

Sauti ya Wazee

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Older activists demand their rights



Natalie Idehen/HelpAge

Tanzania joins the rest of the world in marking World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

Increasing number of older people persecuted and accused of witchcraft

On World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, 15 June, older activists from Tanzania joined 40 countries from around the world to take part in HelpAge International's global campaign, Age Demands Action for Rights. Older activists called for a UN convention on the rights of older people and to urge their leaders to attend the UN Open-ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWGA) that met in New York in July.

In Tanzania older activists are extremely concerned about the increasing number of older people murdered due to witchcraft beliefs. It is often those that are least able to defend themselves and the most marginalised in society that are accused of witchcraft. The majority of cases of those persecuted and accused of witchcraft are older women.

The Tanzania Legal and Human Rights Centre report showed that 765 people, 505 of which were women, have been killed due to alleged witchcraft accusations in 2013. This is a stark increase from the murder of 630 older people reported in 2012.

HelpAge Tanzania and organisations of older people are calling on leaders in the government, educators and the media to use their influence to challenge the beliefs and practices that violate the human rights of older men and women.

Older activists; further stressed the significance of a convention that prohibits discrimination on the basis of age in protecting older people in Tanzania in the same way as the existing UN conventions

for women and children do. Such conventions would oblige governments to bring legislation, policy and practice in line with the standards of the convention.

Sign the Age Demands Action petition for a new UN convention on the rights of older people at

<http://www.helpage.org/signthepetition>

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Tackling witchcraft accusations

New programme launched by HelpAge Tanzania

In Tanzania between 2005 and 2011, approximately 500 older people were murdered due to suspicions that they were witches. Worryingly, these numbers are increasing. The Tanzanian annual human rights report showed that 630 people were killed due to witchcraft accusations in 2012. This rose to 765 in 2013, of which 505 were women. Killings based on witchcraft allegations are a growing problem experienced by older people, and specifically older women.

Indeed, this picture is at odds with the commonly held assumption that respect for older people is a deeply ingrained feature of African society. The belief that misfortunes such as illness, death or financial problems are the result of witchcraft is a widespread cultural belief that cuts across all classes in society. This leads to the labelling of the most marginalised and those that are least able to defend themselves from such accusations – mostly older women.

Once someone is perceived to be performing alleged witchcraft, punishment from the community is meted out, often by mob justice, and is brutal and degrading. Recent cases include older people being buried alive and stoned to death.

Clotilda Kokupima, 80, from the Kigoma region, spoke about the labelling of older



Natalie Idehen/HelpAge

Clotilda Kokupima, older activist, Kigoma

women as witches: “Women are often accused of practising witchcraft because they have red eyes. Women do the cooking at home and the redness comes from the smoke produced from cooking with firewood, not from witchcraft.” Samson Msemembo, 80, from Morogoro region, highlighted the views of older people’s groups in the affected regions:

“There has been a cry to the government to stop the killings for so many years by older people’s organisations in these regions. Yet we do not see to this day that there has been any reduction in the killings or any practical solutions, in comparison to the killing of Albinos that was taken very seriously by the government.”

“Violence against older people is a global issue. We should be celebrating ageing and the invaluable contribution older people make”.

In December 2013, HelpAge Tanzania launched a three year project that is being implemented in Mwanza and Kagera regions. Both regions have high incidences of witchcraft-related killings, specifically targeting older people. This integrated programme, aims to address the underlying socio-cultural, economic and gender issues that increase the vulnerability of older men and women to violence and discrimination. Aiming to tackle the problem at the community, district, regional and national level, the project will, among other things:

- Provide paralegal training to older people, enabling them to raise awareness of their rights, as well as to provide legal advice, counselling and referrals to people at risk of accusations or those that have been victimised.
- Support older women to earn a living which will in turn raise their social

Natalie Idehen/HelpAge



Samson Msemembo, older activist, Morogoro

standing in the community, making them less vulnerable to allegations of witchcraft.

- Enable older women write memory books and will – issues often causing conflict within families
- Mobilise older women spokespersons to campaign for their rights enabling them to engage duty bearers at the ward and district levels.

The project is funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation, who also teamed up with HelpAge Germany and HelpAge International to raise further funding. In a unique way, the project works at local level by mobilising communities to challenge deep rooted cultural beliefs; by working with local authorities to take measures to provide protection and justice to the victims. At the national government level the project seeks to influence policy and legislation, which will significantly increase the role of the Government in tackling the violations of the human rights of older men and women.

Violence against older people is a global issue. We should be celebrating ageing and the invaluable contribution older people make. Everyone has the right to life; no one should have to live in fear of growing older.

Read the latest blogs from the HelpAge global network at <http://www.helpage.org/blogs/>

Message from Country Director

Amleset Tewodros, Country Director for HelpAge International Tanzania, discusses the launch of the latest Global AgeWatch Index and the progress made towards a UN Convention on the Rights of Older People

Beyond the Millennium Development Goals

In the past two years global, continental and national events of significance have shaped and influenced our work with older people. The post 2015 Sustainable Development Agenda is by far the most important global event. Overcoming the omission of older people in the Millennium Development Goal targets, it is hoped, the post 2015 sustainable development framework will put people of all ages and abilities at the centre of the new global instrument. It is only when we have global commitments that promote equity and inclusion that we can truly achieve sustained and inclusive economic growth and social development. This will enable our national governments to draw plans and resources relevant for 'people of all ages' avoiding the neglect of people in older age.

Since the UN General Assembly through its resolution established the Open Ended Working Group (OEWG) over four years ago, there has been encouraging progress towards a Convention on the Rights of Older People. With its extended mandate the OEWG has identified gaps in the existing human rights instruments and is debating the content of a new convention. Although the work of the OEWG still continues, older people recognise the relevance of such a binding instrument that compels Governments to put in place measures that will make violence against older men and women a crime. Tragically the murder of older men and women due to witchcraft accusations which continues unabated in some parts of Tanzania, places huge moral and legal responsibility on leaders in the Government, law enforcement bodies and human rights organisations, to ensure

existing legal frameworks are followed to provide protection and justice to the victims.

On 1 October 2014, HelpAge International launched its second ground breaking insight report that measures the wellbeing of older people using four domains: 'income security', 'health status', 'capability' and 'enabling environment'. Over all Tanzania ranks 92 among 96 countries in the Global AgeWatch index. In the Income security domain it ranks 94 with less than 4 percent of all older people having access to contributory pension although 73 percent of older people remain economically active largely in small scale agriculture. In the health domain Tanzania ranks 69th with its policy of free access to health care for older men and women 60 years and above placing it 2nd from the group of 11 African countries covered in the index. In the capability domain, Tanzania ranks 86 while in the enabling environment domain it ranks 88th.

The domains that measured older people's wellbeing were identified by older people as being of utmost importance to them. The Index tells us that economic growth alone will not improve older people's wellbeing without specific policies addressing the implications of ageing.

Amleset Tewodros, HelpAge Tanzania's Country Director

Flavian Bifandimu/ HelpAge



The inclusion in the draft constitution of social security to poor people, older people, children, sick and people with disabilities is a step in the right direction. We remain optimistic that the commitments are firmly endorsed by the Constitution Assembly, ensuring senior citizens realise their right to social protection as provided in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In this issue we share some of our programmes to give our readers a birds eye view of our work. Please contact us to learn more about our work and see how you can get involved.

Finally, we take this opportunity to thank the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Youth, the Ministry of Local Government in the Prime Minister's Office, for their unreserved support and collaboration. Our appreciation goes to older people's organisations who facilitate our work in the communities. We thank DFID, Sida, Pfizer Inc, the German Federal Ministry of Cooperation, HelpAge Germany and Irish Aid for their financial and technical support.

Read the latest Global AgeWatch Index 2014 report at www.globalagewatch.org

Preparing for an ageing society

Supporting the prevention and control of NCDs

Amleset Tewodros/ HelpAge



23 Active Ageing Groups established

68 per cent of older people actively participating

A dispensary in Mwendapole, Kibaha district – one of the project sites

The recent review of the Tanzanian Government's Health Sector Strategic Plan highlighted that with improved life expectancy, Non Communicable Diseases (NCDs) and lifestyle-related diseases are on the increase. The review also underscored the need for urgent action to tackle NCDs.

Non Communicable Diseases are chronic diseases like diabetes, cancer and stroke that are common in advanced age. HelpAge Tanzania and partners have been working to improve the prevention and control of NCDs among older people in Tanzania. Research conducted by the Adult Mortality and Morbidity Programme showed that in some districts in Tanzania an average of 60 per cent of deaths amongst older people were from NCDs.

A two years project supported by the pharmaceutical company Pfizer, is implementing interventions in Morogoro, Songea and Kibaha districts. The range of activities focus on promoting healthy ageing among older people;

their care-givers and healthcare workers; improving the approach of health services in addressing NCDs in older people and increasing the accountability of public health services.

The main interventions of the project are:

- Training health workers in the early diagnosis and treatment of NCDs
- Establishing Active Ageing Groups where older people can share health information and undertake physical exercises
- Supporting the formation of Older People's Monitoring Groups
- Training healthcare workers to include data on older people in health reports
- Joint meetings with older people and district councils to discuss health issues

Since its launch over a year ago, the project has made significant progress including increasing understanding of NCDs among older people in the project area from 27 per cent at the beginning of the project to 81 per cent. 23 Active

Ageing Groups were established with 68 per cent of older people actively participating in healthy ageing activities. The number of older people receiving support from healthcare professionals to manage chronic illnesses has increased from 68 older people at the beginning of the project to 1,043.

These encouraging achievements have resulted in the development of a new project that has attracted further funding from Pfizer, which aims at exploring the intergenerational role among older and younger people to promote a life course approach to health. The project has embarked on the first of its kind research that involved younger and older people in a co-investigation approach to understand types and sources of health information that benefits both ages. The main output of this work will be the development of materials that could be used to support intergenerational health education initiatives.

You can read the full report on this programme at <http://goo.gl/2ImyBS>

Active ageing

Older people challenge chronic diseases and loneliness through Active Ageing Groups

Health and Income are the two most common priority needs expressed by older people universally. Achieving better health outcomes for older people in the context of weakened health care systems and a growing threat of non-communicable diseases has been a strategic priority for HelpAge in Tanzania.

In 2013, HelpAge launched a programme to support the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases. One of the key features of this programme is the establishment of Active Ageing Groups which were formed to promote healthy lifestyle through regular exercise, create platform for improved awareness of prevention and management of chronic conditions and tackling harmful practices such as smoking and drinking. The programme which is funded by Pfizer



Natalie Idehen/HelpAge

**Margaret,
Active Ageing
Group member**

Pharmaceuticals is also playing a critical role by supporting health care facilities in three districts to carry out regular health clinics for older people to promote diagnosis and referral.

Mobilised by this project, at the moment there are 23 active ageing groups with

a membership ranging from 15-25 older people per group operating across Morogoro, Kibaha and Songea. The groups are having significant, physical, emotional and social impact on the lives of older people. In this issue we will profile the testimony of Margaret Charles from Morogoro.

Margaret's Story

Margaret who is 61 lives in Kihonda ward. She looks after three of her grandchildren (John 1, Mary 10 and Esther 13). Margaret is a widow. She has been a member of the active ageing group, the "Amleset Tewodros" club, for one year.

"I take care of my three grandchildren, John, Mary and Esther on my own. It is very difficult. The children have a lot of

needs and I do not have the money to support them. I get only a little help from my children. Sometimes I skip meals so my grandchildren can go to school. It is better for me not to eat but they should go to school. Everything I have I direct to them.

After I retired I had a lot of financial worries. I had to wait six months to get my police pension. It is only a small amount of money. I suffered from high blood pressure and depression because I did not have enough money to survive.

I was finding life so difficult I stopped exercising because I was depressed and eating was a problem. When you don't work anymore people don't visit, their concern and attention goes away. I was very lonely and angry at everyone. I felt like I was dying before I joined the group.

I had always been physically fit. When I was a police officer I used to be in the netball team. I even appeared in sports

magazines. Now I am in the active ageing group and I am exercising again. We do exercise classes, water pumping, weaving baskets and playing games like cards. I like weaving baskets the most, I like mixing up the colours to create designs. I have learnt a lot of things about being healthy. I know that I should eat a balanced diet with protein and vitamins and that I should stay active.

I am in much better health now. I do not have depression anymore or high blood pressure. I am also physically fit again. I find comfort in the group. I have company so I am no longer lonely. I also get information about my rights. Now I know that I should get free healthcare.

I sell the products from my small business to the other members. We work together to develop new ideas for income generation. I have learnt so much from the group it has given me the light – the way forward."



Natalie Idehen/HelpAge

Improving access to healthcare and livelihoods

New research on rural transport services for older people

Poor infrastructure and a lack of reliable transport can make it very difficult for older people, particularly those living in rural communities, to meet their own and their family's basic needs. In Tanzania, 80 per cent of the older population lives in rural areas and 40 per cent of the country's 2 million orphaned children are cared for by older people.

HelpAge Tanzania with the support of the UK AID funded - Africa Community Access Programme (AFCAP), conducted a research study to investigate how the limited availability of comfortable and safe modes of transport and poor road conditions, affect the lives of older people and their families.

In rural areas the most common forms of transport for older people are walking, cycling and using motorcycle taxis (boda-boda). Older women, who tend to be the poorest, are the least able to afford transport.

The study which was carried out in Kibaha, a rural district in the coastal region, found that older people are often unable to travel because of poor health, disability and the relative high cost of fares. They regularly had to walk long distances to transport routes across challenging terrain and were often hampered by the rains. This made it difficult for them to earn a living to support themselves and their families, access health services and meet basic needs such as obtaining water and firewood for fuel.

An older respondent said about accessing health services, "I have problems with my leg so I can't walk far. Even going to the nearby clinic, I can sit four times. And then there is no medicine.....I also have asthma so when I walk I have to use a stick."

People that live in rural areas regularly have to carry water, fuel and farm

produce. The research showed that older people carried heavy loads of water and wood for fuel from distances that were over 30 minutes from their homes. Often they would have to travel twice a day to collect water, carrying loads of up to 20 kg.

An older participant said about carrying heavy loads, "it takes a quarter of an hour to fetch water – thirty minutes per journey. I do this three or four times a day. I cannot go all the way – I have to stop for rest and carry on, stop and carry on again."

The rapid growth of motorcycle taxi services has brought improved mobility for older people; even for the very old but its use has limitations. Older traders in the research group found it more difficult to travel to the market to sell their goods, because they were unable to manage carrying heavy goods while riding on a motorcycle taxi. Many reported that

“Many reported that motorcycle taxi fares were too expensive and that they found travelling on them a dangerous and frightening experience”

motorcycle taxi fares were too expensive and that they found travelling on them a dangerous and frightening experience. Stakeholders who gathered in Dar es Salaam in March 2014 including representatives from the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Transport, older people's organisations and international and regional participants from academic institutions recommended the following actions for the Government to take forward:

- Introducing a universal pension system to enable older people meet healthcare and transport costs.
- Tackling the high cost of fares and the lack of comfortable and safe modes of transport.
- Establishing community funds to help meet transport costs.
- Training motorbike operators on safety and sensitivity towards people with limited mobility.
- Involving the rural community to improve the conditions of rural roads.
- Investigating the use of mobile phone technology in health promotion, prevention and treatment.

You can read final report at <http://goo.gl/ogEj2e>

Dr Gina Porter/University of Durham



Motorcycle taxi traversing a rural area

Older people championing their rights

DFID programme strengthens civil society

HelpAge Tanzania is one of the organisations partnering in the DFID funded Accountability in Tanzania (AcT) programme. This innovative programme seeks to increase the responsiveness and accountability of the Tanzanian Government by strengthening civil society and empowering citizens to hold the government accountable for the delivery of quality services and responsible management of public resources. The initiative began in 2009 and will run until March 2015.



Amleset Tewodros/HelpAge

Older activists calling for their rights

Placing the rights of older people in the centre of the accountability programme, HelpAge and its partners aim to deliver:

- Age-friendly health services for older people.
- Mobilise key stakeholders to campaign against the persecution and murder of older people due to witchcraft allegations.
- Changes in government legislation, policies and practice to promote and protect older people's rights.
- Inclusion of older people in local and central government funded programmes.

Older people have received training and coaching through the local forums and monitoring groups to build their capacity to act as spokespeople about their rights and entitlements and to strengthen the collection of evidence to support advocacy activities. An older community leader said about the training he had received, "before we were blinded, we didn't know our rights. But now we are aware of ourselves...now it is we [older people] who demand our rights instead of waiting for government officials."

Older spokespersons met with human rights and gender activists in Tanzania including the Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC) and the Tanzania Gender Network programme (TGNP) to discuss the persecution and murder of older

people due to witchcraft allegations. The meeting led to the LHRC committing to including the violation of older people's rights in their upcoming shadow report and to feature this topic in their regular broadcasting slot on Channel Ten. In the Kagera region, 12 older people participated in a meeting with the regional commissioner, members of parliament and other key health officials to champion the health rights of older people. During the meeting older activists presented a petition that had over 3,000 signatures calling on the government to ensure that older people are able to access their entitlement to a social pension and free medical services.

The Overseas Development Institute (ODI), a leading independent think tank, highlighted in its recent report that HelpAge Tanzania has been particularly effective, through its innovative approaches, in working with the government to address inconsistencies in policy that impact on the lives of older people. The key achievements from the programme to date are:

The number of healthcare facilities delivering age-friendly services has increased from 62 to 1,307, covering 24 per cent of the country's total health facilities.

The establishment of a geriatrics desk within the Ministry of Health and the

appointment of 46 health and social workers that will act as focal persons for older people.

The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare has started the process of reviewing the current curriculum for medical staff to ensure health care services are age-friendly.

A toolkit called the EASY Care Tool that was designed to screen older people for Non Communicable Diseases (NCDs); was tested to provide evidence to the government about the impact of NCDs on older people.

The Older People's Monitoring Groups are working with 1040 older people, particularly in the rural areas, to monitor the delivery of health services and to report any barriers to access or discrimination. Subsequently, 10 councils have now included a provision for older people's health in their 2013 budgets.

Older spokespersons have engaged with 109 policy makers and human rights organisations who are now championing age-friendly healthcare and the life-course approach.

Find out more about the Accountability in Tanzania programme by downloading the ODI report at <http://goo.gl/VNrgJs>

Key Dates for Your Diary

International dates of significance

September

21 September – World Alzheimer's Day

October

1 October – International Day of Older People – Launch of the Global AgeWatch Index and Age Demands Action
Global campaign day

9 October – World Sight Day

13 October – International Day for Disaster Reduction

15 October – International Day of Rural Women

16 October – World Food Day

17 October – International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

November

14 November – World Diabetes Day

25 November – International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

December

1 December – World Aids Day

3 December – International Day of Persons with Disabilities

10 December – Human Rights Day

20 December – International Human Solidarity Day

February

20 February – World Day of Social Justice

March

1 March – Zero Discrimination Day

8 March – International Women's Day

22 March – World Water Day

24 March – World TB Day

April

7 April – World Health Day

June

15 June – World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

Organisations of older people and networks in Tanzania

Tanzania Older People's Forum (TOP)

Tanzania Social Protection Network

Morogoro Elderly People Organization (MOREPEO)

Saidia Wazee Tanzania (SAWATA) Dodoma – Dodoma Region

Saidia Wazee Tanzania (SAWAKA) – Kagera Region

Tanzania Mission to the Poor and Disabled (PADI) – Ruvuma Region

Chama Cha Wastaafu na Wazee wa Lindi (CHAWALI) – Lindi Region

Arusha Retired People's Association (CHAWAMA) – Arusha Region

Songea Older People's Forum (SOPF) – Ruvuma Region

Saidia Wazee Tanzania (SAWATA) – Mara Region

Chama cha Wastaafu Mtwara (CHAWAMU) – Mtwara Region

Saidia Wazee Tanzania (SAWATA – Kasulu) – Kigoma Region

Tanzania Women Leaders on Agriculture & Environment (TAWLAE) – Shinyanga Region

Shidepha+ Kahama – Shinyanga Region

Kilio cha Waathirika na Waathiriwa wa Ukimwi Mbarali (KIWWAUMBA) – Mbarali, Mbeya Region

Nassa Brotherhood Society for the Aged (NABROHO) – Mwanza Region

Magu Poverty Eradication Rehabilitation Center (MAPERECE) – Mwanza Region

Africa Women Aids Group (AFRIWAG) – Tanga Region

Iramba Help Older People Economic Groups Association (IRAHOPEGA) – Iramba, Singida Region

Moshi Poverty Stricken Elders Association (MOPSEA) – Kilimanjaro Region

Organisation of Ukerewe Ageing and Development (ORUKADE) – Ukerewe District

Walio Katika Mapambano na AIDS Tanzania (WAMATA) – Dar es Salaam Region

Service to Widows, Orphans and Little-ones Organization (SWOLO) – Mbeya Region

Care for Vulnerable People (CAVUPA) – Arusha Region

Chama cha Wastaafu Bukoba – Kagera Region

Kwa Wazee Bukoba – Kagera Region

Jumuiya ya Wastaafu Zanzibar (JUWAZA) – Zanzibar

Southern Highlands Senility Organization (SHISO) – Iringa Region

Mwananyamala Women Development (MWAUWODE) – Dar es Salaam Region

The Good Samaritan Social Services Trust (GSSST) – Kibaha, Coast Region

Chama Cha Wazee Mpanda – Katavi Region



Celebrating the UN International Day of Older People on 1 October

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