

Country Position Paper on Ageing and Poverty in Zambia



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Introduction

- **Poverty is widespread in Zambia**
- **40 years ago, at Independence, Zambia was a prosperous country**
- **Research evidence indicates that among the poor in Zambia, are the small scale farmers, people living in low cost areas and older people**

- **There is general agreement that poverty must be eradicated as it is a human and development problem**
- **From 1997 Government has been looking for a solution to the high poverty levels. In July 2002, Zambia launched its PRSP which aimed at reducing poverty while stimulating economic growth**

Overview of the Status of the National Poverty Policy and Strategy

The Poverty Situation in Zambia

- **Both income and human poverty are high. In 1996 about 69.2% of the people were classified as poor. In 1998 this rose to 72.9% indicating that poverty had worsened.**
- **The above increase in poverty levels has not only been a source of concern but also a catalyst for more sustainable interventions in the PRSP.**

Changes in the Poverty measurement in Zambia 1996 - 1998

- Although majority Zambians are poor, there are certain groups of the population who experience poverty most.
- According to the LCMS of 1998 small and medium scale farmers, people in low cost areas, and the urban poor are some of the poorest groups and their situation did not change much between 1996 and 1998.
- Our experience is that poverty tends to vary with size of the household, the bigger the poorer.
- In terms of gender, female-headed households tend to be poorer than male-headed households. The same LCMS says 77% of all persons in the female-headed household were poor as compared to 72% in the male-headed household.

- In addition, 68 % of the female-headed households had food shortage as compared to only 61% of the male-headed households.
- These figures clearly show that poverty affects females and males differently. The differences are due to several factors including:
 - Gender differences in levels of education
 - Low participation of females in formal employment
 - More females (39%) than males (16%) are employed as unpaid family workers
 - Females are at greater risk of contracting HIV/AIDS and opportunistic infections due to their biology, roles, resources and cultural norms.
- Poverty also tends to be higher in orphans, street children and children who are household heads. About 600,000 children are orphans with the number higher in rural areas and other areas where the incidence of poverty is very high.

- **Poverty and age:** Various studies in Zambia indicate that poverty is deeper and more severe in households headed by older people than in households headed by younger persons
- **Poverty and location:** There are rural-urban disparities. Rural areas experience more poverty than urban areas.
- **Also Areas outside the line of rail** experience more poverty than the areas along the line of rail.

Methods of collecting poverty data

- **Zambia's poverty profile is a product of a combination of quantitative, participatory and longitudinal studies.**
- **These have enabled the presentation of different dimensions of poverty as well as the changes in the levels of poverty overtime. This data is desegregated by gender, education, and other aspects**

Methods used in preparing the PRSP

Since the PRSP was built on the following six principles as outlined by the World Bank, ie,

- 1. Country driven and lead by the Government**
- 2. Results oriented with the outcomes benefiting the poor**
- 3. Recognise the multi-dimensional nature of poverty**
- 4. Implementation to be feasible in fiscal and institutional terms**
- 5. Encourage coordinated participation of development partners**
- 6. Be based on poverty reduction that is long term**

Preparation of the of the PRSP involved the participatory process which included civil society, donors, private sector and people from the academia

The Zambian Government is credited with the with adopting about two thirds of the suggestions from the civil society



The preparation also included the review of literature on poverty in Zambia, participatory assessments and provincial conferences

Methods of monitoring and reviewing PRSP

A set of intermediate indicators and final indicators will be used

The indicators were selected by the thematic groups which worked on the various themes. They were field-tested and further screened to ensure that they also monitor the country's progress toward the Millennium Development Goals

The CSO has been selected as the primary organ for carrying out the monitoring. Government Ministries, bank of Zambia, parastatals, Zambia Social Investment Fund, NGOs, academic institutions, research centres and Provincial Planning units will also provide data

Methods of evaluating PRSP

In evaluating the PRSP, the implementation and outcomes of the programmes and policies will be compared with a set of indicators in the sector programmes and other institutional benchmarks. The main source of evaluation data will be the sample surveys by the CSO. The Civil society will be expected to play a vital role in the evaluation of the programmes and policies

Focus and strategic thrusts of PRSP

- 1. Availability of growth-stimulating and pro poor interventions vital to economic growth and poverty reduction.**
- 2. Channeling of scarce resources to meet the already agreed goals and objectives of PRSP.**
- 3. Targeting Agricultural development as an engine for economic expansion for the poor**

In addition to these the PRSP intends to fund the ongoing social safety nets such as the Public welfare Assistance Scheme

Linkage to other development initiatives

Our PRSP is regarded as a medium-term development and poverty strategy, a conditionality for further donor support, and a tool for achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

The PRSP is also linked to the Zambia vision 2025, medium term expenditure framework, public investment programme, district and provincial development plans, poverty alleviation programmes and the annual budget

Overview of current social policy/ strategy with respect to older persons

National policy on ageing

Government acknowledges that older people are some of the poorest and approaches the issue of poverty reduction seriously

Though Zambia has no specific policy on ageing, there are policies in line Ministries which address specific needs of older people. The

National Social Welfare Policy for instance has interventions to cushion older persons and other vulnerable people from the effects of SAP.

It also stresses the importance of family or community care as opposed to institutional care. Homes for the aged should be the last resort for those with no one to look after them.

The Ministry of Health's policy exempts persons over 65 years from paying user charges in health facilities so as to increase their access to health services

The Ministry of Labour in its Employment Policy says that men should retire at 55 years and women at 50

Government is concerned that there is no ageing policy and has started preparing for the drafting of the policy to be ready by the end of the year

Social sector Strategy

Income and social protection of older persons is provided by a combination of formal and informal social support systems which include publicly funded pension schemes and privately run pension schemes

Others are safety nets like the Public Welfare Assistance Scheme providing for the basic needs of the older persons, orphans, stranded persons and the destitute

There are also public works programmes like the food for work, home ownership schemes which also enabled some retirees and other older persons to purchase housing units cheaply

These safety nets started way before the PRSP but have since been adopted as part of the PRSP after some adjustments

The informal social protection support systems refer to the care and support provided by the extended family. Policy has always been to support the extended family so that it continues to care for many of older Zambians

Current thinking on ageing issues in the country

It is felt by many interested in ageing issues that the lack of an ageing policy compliance of various ageing related procedures and ageing rights will be difficult to achieve.

Government share this thinking and that is why the ageing policy is now a priority.

Since most of the older persons lack income and live below the poverty line, something should be done to help the needy older people. Younger member of society should be encouraged to look after their elderly ones.

Secondly, Government should consider interventions like social pension, support and incentives to families looking after older people, and provision of credit for income generating activities

Specific problems that Government believes need attention

1. Delayed pension contributions for former public service workers.
2. Lack of an ageing policy which seems to retard progress on many ageing issues
3. Increasing cases of elder abuse and neglect.
4. Invisibility of ageing in poverty reduction programmes require immediate attention

Special initiatives with respect to older persons

1. Research on ageing issues by university students and academic staff
2. Income Generating Activities by the senior Citizens Association and other organizations intended to improve incomes of the elderly
3. Relief programmes pay particular attention to the older persons when distributing relief food as they are usually worse off in terms of food security
4. Some Church organizations have started homes for the aged and day care centre. These are free services to the older persons

Linkage to the AU policy on ageing

The African Union Policy Framework and Plan on Ageing is being used as a basis for developing the ageing policy

EVIDENCE ON POVERTY-AGEING LINKAGES

Statistics on Ageing-poverty linkages

Research shows that female-headed households are more poor than those headed by males. Further, households headed by older persons are poorer than those headed by younger people. In households headed by older women poverty situation is even more serious

Older people's access to social services

Poverty can not be effectively reduced if older persons do not have access to basic social services. Older persons access and utilisation of health care is limited by distance and lack of transport, long waiting hours, negative attitudes by some staff, lack of drugs, poor infrastructure, and availability of alternatives such as traditional medicines

Access to public assistance is limited due to budgetary constraints

Older persons' access to credit, training and other services is limited by attitudes and regulations

Steps towards the integration of ageing into national poverty policies

1. Involve older persons in the assessment, implementation and evaluation of poverty reduction programmes
2. Review the PRSP policies to ensure that specific needs of older persons are taken into account
3. Examine the poverty reduction policies to ensure they do not weaken but strengthen the extended family support systems
4. Public awareness programmes to change attitudes that prevent older people from accessing basic social services

LESSONS LEARNT

1. The participatory consultation used in the formulation of the PRSP builds partnerships critical for national development.
2. The linkage of PRSP to debt relief is problematic because when benchmarks are not achieved external funding was withheld and debt relief was postponed
3. The preparation of the PRSP made us recognise the presence of a large pool of expertise which we need to tap from to take the nation forward

RECOMMENDATIONS

There is need to promote and institutionalise a culture of consultation built up during the preparation of the PRSP in development programmes and budgetary processes