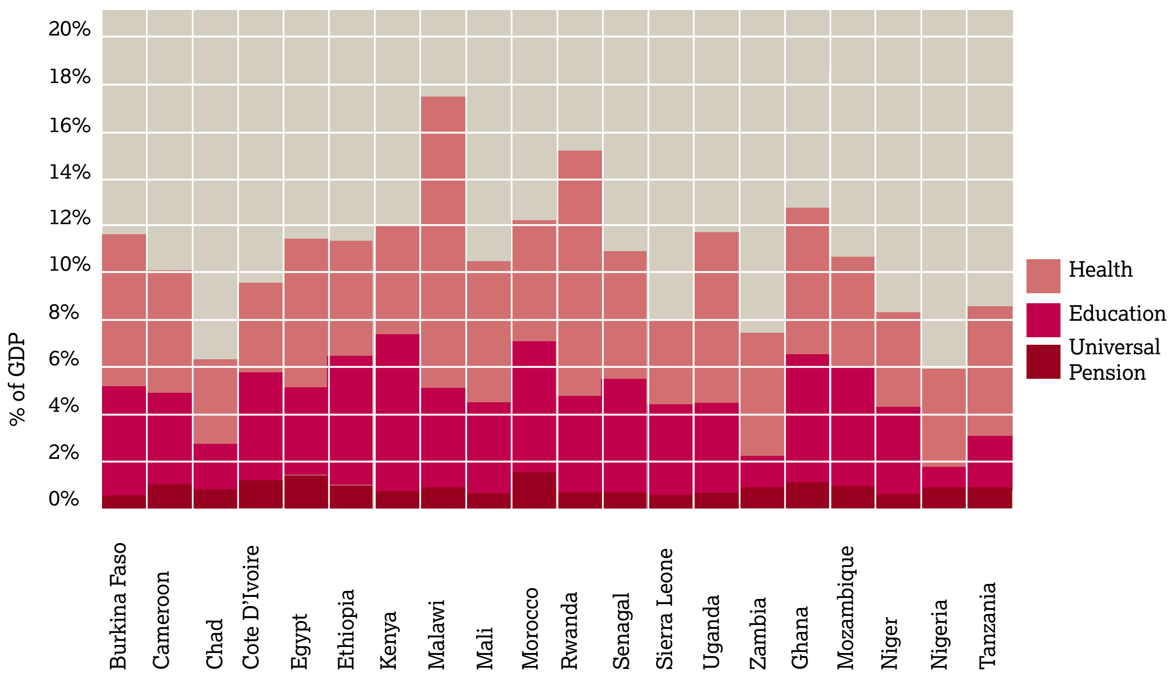


Figure 3: Cost of a universal pension compared to current expenditure on health and education in selected African countries

as housing). A key lesson from countries which are seen to have had successful social policy is that they invest in health, education and social protection.

For those countries still with little in the way of social protection, it also appears that putting in place a social pension would be a relatively small cost compared to health and education spends.

Figure 3 shows that the cost of a social pension would be relatively small to health and education spending in a selection of African countries. This suggests that a social pension would be an affordable way to begin complementing health and education spending with greater emphasis on social protection.

So, how should a universal pension be financed?

Most universal and near universal social pensions in Africa are funded by government, sometimes even against the advice of international financial institutions (as in the case of Lesotho). In the long term, a social pension needs to be sustainable and government owned so the financing of universal social pensions, the same as other forms of social assistance, should be from general tax revenue.

With this in mind, governments may need to think innovatively about achieving this in the short and medium term. Aside from the large schemes predominantly in Southern Africa, donors have played an important role in financing smaller pilot schemes elsewhere in Africa. However, increased government financial responsibility of these schemes is yet to be seen.

For this reason, if donor support is to play a meaningful role, it is advisable that it should be characterised by clear exit strategies and the progressive ownership of government. Alternatively, external support can provide the necessary investment in set up and operational costs that are needed to raise the capacity of government to implement the scheme.

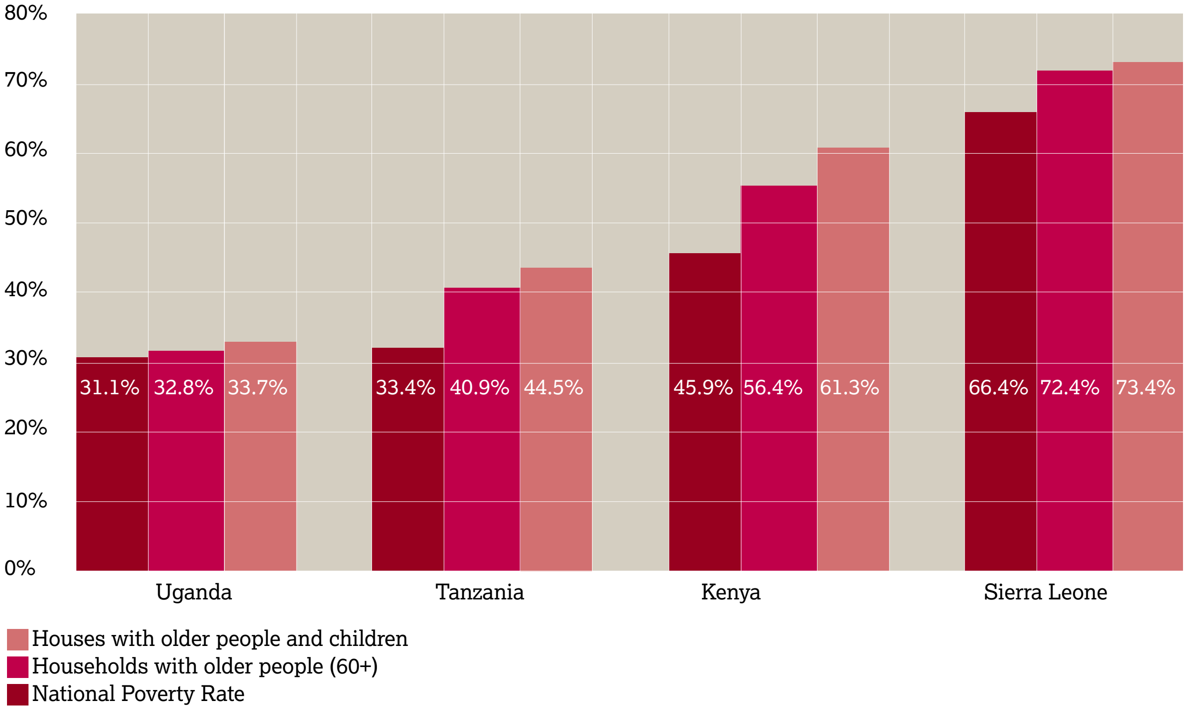
Ultimately, there is no one way to determine the fiscal space needed to fund a universal pension. Global trends show that their affordability is more related to political will than a calculation of available funds.

donors have played an important role in financing smaller pilot schemes elsewhere in Africa.

if donor support is to play a meaningful role, it is advisable that it should be characterised by clear exit strategies and the progressive ownership of government.

social protection for older people

mitigates the impact of HIV and AIDS



Source: Uganda National Household Survey (2005/2006), Tanzania National Household Budget Survey (2007), Kenya Integrated Household Budget Survey (KIHBS 2005/06), Sierra Leone Integrated Household Survey (SLIHS 2003/04)

Figure 1: National Poverty Rates by household type in Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya and Sierra Leone

> older people over 60 years of age represent between 4 - 6 per cent of the population.

Old age poverty in Africa

Issues and impacts with a focus on Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Sierra Leone

Lara Newson

In Kenya, Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Uganda, older people over 60 years of age represent between 4 - 6 per cent of the population. Despite representing a small proportion of the overall population in these countries, older people live in families and therefore are present in nearly one in three households in Sierra Leone, one in four households in Kenya and Tanzania and one in five households in Uganda.

Increasing life spans is something that should be celebrated, but it also raises significant challenges. HelpAge's analysis of the national poverty surveys of Kenya, Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Uganda shows that older people and the households they live in are highly vulnerable to falling further into poverty. In Kenya and Tanzania, households with older people have a poverty rate over 20 per cent higher than the national poverty rate. In Sierra Leone, the poverty rate of these households is 8 per cent higher than the national average and in Uganda the poverty rate is 5 per cent higher.

This suggests that old age poverty is having a considerable impact on a large portion of the population in these countries and being transmitted across generations. This is a key concern given that the population of older people in Africa is projected to increase by nearly 4 times by 2050[1] .

Grandparents without reliable income are caring for children as a result of the HIV and AIDS epidemic: this creates worrying prospects for their future human development. This is particularly evident in Kenya and Tanzania where the poverty rates in multigenerational households are 33 per cent higher than the national average.

In Africa, national measurements of poverty tend to focus on capturing income/poverty based on the value of how much a household consumes. This means there are challenges in measuring the poverty rates of a population group composed of individuals such as older people because calculations have to be based on assumptions regarding how resources are distributed within the household. Since there is limited evidence on how resources are allocated within a household, it is difficult to calculate poverty at an individual level.

1. Source: UN DESA. 2008. Population division

> **The population of older people in Africa is projected to increase by nearly 4 times by 2050**

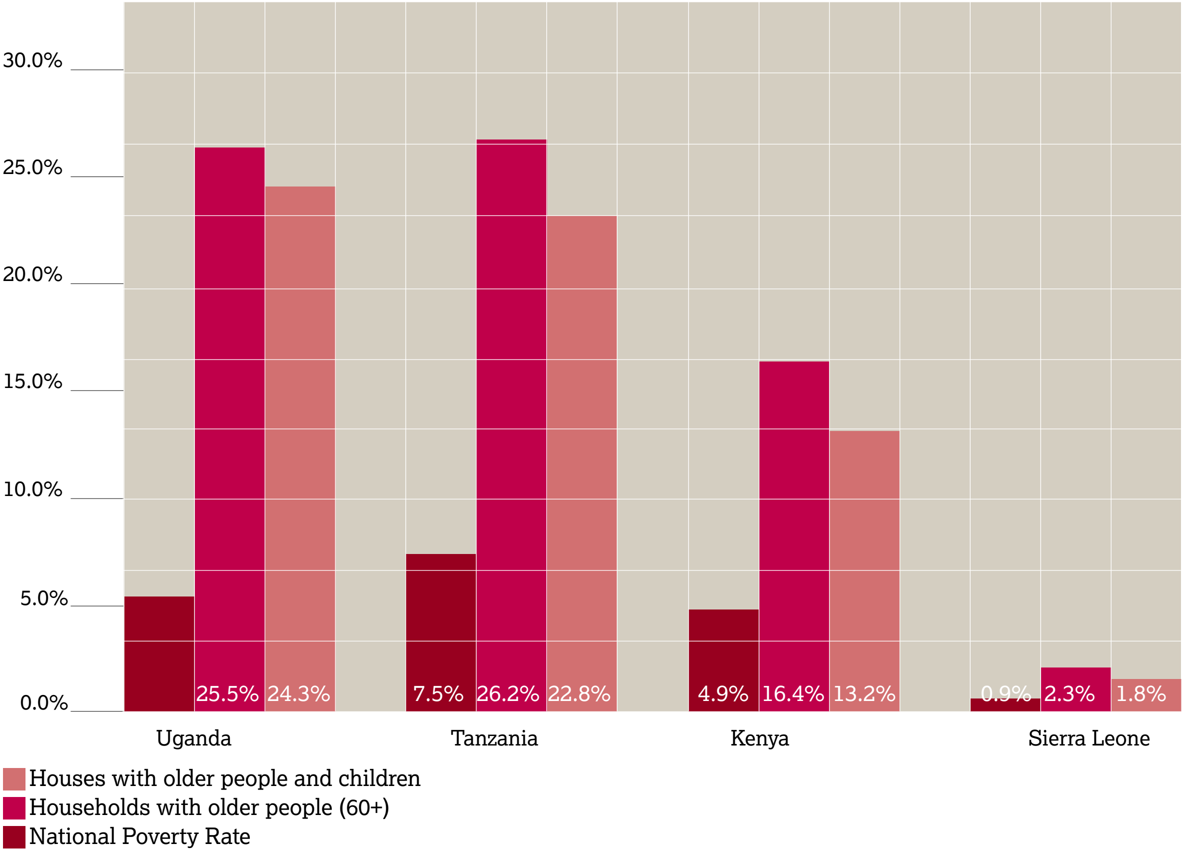


Figure 2: Reduction in poverty rates from a universal pension in those aged over 60 from a transfer of 20% of GDP per capita

Measuring the poverty level of older people is highly sensitive

Measuring the poverty level of older people is highly sensitive to the assumptions that are used and a slight adjustment can lead to significant difference in the poverty of older people. For example, HelpAge compared analysis of old age poverty in Uganda (where the consumption of people over 60 was considered to be a similar level to a person aged 13) to analysis that assumed an older person has the same consumption needs as other adults. Older people went from having a poverty rate slightly less than the national average to being significantly poorer[2].

Therefore, more evidence is needed to guide the assumptions about consumption patterns in old age to ensure that older people are not disadvantaged by policy decisions that aim to tackle income poverty.

2. HelpAge International (forthcoming) Poverty Analysis based on HBS 2004/2005

The potential impact of a universal pension on poverty reduction

A universal social pension can considerably reduce poverty amongst households containing older people and also be an effective tool for reducing the national poverty rate. The graph below demonstrates the potential impacts in Kenya, Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Uganda amongst beneficiary households from a transfer worth 20 per cent of GDP per capita to everyone aged over 60. In Tanzania, the impact is highest as the poverty rate of households with older people is reduced by 26.2 per cent. In Sierra Leone, where the impact is lower as many older people live well below the poverty line, a universal pension would still contribute towards improving their lives and moving them closer out of poverty.

An older person registering before receiving a cash transfer in Tanzania.

Social protection for senior citizens critical

Conrad Gweru, HelpAge Zimbabwe

Mbuya Muringani, 60 years old of Taruvinga Village in Zvishavane, looks after seven orphans left by her children and one child whose parents are in the diaspora. When other villagers look at her, they see a strong mother who is managing to fend for her grandchildren, yet deep inside her, she has no time to rest.

She is always up and down, all in an effort to find ways of ekeing out a living. To her, each new day brings its own challenges because of the task ahead of her. When they see her, villagers are reminded of the biblical David fighting Goliath. Her herculean task is to ensure that children go to school every day, well fed and have decent clothing. Her major challenge is that of resources to meet her needs and that of children under her care.

Mbuya's life experience is just but a replica of many other older persons in Zimbabwe who are caring for orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) without the necessary resources to do so. In Zimbabwe, it is estimated that 7 per cent of the population is made up of older persons and 60 per cent of orphans in the country are under the care of older persons. 40 to 50 per cent of people living with HIV and AIDS (PLWA) are cared for in grandparent-headed households (HelpAge International, Older People and HIV and AIDS Regional Programme, 2006). To make ends meet, older persons mostly work in the informal sector and have no regular income or social security.

The percentage of men and women over the age of 60 engaged in some form of work is highest in the least developed regions of the world. In Africa, 64 per cent of men over the age of 60 and 32 per cent of women in the same age group are economically active. Apart from the underlying frustration of caring for orphans, many older persons are also bearing the burden of care for those affected and infected by HIV and AIDS. They use up the little money they have supporting those under their care.

As primary care-givers for PLWA and OVC, older people face extreme physical, emotional and economic strain when they need support themselves due to frailty and diminishing income earning potential.

However, policies and programmes on care and support seldom target older persons. Governments and development institutions are slowly beginning to recognise the enormous contribution of older persons, but most of it remains lip service. Social transfers would go a long way to providing the financial support needed by older persons to undertake their care role. Across 5 wards (Mutambi, Murowa, Chirere, Indaba and Mhototi) in Zvishavane rural and 10 wards in Zvishavane urban, HelpAge Zimbabwe (HAZ), with the support of PRP and EC, is distributing cash to older persons aged 80 and above. 180 households are benefitting from this intervention. In Zvishavane urban, the organisation is targeting 100 households across 10 wards under EC funded program.

Social protection programs are a key component in HAZ programming. Under the National Action Plan for orphans and vulnerable children, 2506 orphans and vulnerable children under the care of older persons receive monthly grocery vouchers while 500 OVC under the care of older persons receive nutrition supplements.

HAZ social protection programs are pilot projects intended to be shared with the government to provide evidence based statistics that assist in advocating for the older persons bill. There is a serious need for the government of Zimbabwe to develop social protection mechanisms for older persons in appreciation of the contribution they make in reducing the impact of HIV and AIDS in our communities.

Mbuya's experience is a replica of many other older persons in Zimbabwe who are caring for orphans and vulnerable children (OVC)

© HelpAge Kenya

Older women have the greater burden of looking after orphan and vulnerable children. Social pensions go a long way in ensuring the burden is lighter.

HAZ social protection programs are pilot projects intended to be shared with the government to provide evidence based statistics that assist in advocating for the older persons bil

Role of the paralegal advisor in access to Social Protection

Thobile Mzobe , Paralegal Advisor

Mr. Themba Shozi is 71 years old and partially blind due to cataract. He had a common-law wife: they were not legally married because she did not have an Identity Document (ID). She has since passed on. Together they had 5 children. Three are deceased, leaving his with two sons: Thulane who abuses alcohol and the younger Mthokozisi who is mentally challenged and does not have an ID. One of his deceased daughters, Nonhlanhla who died in October 2009 at the age of 40, left the 5 children without any legal documents. Their ages range from 5 to 20 years.

Paralegal Intervention

MUSA assisted Mr. Shozi to obtain the ID and access the OAP (Old Age Pension). Two of his grandchildren Ziyanda and Thobani were also assisted to access birth certificates which were issued in May 2010.

The other 3 grandchildren have no birth certificates: Thando is no longer schooling but is employed as a nanny in kwaMashu , Mbali is in grade 11 but spends most of the time with her boyfriend; and Nuh is in grade 8 and she is now pregnant.

They were encouraged by Paralegal Advisor to obtain these documents (birth or baptismal certificates) in order for her to process applications for IDs and they encourage have not produce these to the Paralegal Advisor to fast track their applications for the Identity Documents which they have not done.

© HelpAge International

Field Visit Findings

• Mr Shozi was supposed to attend the eye clinic in St. Aiden's hospital in June 2010. His referral letter has since expired.

• Ziyanda and Thobani were not accessing child support grants even though they have Birth Certificates due to lack of information. Thobani was in desperate need of school uniform the one she had was donated by the school Principal long ago.

• Mthokozisi had three letters written by the school Principal to the Social Worker appealing for him to be assisted to access ID. The second is also from the school Principal confirming his date of birth which was done when he was registered for school.

• The third letter was from the area Councillor confirming proof of residence.

Achievements

• Mr. Shozi was assisted to obtain ID so as to access the Old Age Pension.

• The Paralegal Advisor accompanied Mr. Shozi to SASSA (South African Social Security Agency and Department of Home Affairs) to apply for child support grants and Mthokozisi to apply for the registration of Late Birth Certificate.

• MUSA's Older Person's sewing project made two school uniforms for the child. The Society Social Worker paid a visit to the paternal side of the two small children to discuss their role in caring for the children so that a gap in parenting does not occur in the future.

• Mr. Shozi was taken to hospital and a new date has been set for his cataract removal.

Mr. Shozi is successfully caring for the whole family and is a very responsible parent. He appreciates the assistance from Muthande Paralegal Advisor who assisted him to get the IDs that has made it possible for the children to access Child Support Grants and join their local funeral scheme which was impossible without the ID.

Please note that names have been changed

"The OCMGs have prioritised the returnee and re-integration process as one of the issues for monitoring"

...working groups carry out activities and events that support the member agency achieve their goals...

Inclusive Growth through Social Protection

Erna Mentesnot Hintz, HelpAge International

On March 3 and 4, 2011, a workshop on "Inclusive Growth through Social Protection" was held at the Hilton International Hotel in Addis Ababa organized by HelpAge in close collaboration with the National Social Protection Platform (NSPP). The two-day event was attended by members of parliament of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and representatives from various government offices, civil societies, research institutions, UN agencies and international agencies and the media as well as state ministers.

© Tesfaye Abreha/HelpAge International 2011

The participants of the social protection meeting which included state ministers, government representatives, civil societies, research institutions, UN agencies and international agencies and the media.

The workshop was officially opened by the State Minister of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs Hon. Ramadan Ashenafi. The keynote address was given by Mrs. Alison Rusinow, HelpAge Ethiopia Country Programme Director. Technical presentations were delivered by senior experts from UNICEF, ILO, HelpAge's Africa Regional Development Centre (ARDC), the Disaster Risk Management and Food Security Sector (DRMFSS) of the FDRE Ministry of Agriculture and a national consultant.

The presentations covered fundamental issues such as a de-facto social protection in Ethiopia; costing and affordability of social protection programmes and linkages with growth; and social protection in Ethiopia and experiences of other developing countries.

This was followed by plenary discussions focusing on concepts of social protection, social pensions, affordability, costing and dependency and other related issues. Emphasis was given to the role of each of the stakeholders in the process of revising the existing Developmental Social Welfare Policy of Ethiopia and its implementation. Subsequently, recommendations were proposed by a senior official from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

Participants agreed on a way forward which includes:

• Closely working on the institutional framework of introducing social protection systems to Ethiopia, recommending all concerned to actively participate in the National Protection Platform so as to contribute to the revision of the policy and strategy document.

• The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Agriculture together with the platform are to exert the maximum possible effort to widen the participation of all concerned.

• The platform is to initiate the organization of either a one-day or half-day briefing for members of parliament focusing on the members of the Social Affairs Standing Committee while the policy revision is in progress.

• Emphasis is to be given to the involvement of print and other media take an active part in the revision of the policy document and its subsequent approval by parliament.

• Continue advocacy on the multi-dimensional nature of social protection systems and the need to establish strong multi-sectoral collaboration.

On March 3 and 4, 2011, a workshop on "Inclusive Growth through Social Protection" was held at the Hilton Hotel in Addis Ababa

Emphasis is to be given to the involvement of print and other media take an active part in the revision of the policy document

Bill for older people sails through to cabinet

In March 2011, the Zimbabwe Cabinet Committee on Legislation (CCL) made a landmark resolution that saw the Older Persons Bill sailing through to cabinet for approval. CCL indicated that the bill passed the committee stage and has now been passed to the cabinet. After the cabinet, the bill is expected to be forwarded to the house of assembly for debate.

The decision by the committee follows widespread efforts made by HelpAge Zimbabwe (HAZ) and other stakeholders to ascertain the position of the bill. It has been reported in the media that it is not known where the bill is between the Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs and the Ministry of Labour and Social Services.

In an interview with ZBC TV, HAZ Executive Director, Mrs. Priscilla Gavi, indicated that this was a positive step taken by the government. She said that older persons have been waiting for years on end for the bill to reach Parliament. She hopes that the bill will become an act of parliament by the end of the year.

Currently older person's issues are addressed partly in the Social Welfare Act. Under this act, older persons are entitled to Public Assistance. This is a fund which is only accessible as and when it is available and upon application by older persons.

If passed into law, the act will see the formation of a board that will look into issues affecting older persons. The board will also be responsible for drafting policies to further protect and meet the needs of vulnerable older persons as well as promoting positive contribution that senior citizens make.

The act will also provide for the establishment of a fund for older persons. This fund will go a long way in meeting the needs of senior citizens, who are mostly involved in caring for orphans and vulnerable children, without, however, necessary resources to do so.

In Zimbabwe, 7 per cent of Zimbabwe's projected population of 12.4 million people is made up of older persons. A majority of these older persons are vulnerable due to the absence of laws and policy which protect them. Since 2002, HAZ has been advocating for the signing into law of the bill of older persons.

Attributes to the progress

In 2010, HAZ through the assistance of PRP, initiated advocacy as a build up to on-going programmes in Zvishavane that include social protection, agriculture, water, sanitation and health, and community-based approaches. Although Zvishavane community members are directly involved in advocacy activities, the activities were designed in such a way that all older persons will ultimately benefit, for example the enactment of the older persons bill.

The advocacy strategy build up to existing programmes in Zvishavane saw the formation of a Group of Champions, consisting of 20 older persons selected from 5 wards with each ward contributing 4 members. Capacity building training workshops and community leadership sensitization workshops were conducted in line with this development. Interestingly, workshops were held a week before community meetings to be conducted by COPAC was held in Zvishavane. Older persons in their capacity building workshops developed a position paper which was shared with the Ministry of Constitutional and Parliamentary Affairs.

Media relations

In an effort to further advocacy activities, HAZ is working closely with both print and electronic media to further its advocacy messages. Since 2010, 3 programmes have been screened on national television. Two of the programmes were talk shows hosted by the famous TV personality Mai Chisamba and the other one was a documentary on key issues affecting older persons. Of importance to note is that older persons were given a platform to air out their concerns in all these programmes, in an effort to fulfill participation as one of the fundamental rights of older persons. Currently, the organisation is working on yet another documentary focusing specifically on the older people's bill. The documentary is expected to be on air by mid-April 2011. Radio programmes also added a voice to the demands by older persons.

The print media is also a

Currently older person's issues are addressed partly in the Social Welfare Act.

In an effort to further advocacy activities, HAZ is working closely with both print and electronic media to further its advocacy messages.

powerful tool HAZ is using. A number of articles and press statements have been sent to print media for publication. Online publications on HAZ's website are in support of other publications which cannot reach Zimbabweans outside the country.

The Age Demands Action Campaign and the International Day for older persons

The two events are now permanent on HAZ's calendar and particularly to senior citizens of Zimbabwe. Each year, older persons look forward to meet relevant government ministries and other stakeholders to air out their concerns. Although ministries have not been responding as expected by the generality of older persons, awareness-raising on issues affecting older persons has been successful.

© Antonio Olmos/HelpAge International

"the number of older persons (60 years and above) has risen from the modest number of 270,000 in 1949 to 1.9 million in the 2009 Census

Implementation of older person's programme in Kenya

Winnie Mwasiaji, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development

Background

According to the 2009 National Population and Housing Census, Kenya's population stood at 38.6 million; out of this, the number of older persons (60 years and above) has risen dramatically from the modest number of 270,000 during the first National Population Census Report in 1949 to 1.9 million during the 2009 National Population and Housing Census. This is projected to rise to 2.2 million by 2020.

Older person's cash transfer programme (CT)

A cash transfer Programme targeting vulnerable members of the community, which include the older persons (65 years and above), persons with disability and the terminally ill was piloted in three (3) districts (Nyando, Thika and Busia). This programme was started in April 2006 under the Rapid Results Initiative and catered for 100 vulnerable households in each district. A total of Kshs 1,000 was disbursed per household given monthly.

With lessons from other countries the focus of the programme has changed to focus on Older Persons only. This was mainly due to the complications of dealing with a unified programme covering all the different categories of vulnerable persons.

Objectives of the cash transfer programme

The overall objective of the programme is to strengthen the capacities of older persons so as to improve their livelihoods through a sustainable social protection mechanism.

The overall objective of the programme is to strengthen the capacities of older persons so as to improve their livelihoods through a sustainable social protection mechanism.

Effects of the cash transfer programme

An impact evaluation done on this programme, provide strong evidence that the programme is having a very big impact on the lives of the beneficiary households. It has enabled the beneficiary households to meet basic needs and to invest in domestic animals like cows, goats, sheep and chicken. during times of hardship they could transform these assets into cash which will enable them purchase food, pay fees, accessing healthcare and other basic services. Improvement in household food security has therefore been evident –

Other positive results include: positive impact on Local economy, enhanced saving by beneficiaries, strengthened familial support, social capital and access to informal social protection mechanisms, as well as improvement in household environment which include shelter, clothing.

Selection of programme districts

The districts were selected depending on their vulnerability. The indicators used to determine district vulnerability included poverty index and HIV and AIDS prevalence (Kenya Integrated Household Budget Survey 2005/06). However regional balancing was also observed in the selection. The district statistics office also provided data for selection of the locations within districts.

Eligibility criteria

The cash transfer attempts to target ultra poor households with characteristics which include poor nutrition, poor health and low income among others.

The four main criteria for selecting beneficiaries will be:

- Households with an older person of 65 years and above
- Extremely poor households
- Households not enrolled in any other regular cash transfer programme.
- The identified older person must not be receiving any kind of pension

Beneficiary Selection

Beneficiary selection was based on a set of vulnerability criteria aiming to identify the poorest and the most vulnerable households. Communities were asked to validate the list of identified poor households based on the specific indicators for poverty. Random sampling with visits to the beneficiaries' homes has also been done to minimize the inclusion/ exclusion errors.

Delivery of the cash transfer
The cash is being disbursed mainly through the Postal Corporation of Kenya (PCK) (in 35 districts) and through the District Treasury in 9 districts and through. The funds aim to be delivered every two months through PCK and quarterly for the District Treasury to reduce on the administrative costs. Each household receives a total of Kshs 1,500 per month (about US$20).

Exit strategy

A household will be exited if the following conditions apply:

- If the older person dies (the household will continue to receive the transfer to a value of 6 months)
- Where the socio-economic status of the older person drastically improves
- If the household willingly exits
- If the household is found to have given false information at enrolment
- If the beneficiary moves out of the programme location
- If the beneficiary does not collect the funds for three consecutive payments (six months).

Challenges

A number of challenges have however also been experienced in the effective delivery of the cash transfer programme. These include inadequate M & E systems; inclusion and exclusion errors; inefficient administrative structures; inadequate capacity (both personnel & infrastructure);

Universal Pensions

Promote Income Security and Dignity

> It has enabled the beneficiary households to meet basic needs and to invest in domestic animals

> **The cash transfer attempts to target ultra poor households with characteristics which include poor nutrition, poor health and low income among others.**

© HelpAge Kenya

ADA activists pose for a photograph with the Mr. Joseph Kinyua, the permanent secretary, Ministry of Finance in Kenya (seated second left) and members of the Budget Committee.

recurrent global crises-oil and food finances amplifying existing vulnerability; and increased demand for the cash transfers due to increased number of vulnerable persons.

It is important to note that the complimentary strategies aimed at enhancing productive capacity of beneficiary households are also scattered and not well coordinated to allow for comprehensive and effective delivery of the programme.

Delivery of the cash transfer to the beneficiary household is still a challenge. This is mainly due to the fragile situation if the older persons. The ministry is currently weighing the various delivery options to enable informed decision to be taken on the best possible mechanism that suits the target group.

Other factors are funding of CT programs. In the financial year 2009/2010 the budgetary allocation for the ministry was increased from Kshs 4 million to 550 million. This has enabled the ministry to scale up delivery of cash transfer to additional 41 districts bringing the total to 44 implementing districts.

Way forward for scale up and expansion of the programme. The 44 implementing districts were identified and capacity building for the implementing district teams done. The capacity building is expected to enhance performance of the district implementers on social protection initiatives and more so prepare them for effective implementation of the older persons cash transfer programme. The training also enhanced integration of the implementing committees while ensuring greater support and ownership of the programme by the stakeholders.

The ministry is in the process of preparing documentation for justification of additional funds towards the CT to cover the whole country. Once the funds are available, it is anticipated that the scale up will be done as laid out by the selection criteria.

HelpAge has a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development in Kenya. HelpAge is offering the ministry technical assistance in social protection issues.

Financed by
Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development

Staff changes

Moses Owaka

Joined ARDC as the new Social Protection Manager.

HelpAge International helps older people claim their rights, challenge discrimination and overcome poverty, so that they can lead dignified, secure, active and healthy lives.

We welcome letters from readers. Please write to:

Ageing in Africa,
Africa Regional Development Centre,
P.O. Box 14888, Westlands,
00800 Nairobi, Kenya,
Email: helpage@helpage.co.ke

Please include your name, organisation (if any) and postal address. Letters may be edited.