Expert Group Meeting on Policies and Strategies to Promote the Empowerment of People in Achieving Poverty Eradication, Social Integration and Productive and Decent Work for All

Experiences of policies and practices of empowering older people in Africa

UN Headquarters, New York, 10-11 September 2013

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Summary

Poverty in old age is often a result of deprivation and marginalization experienced across the life course and passed on through generations.   Nevertheless, growing older poses specific challenges such as increased physical, economic and social vulnerabilities that deserve special attention. In the context of widespread poverty, reduced earning power of an older person can create additional stresses and shocks to the wider household. Furthermore, due to changing family structures, conflict, migration and HIV and AIDS many older people in Africa are finding themselves facing greater responsibilities just as they encounter the vulnerabilities of old age. The urgency of this issue is increased in the context that the world is undergoing unprecedented demographic change, with numbers of older people in low and middle income countries predicted to outnumber children under 14 by 2045.[2]

Addressing issues being faced by older people will require interventions that go beyond the simple provision of alms. It requires provisions that draw on the experiences, skills and energies of older people themselves; provisions that empower older people to take charge of their own lives and contribute to the sustenance of their families and communities. For over 30 years, HelpAge International has been working to ensure that older people can enjoy healthy, active, secure and dignified lives.

This paper attempts to share some of the national, continental and global policy frameworks that have provided the required legal framework to institute measures that empower older people. It further discusses programmatic responses implemented in various countries of Africa and contexts that have, to varying degrees, reduced risks and vulnerabilities and contributed to the empowerment of older people to economic, social and political independence. Its recommendations include specific policy actions to be taken at national level and through the response of Member States on ageing within the future global post 2015 development framework.

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

[2] Achieving income security in old age: *Taking stock and pushing the boundaries (Synthesis report, Feb 2012)*

Africa's ageing population

Current figures and projections suggest that Africa has been experiencing the largest increases in the number of older persons. In 2007, the figure stood at 50.5 million, went up to 55.4 million in 2010 and is projected to rise to 213 million by 2050[3]. According to Kalasa[4], many regions of the African continent will experience the same trend with Northern Africa showing a dramatic development in which the population older than 60 years is expected to be around 20% in 2050. Aboderin[5] finds similar results indicating huge increases in various parts of Africa with increases of up to 300% between 2010 and 2050 in Northern and Eastern Africa. Globally women form the majority of older persons. Today, for every 100 women aged 60 or over worldwide, there are just 84 men and for every 100 women aged 80 or over there are only 61 men[6].

These increases are, unfortunately, taking place in a continent that is experiencing many socio economic problems ranging from poor economic performance in many countries, rising levels of poverty exacerbated by the impact of HIV and AIDS and persistent conflict among many population groups.

High levels of poverty among older people

It is now a known fact that older persons are among the poorest in every community in Africa[7]. Nabalamba and Chikoko[8] contend that economic indicators for older persons show that households headed by older persons in many countries in Africa are among the poorest, showing poverty rates of between 8 and 20% higher than the national average. In most middle- and low-income countries, the proportion of older people living in poverty is higher than the general population[9].

Kakwani and Subbarao[10] analyzing the situation in a number of African countries, show that poverty is highest in households where older persons and children live and is less in households with no older persons. In Uganda, for example, 64 per cent of older people are poor, compared with 38 per cent of the total population, while in Tanzania, poverty among older headed households is higher by 22.4%.

Poverty is the principal cause of hunger in Africa and elsewhere. In 2008, 47 percent of the population of sub-Saharan Africa lived on $1.25 a day or less. According to the 2012 Global

[3] United Nations Population Division (2010) World population prospects: the 2008 revision, UN

[4] UNFPA "Population Ageing in Africa", Kalasa B. (2011)

[5] UNFPA "Understanding our Ageing World": Assessment of National Level Implementation of The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) in the Africa Region, Aboderin, I. (2010)

[6] UNFPA and HelpAge International: Ageing in the Twenty-First Century: A Celebration and a Challenge (2012)

[7] ILO *"Ageing in Asia: The Growing Need for Social Protection"*, 1997

[8] African Development Bank, "Ageing Population Challenges in Africa"; Chikoko M. & Nabalamba, A. (2011)

[9] *HelpAge International, Forgotten Workforce: Older people and their right to decent work, HelpAge International, 2011, p.7*

[10] The World Bank, Washington, Aging and Poverty in Africa and the Role of Social Pensions, *Social Protection Discussion Paper Series*. DC.Kakwani N and Subbarao K (2005),

Hunger Index, of the 20 countries with alarming level of hunger in 2012, 14 were countries from Africa.

Conflict and displacement

Conflict exacerbates human misery. Poverty rates are 20 percentage points higher in countries affected by repeated cycles of violence over the last three decades. Every year of violence in a country is associated with lagging poverty reduction of nearly one percentage point. People living in countries currently affected by violence are twice as likely to be undernourished and 50 percent more likely to be impoverished. Their children are three times as likely to be out of school. Countries with serious human rights abuses or weak government effectiveness, rule of law, and control of corruption have a 30 - 45 percent higher risk of civil war, and significantly higher risk of extreme criminal violence than other developing countries. Africa had an estimated 13.5 million refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in 2011. Older persons form a significant proportion of IDPs and refugee groups sometimes as high as 30-65 percent[11]. The degree to which older people's skills, capabilities and roles are recognised and supported during displacement has a significant impact on the challenges older people face and their ability to survive and recover.

The Impact of HIV and AIDS

The Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) countries whose combined population constitute 3.5% of the world's population account for more than 37% of PLHIV[12]. In sub-Saharan Africa, for example, approximately 40 per cent of people living with HIV are being cared for by an older person[13]. Around 50 per cent of children orphaned as a result of AIDS in east and southern Africa are cared for by older people[14].

As well as the impact of HIV and AIDS on older people as carers, many older people are also living with HIV. With significant increases in access to antiretroviral therapy (ART), many people are now living into older age with HIV. With the success of increased access to ART and the subsequent ageing of the epidemic comes a challenge.

Older people need a secure income, for many reasons: to enable them to continue to adhere to their treatment regimen to be able to travel for health check-ups regularly; to have a diet with adequate nutritious foods; and to pay for any necessary medical tests and medicines that may not be provided free of charge.

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[11] The Neglected Generation: the impact of displacement on older people (HelpAge International and Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2012)
[12] SADC HIV and AIDS strategic Framework 2010-2015
[13] Baseline information from Africa regional HIV and AIDS project, London, HelpAge International, 2006
[14] HelpAge International, 'Governments not prepared for ageing, warns HelpAge', www.helpage.org/news/mediacentre/pressreleases/scxp (4 May 2009)

Social and cultural changes

Africa is facing an almost irreversible trend in which the social and cultural fabric has significantly changed. There is an increasing disconnect between the young and old and the values and norms are slowly being lost in dress, manners, conversation, sharing, and other symbols that used to hold families together. The exchange that existed and interaction between the various age groups and older persons; in for instance, the socialization process through storytelling and other initiation processes has been replaced by modern means of communication (TV, radio, mobile phones, etc). This is creating nuclear families at the expense of the family support networks (extended families). The combination of all these factors has led to a lot of abandonment, neglect and abuse of older persons.[15]

We live in an increasingly digital world, everything from providing services to social interaction is changing. As information and services move increasingly online how do we ensure that older people are not left behind and are able to benefit fully from the increased independence that comes with digital competence. This scenario means that a lot needs to be done to empower older persons to take charge of their own lives but also to contribute to their countries, their communities and their families. It should be noted that progress towards this goal has been increasing slowly in the continent with frameworks and policies and legislation being developed to support action on improving the lives of older persons.

The Role of Policies in Empowering Older Persons

Africa still lags behind in the development and implementation of policies and legislation on older persons[16]. Only a handful of countries in Africa have developed policies on ageing with a few others in the process of doing so. This is the case despite the impetus that has been provided by international[17] and continental[18] policies on ageing developed since 2002.

It is important to note that in Africa the Vienna International Plan of Action on Ageing catalyzed the creation of a number of organizations focusing on ageing and encouraged a number of governments to initiate discussions on ageing. However, there were no concerted efforts to advocate action on ageing even though the United Nations came up with two important initiatives nearly 10 years after the Assembly. These were the United Nations Principles on Older Persons (1991) covering key areas of independence, participation, care, self-fulfilment and dignity; and the UN Proclamation on ageing which designated 1999 as the International Year of Older Persons.

The International Year of Older Persons whose theme was ''Towards a Society for All Ages'' was instrumental in creating the environment for many Civil Society Organisations across the globe to take some positive action to address the issues of older persons. In Africa, HelpAge International through its regional presence pushed the agenda through the corridors of

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[15] Coping with Old Age in a Changing Africa. Aldershot: Avebury, Apt N (1996)
[16] Nhongo, T. M. (2006) "Age Discrimination in Africa", Age Concern, UK
[17] The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002
[18] The Africa Union Policy Framework and Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002

governments and continental organisations such as the Africa Union (the then Organisation of African Unity). It is during this period that the agenda for older persons' issues was tabled at the Labour and Social Affairs Commission held in Namibia in April, 1999.[19] The Commission directed the OAU to work with HelpAge's Africa Regional Development Centre and advance the ageing agenda in Africa. This was followed by a conference of experts held in Kampala, Uganda in December, 2000, to draft the Africa Union Policy Framework and Plan of Action on Ageing (AU PF & PAA). The draft passed through several processes in the African Union; was finalised in April, 2002 and was approved by Heads of State and Government in July 2002.

At the international level, the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) outlined three priority areas: older persons in development; advancing health and wellbeing into old age and ensuring enabling and supportive environments.

Additionally, the African Union Social Policy Framework for Africa was finalized at the First Conference of Ministers in charge of Social Development, held in Windhoek, Namibia in October 2008.

It is important to note that the MIPAA and the AU PF & PAA contain the same salient features and are complimentary. They all call for the development of policies and enactment of legislation to protect the rights of older persons; the inclusion and participation of older persons in all development processes and decisions that affect them and collaboration between a range of stakeholders.

Despite this momentum at the international and continental levels, the development of policies on older persons has remained slow across Africa. Galvanised by these international and continental processes, a number of countries started developing policies around 2000. Examples include Mauritius, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Kenya and Uganda. While Tanzania's national policy on ageing was completed in 2003, it has not been legislated and by and large remained not binding. The Government of Zimbabwe approved the Older Persons Bill in 2012. Ghana, which was ready to table its policy on older persons in 2004, only finalised it in late 2011[20]. By about 2007, there were around 13 countries developing policies on ageing in sub Saharan Africa. This number has only marginally increased to 20 by 2011[21].

The slow pace in developing policies on older persons notwithstanding, HelpAge observes that there is a clear correlation between policies being in place and action towards empowering older persons. In every country where these policies exist, it has been easier to advocate the allocation of resources for older people's programmes. While there is general scepticism about the value of putting in place policies (especially in Africa) since implementation is often weak; it is important to realise that policies particularly those that are backed by legislation provide mandate to the

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[19] Nhongo, T M (1999), Report of the Twenty –Second Ordinary Session of the OAU Labour and Social Affairs Commission (19 – 24 April, 1999), Windhoek, Namibia, HAI- ARDC (Unpublished)
[20] Alifo, H. (2011) in Report for Interactive Training Workshop on Ageing, UNECA/UNDESA
[21] Nhongo, T. M. (2010) "Innovative Social Protection Programmes in Africa", African Union, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

responsible institutions to firmly seek resources and put actions while civil society can demand action and accountability on the basis of commitments articulated in the policy documents.

Strategies to empower older persons
Whilst a number of programmatic and policy responses have greatly enhanced the economic, social and psycho-social wellbeing of older people, the extent to which the approaches used have been empowering older people by promoting their rights, independence, choice, dignity, participation and self fulfilment can vary from place to place. Culture, economic status, gender, urban-rural differences, family structures, demographic trends, levels of the HIV and AIDS pandemic, security and political commitment hugely influence the situation of older people which is as diverse as the broader characteristics of the African continent itself. The strategies discussed in this section have been used in empowering older people in different geographic locations and contexts and the outcomes have equally been diverse.

HelpAge's rights based approach to advocate increased voice and visibility for older people primarily emanates from the recognition of the contributions and rights of older people - a major factor in the quest for older men and women's empowerment. According to Sylvia Beales, the core issue in the empowerment of older people lies in strengthening their capabilities; expanding their choices; and ensuring the promotion and protection of their human rights. [22]

In its over 30 years of experience working with older people, HelpAge International and its global network of organizations have developed strategies accompanied by innovative approaches that have played important role in empowering older people through the provision of appropriate information; particularly by bridging the gap in understanding of rights, entitlements and enabling older people to directly engage and hold their leaders accountable.   Additionally direct programmes that address their economic needs have also enhanced their position within the family and the wider community.

<u>Increasing access to income and improving living conditions</u>
Globally, only one in five older people receive a pension and coverage is lowest in developing countries, particularly for women, informal sector workers and people living in rural areas[23]. In most African countries, fewer than 1 in 10 older people; In Eastern and Southern Africa 19% access pension. The majority have no access to any form of regular income as they work in the informal sector and are excluded from contributory pension.   Furthermore they are often perceived as a credit risk and denied access to the benefits of microcredit often accorded to younger people.

In a context where older people provide care to a large number of vulnerable children, lack of regular income has a devastating impact for older people and those that depend on them. Consequently older people carry the heaviest burden of feeding, educating and looking after the health care needs of children at a time when they have diminishing mobility and capacity to work

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[22] BEALES, S.2012: Empowerment and older people: enhancing capabilities in an ageing world. Expert Group Meeting, 10-12 September 2012

[23] Forteza A, Luccheti L, and Pallares- Miralles M, "Measuring the Coverage Gap" in Holzmann R, Robalino D A and Takayama N, (eds.), Closing the Coverage Gap: The Role of Social Pensions and Other Retirement Income Transfers, World Bank, Washington, 2009

and earn a living. In Mozambique, for example, the average monthly cost of caring for an orphaned or vulnerable child is around $21. Secondary school fees cost $6 a year, but many children have to board, at a cost of $12 a term. The average monthly income for older people is just $12.

To respond to this crucial need, HelpAge International and its partners have worked on developing programmes that provide intergenerational livelihood support through the provision of grants to enable households headed by older people generate income. This approach enabled older people and grandchildren to work together to run small businesses based on areas of skills older people have and activities that are relevant to older people. Such programmes were common in East, Southern and West Africa where majority of projects were implemented.

Case Study 1: Loans for older people: Veronica, 62, Kenya

When Veronica's daughter died as a result of AIDS in 2006, her immediate concern was for her two grandchildren, who were four and two at the time. She said: "*Their father lives in this town, but he has a drinking problem. He and my late daughter separated before she died*.   Veronica took the grandchildren in and now looks after them as their primary carer. First of all, she made sure they were tested for HIV. "*The children are not infected*," she says. "I *am thankful for that*."

To provide for her grandchildren, Veronica started selling bananas. But because of prolonged droughts her business failed. However, being a resourceful and determined woman, she developed a new, better business idea and approached HelpAge International for a loan, which she received. With it, she opened a small eatery in Mangu town which she called the Classic Café. Every day, Veronica goes to her café early in the morning to prepare tea and snacks for her morning customers as well as some traditional Kenyan dishes based on maize, rice and beans.

HelpAge also gave Veronica school uniforms, blankets and mosquito nets. She says: "*The children are not as hungry as before because I am able to provide food for them and educate them. It is good to see them healthy''*.

The story of Veronica represents thousands of Africa's newest mothers who, in a reversal of roles, have been recalled to care for grandchildren at a time, they, themselves need care. Injecting small capital into a household headed by an older person has an enormous benefit by enabling the older carer to provide for the daily needs of the children and investing in the education of the grandchildren. This particularly was beneficial to the vast majority of older people who struggled to provide food, shelter and the educational needs of grandchildren.

Similar interventions have been provided to improve food security and provide decent shelter for older people affected by poverty, vulnerability that is exacerbated by the impact of HIV and AIDS and conflict and displacement. Shelter not only provides physical protection from harsh and adverse weather conditions, but is a key instrument of restoring the dignity and social status of older people.

An older carer of orphans and vulnerable children in Nyanza Province of Kenya while celebrating her corrugated iron sheet two roomed new house said ''..... *No one wanted to be*

associated with a woman whose house leaks when it rains. I can now rejoin the women's group which I left because no one would come to meetings when it is my turn to host as they do not want to run when it rains. My grandchildren do not have to sleep with a bucket over their heads to protect their books from being soaked in rain water.''

One cannot underestimate the emotional and physical scars living in such a condition can bring to the older carer and those they care for. Older people reported the significance of decent shelter to improved social standing, self esteem and confidence.

Access to rights and entitlements through Social Protection

Social protection is increasingly gaining recognition as an effective mechanism to fight poverty across the world. It is now featuring in debates and development plans of both governments and nongovernmental organizations and this includes multilateral and bilateral institutions and the United Nations. Any reviews and evaluations being undertaken to look at the existing programmes indicate impressive results in the ability of the programmes to alleviate the poverty of many vulnerable groups[24]. Individuals, households and communities targeted are improving their lives, providing food to families, sending children to school, meeting their health care needs and contributing to the economies of their communities and countries. Reviews of old age pension programmes in countries such as South Africa show a significant role of these transfers in uplifting the living standards of older persons.

In Africa, concerted efforts to create awareness and knowledge on the issue of social protection gained currency following the AU Ouagadougou Declaration of 2004; the sub regional meetings that took place in Zambia and Cameroon in 2006, resulting in the Livingstone and Yaoundé Calls for Action; the 2008 national consultations held in a number of East, West, Central, Southern and Northern African countries, and the sub-regional consultations in Egypt, Uganda and Senegal[25] . Since then, Africa has seen the development of many new social protection programmes and the expansion of those already in existence. The World Bank indicates that there are social protection programmes or discussions to establish them in over 38 African Union member states with a significant number of these having been initiated in the last few years[26]. The majority of these programmes have been short term pilot programmes funded mainly by donor organisations, UN agencies and NGO's.

Despite all this, access to programmes that are already in place is a challenge for many older persons. Limited awareness of those programmes and red tape conspire to ensure that older persons do not access such entitlements. HelpAge and its partners have approached this issue from two basic levels:-

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[24] Schubert, B. and M. Huijbregts (2006), "The Malawi Social Cash Transfer Pilot Scheme: Preliminary Lessons Learnt". Social Protection Initiatives for Children, Women and Families: An Analysis of Recent Experiences (UNICEF)

[25] Report of regional consultation meetings on Social Protection, HelpAge International, 2008

[26] World Bank Social Protection Strategy for Africa, World Bank, 2012

- Working with regional and government agencies to promote the development and implementation of Social Protection policies. This has included the Livingstone Call for Action in 2006 and the African Union Social Policy Framework in 2008. The organisation has worked with governments, such as in Kenya, to develop policies and strategies on Social Protection, support technical capacity in the design, implementation and monitoring of various pilot programmes in the continent. It further participated in carrying out feasibility studies and impact assessments to strengthen the evidence base for advocacy for social protection.

- Working with older persons themselves at the grassroots level to ensure that they are aware of their rights and entitlements and engage government agencies at the local and national levels to demand these. This has been done through a number of older people led processes that will be discussed later in this document.

The older citizens monitoring approach
HelpAge International developed the older citizens monitoring approach in response to MIPAA. Pilot projects in Bangladesh, Bolivia, Jamaica, Kenya and Tanzania showed that this was an effective way of enabling poor older people to hold their governments to account for the commitments they had made in adopting MIPAA. The approach is based on the idea that evidence is needed to support arguments for change. Often, evidence is gathered by professional researchers, with older people playing a passive role. Older citizens monitoring turns this around, so that older people gather data on their access to services and use this evidence to lobby policy makers and service providers for improvements.

The process of older citizens monitoring is as important as the results. As well as bringing practical changes, older citizens monitoring has a range of other benefits, including increasing older people's confidence, promoting their participation in society and providing mutual support.

Older people were trained, in leadership, organisational development, monitoring, communication and networking skills that were critical in data collection, analysis and presenting compelling messages to demand change.

In **Tanzania** older people monitored the quality of healthcare services by collecting data on where older persons wait (chair, ground or standing); how well medical staff listened to them (poor, average or good); language used (respectful or not); availability or non availability of drugs; and whether they were asked to pay as health care is supposed to be free. The older people tallied and analysed this information and presented their report with demands for improvement to the local government authorities. In some cases they involved the media so the evidence and process get highlighted to the wider public.

"Knowing your rights and benefits is like restoring your eye sight" OCM member in Kasese, Uganda".

<u>Older people holding their elected and appointed leaders in Tanzania accountable</u>

As part of a DFID funded programme "Accountability in Tanzania", HelpAge International facilitated awareness on rights and entitlements among older people in over 30 districts.   This resulted in building an on-going engagement between older people through their forums and the elected leaders including the local district council officials and those that represent the area in the national assembly (parliament). Activities to realise this broader accountability of leaders to the electorate included:

- Training older people in their rights and entitlements ranging from health and HIV and AIDS prevention, care and treatment
- Training of district officials in "mainstreaming ageing in district development plans and budgets"
- Engagement meetings between leaders of older people's groups and the district council officials
- Lobby meetings between older people's leaders and MPs during parliamentary sessions and create a group of "champion MPs" who support older people's quest for universal pension
- Involve the media to keep the momentum by highlighting issues of older people in a sustained way in print, electronic and social media and conduct live interviews with older people themselves and political leaders

A review carried out at the end of March 2013, highlighted the following major achievements:

- Increased targeting of older people in livelihood projects using the ''Constituency Development Fund'' managed by members of parliament.
- Increased resource allocation by district councils to support older people through a range of livelihood projects. One district set aside 21% of its total budget for projects supporting older people
- The Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF) through its conditional cash transfer programme supported 16 older people's groups to implement livelihood projects with a total budget of (£46,649).

What makes these achievements worth recognizing is not as such the scale of success but it is to demonstrate that this is an outcome primarily of a direct engagement between older people and their leaders. The changes that the local councils have made in their plans and budgets are not a result of central Government directives but a result of sustained lobbying by older people who persistently demanded that their needs be incorporated in district plans and budgets.   Older people were aware of their electoral rights and held the leaders on promises they made during their election campaigns.

Additionally, Older People's Champions who represented older people from across the country have been attending parliamentary sessions to lobby individual MPs to support their demand for universal pension. Although this has not still materialised they have secured extensive support from individual parliamentarians and the various sub-committees within the parliament.

Age Demands Action

All over the world, older people are coming together to claim their rights and fight age discrimination. Their global grassroots movement is called Age Demands Action (ADA). It's the only one of its kind in the world.

The ADA calendar is organised around three occasions: ADA Global, 1 October (UN International Day of Older Persons), ADA on Health, 7 April (World Health Day) and ADA for Rights, 15 June. On these special days, delegations of older people meet their governments to call for change. But action continues all year round, with older people monitoring governments to hold them to pledges they have made – and raising awareness more widely at the same time. Launched by the HelpAge global network in 2007 in 26 countries, the campaign has already more than doubled in size – proof of the energy it's igniting globally. Through ADA, many older people are finding their voice for the first time in their lives. Often excluded for many years, they're now sitting down with political leaders to speak from the heart about what they need

Thanks to ADA, that's changing. In a survey of more than 1,200 older people, 86 per cent said ADA had helped them influence governments, while 95 per cent believed it had raised the profile of ageing issues in their country.

Case Study 2:   Rhoda Ngima, 77, Kenya

Rhoda has long been a pivotal figure in her church and community, where she brings people together, inspiring them to stay strong and keep going through life's challenges. She's now bringing her leadership experience and social commitment to ADA, where she's already made a big impact.

In 2009, she led an ADA delegation to meet the Prime Minister. And the following year, she met the Minister for Gender, Children and Social Development to explain the benefits of increasing pensions. After the meeting, the Government agreed to raise pension payments for all older people in Kenya.

In 2012, Rhoda travelled to Brussels where she met several Members of the European Parliament. In her speech, she spoke about her life in Kenya and the challenges older people have in developing countries, urging the European Union not to forget her generation. She passionately believes that the world's older people should unite as one voice.

"*We have been removed from a very dark pit and brought to the surface where there is light. ADA has made me an ambassador to spread news about older people. I have learnt that even in older age I am able to do something worthwhile and constructive for my country.***"**

Older people as co-investigators in a research Programme

In a study focused on mobility and service access among older people in Kibaha district, Tanzania, 12 people (8 Men and 4 women) aged between 60 and 70 years were recruited and trained in qualitative research. They subsequently conducted interviews and group discussions with their peers in their own community and 9 other local villages. In both the training sessions

and subsequent research studies led by older people the vital importance of intergenerational support for older people's access to services - and the difficulties experienced by older people without such support - was a recurrent theme.

The participation of older persons as researchers in the study was central to the design of the research. Given the development objective of the project it was important to include older person's perspective to help shape the methodology. Most of the older researchers were farmers while some engaged in additional occupations such as masonry and cattle husbandry. The older researchers worked with five young research assistants

The findings of this study show how co-investigation can illuminate understanding of older people's lives and the role that intergenerational relations play within them. It focuses principally on the processes of developing a co-investigation approach with older people, including careful selection; age appropriate training and subsequent field support, but also considers inter-generational relations within the research team.

The one week training was pivotal in creating better understanding among the older co-investigators, the young research assistants and the lead researchers. The Older People Researchers (OPR) team began to come forward with their own observations on age-related characteristics. The need for adjustment was noted when they interviewed some of their older and less literate peers in the villages:

Both Research Assistants (RAs) and OPRs accompanied their observations by examples of how they adapted to issues of pace, hearing and understanding. Rather than seeing this as insoluble, both age groups showed the capacity to adjust and to be open to learning from some of the oldest and most vulnerable people in the communities where we worked.

The confidence of the OPR team grew over time, as they built up a strong knowledge of the difficulties and disadvantages faced by their peers in settlements across the district.

One [male] member of the team, on the basis of the information the team had collected, had no hesitation in getting up at the final national dissemination workshop in Dar es Salaam and lecturing the meeting – including the Chief Medical Officer for Tanzania, who had been invited to open the meeting - about the needs of older people. Both male and female OPRs were observed to participate actively in small group discussions with senior ministry and NGO staff which followed. The confidence they have built through the project will help them to take a stronger role in advocating for change in their own community in the future.

<u>Embedding grievance and compliant mechanism in a cash transfer programme</u>

A study carried out in North Eastern Kenya where a Cash Transfer (CT) Programme called the Hunger Safety Net[27] (HSNP) implemented by a consortium of NGOs with funding from DFID showed evidence that a Social Protection Rights programme gives beneficiaries an independent grievance and complaint mechanism. Apart from the role the CT played, there is evidence of

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[27] Delivering long term guaranteed cash transfers to extremely poor and vulnerable members of the society using the most convenient and reliable methodology

spill-over effects and indirect impact in areas related to <u>citizen participation</u>, <u>empowerment</u> and <u>engagement</u> with local authorities through the Rights Committee − a community structure that has been established to educate the people about their rights to engage with the local authorities and demand services.

Findings in Turkana, Wajir and Mandera district showed that communities were successful in securing services from their local government authorities.   This was never the case prior to the introduction of "a rights discourse'' as a result of the HSNP[28].

The HSNP has had some unintended positive impacts on State Citizen relations in particular the incentive the programme created to apply for national ID cards. These are required in order for beneficiaries to receive cash directly. Prior to the introduction of the programme, community members, especially older women did not see the value of having a national identity card. A key implication for state citizen relations is that older women with national ID cards can now participate in the electoral process.

In Turkana, Wajir and Mandera there has been a significant increase both in registration for national ID cards and also requests for corrections on previous cards. In El Das Location, for example, several older people lost their ID cards during the Wagalla massacre in 1984, tribal conflicts in 1994 and the Bagala massacre in 1998. Many did not see the need to replace them until the HSNP social pension programme was introduced in El Das. Records from the local chief's book showed that 505 people over 44 years old had applied for new ID cards.

Case Study 3: The Social Protection Rights Programme

"*It is obvious that the number of older people registering for national ID cards has dramatically increased in recent times. In the past, many did not see the value of having a national ID card but now the cash transfer programme has created the incentive for them to either apply for the first time or seek to correct the misinformation on their current cards*".   District Commissioner, Mandera.

"*At first people feared to ask things from government, but since we received the 'rights education' the community is now asking for a number of things. We always ask in a respectful way and not in a rude way. Even the chiefs are now fearful because we are asking questions without fear. We need more training so that we can continue to demand and monitor what our leaders are doing with our resources*'' A Rights Committee member.

Increasing older people's representation and deepening democracy in Uganda

The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (1995) provided for special interest representation in favour of groups marginalized on the basis of gender, *age,* disability or any other reason created by history, tradition or custom.   However through affirmative action with the exception of older people special interest groups of women, people with disability and the army got representation

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[28] HelpAge International Strengthening state-citizen relations in fragile contexts − The role of cash transfers (2011)

that allowed them to sit in various decisions making processes from the local government level to the national assembly.

CSOs and FBOs began engaging actors and the Local Government Act was reviewed in 2007 to include representation and participation of older persons in Lower Councils (LCI-LCV). But this also suffered a setback because without any law and structure such as a National Council for Older Persons, older people could not be elected to hold positions. Sustained advocacy by organizations of older people and HelpAge in districts where active programmatic work was taking place enabled the representation of older people in the councils as observers to begin with while the law was being awaited.

This representation was accepted and enabled older people to sit in the LC Executive meetings to lobby the councillors on various issues that affect their lives. The impact created in these districts is that, amid their meagre resources, the local councils have begun allocating resources for older people's activities. An evaluation carried out in the district[29] highlighted that older people are proud, have increased self-esteem to sit in the council; some districts have resolved that development funds specifically allocated for PWDs from Central Government can benefit OPs once they form and register their groups. A number of groups have benefited from this support and started small self help groups to improve their socio economic status.

Older Women in Burkina Faso Illuminated by Literacy
In Burkina Faso where a programme addressing social exclusion of older women whose rights are violated as a result of widespread gender inequality among other interventions included functional literacy to improve women's understanding of their rights and entitlements focusing on violence and rights to property. In a country where literacy rate among women is much lower compared to men, between 2009 and 2011 over 874 older people participated 81.24% of these were women. Evidence of a final project evaluation[30] demonstrated positive evidence that range from reduced violence, access to justice, reduced incidences of preventable diseases, increased enrolment of children in school supported by quantitative evidence. Additionally testimonies given by older women participants of the Literacy programme during focus group discussions highlighted the following testimonies. These selected testimonies can attest to the empowering effect of education both in asserting their rights and using their influential position to benefit other family members such as children:

Case study 4: Literacy in Burkina Faso

A 68 year old woman, in a village said: '*I have become more interested in the education of my grandchildren. I want them to learn and be strong to defend themselves against any abuse. I know how to practice good hygiene and health: by protecting food against flies which cause diarrhoea. I wash my hands with ash after using the latrine'.*

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[29] HelpAge International, Final Project Evaluation: Improving Delivery of Local Government Services to Vulnerable Older People in Rwenzori Region, Uganda, 2012

[30] HelpAge International, Final Project Evaluation: Promoting the rights of older women in Burkina Faso and improving their access to basic rights and entitlement, 2012

Balaissa said, *'there is improved communication between me and my husband and we have agreed to educate our girls. My husband also seems to listen to me and show respect to me which was not the case before. I can now dare to speak in public, talk to other women in meetings to give my opinion on different subjects including castigating social exclusion. We as women provide practical advice on hygiene in our community and periodically we sweep public places like markets.'*

Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC): the role of social spaces

An estimated 1.7 million IDPs live in Eastern DRC and the older persons among them face enormous individual, social, and economic challenges related to meeting their basic needs. They report being isolated or excluded from their communities, suffering from land losses and disputes, and being broadly unable to access support from the Congolese government and humanitarian community.

In 2010-11, HelpAge constructed 'social spaces' or community centres under the management of local associations of older persons in camps and return areas. The aim was to a) provide a place where older persons could meet, b) facilitate advocacy within communities and with leaders and c) provide for livelihood support.

Some of the positive impacts of the spaces as reported by older persons themselves include:
- a reduction in isolation: 89 per cent of older persons interviewed attend the social space at least once a week; 24 per cent go every day; and 29 attend two to three times per week.
- somewhere for older people to take shelter from daily rains, an important function for IDPs in temporary shelters or tents
- a mechanism by which older people are represented in the community and whose value and credibility is supported by their ownership of the space
- a mechanism through which many older people in the camp are registered for other support services
- organisation of activities that aim to increase knowledge around older people's rights and to combat exclusion and discrimination (such as a forum for dialogue and debate within communities to help them reflect on what is lacking within the community to ensure protection and inclusion of older people)
- intergenerational activities that aim to reduce the gap between older and younger generations by building understanding on the issues and challenges they face
- literacy classes and conflict resolution
- income-generation activities such as tailoring, basket making, and production of combustible briquettes made from recycled paper that can be burnt instead of wood, reducing risks associated with collecting firewood and providing older people with protection against extreme
- About 95 per cent said that the social space increased their visibility in the community and made them feel more confident. Older people feel that the community gives them more respect and attention and that they feel stronger as a group because they have a meeting place that represents them

- Women said they felt empowered by having the same access to the social space as men. About 63 per cent of those attending the social space are men

Conclusions and Recommendations

Empowerment of older people can be realised when there is a level playing field where all citizens irrespective of age, gender, disability, ethnicity and place of residence have equal rights to provisions made in national constitutions. State parties should be held accountable to the international frameworks and instruments that they are signatories to.

Specific recommendations based on the identified gaps, have been made. However, there needs to be policies that ensure that older persons' issues are mainstreamed into all facets of development processes. This will entail developing new policies where they do not exist or review and amend those that are already in existence.

Clearly, the existence of policies alone will not guarantee the development of programmes to address the needs of older persons and indeed other vulnerable groups. There needs to be concerted efforts to produce implementable strategies and legislation from which practical programmes will be developed.

This can only take place if there are strong and complementary institutions that support this process. Ministries and Departments responsible for older people's issues need to be strengthened with financial and human resources. There should be complimentary action from Civil Society organisations and the UN institutions since it is not possible for government alone to achieve these goals.

Below, this paper advances a few recommendations that can help governments and other players to empower older persons and ensure a better life for them:-

Awareness of the demographic change: The population of older persons is fast expanding in Africa, with more people living longer, even with HIV and AIDS. However, many countries still grapple with the youth bulge concept, completely neglecting the growing population of older people. Member states need to be informed of this trend in clear and simple terms.

Rights of Older Persons: There is need for all Member States to institute measures to protect the rights of older people in line with international conventions and human rights instruments and national legislation

Guaranteeing incomes for older persons: The progress made in the development of Social Protection programmes is to be lauded, but these should be scaled up to being comprehensive national programmes rather than small pilots. The Social Protection debate needs to extend to equity, empowerment and economic, social and cultural rights and governments should implement non-contributory pensions to ensure income security for all older men and women.

Micro finance: Facilitate access to microfinance programmes, especially micro-credit schemes, allowing older women and men to have equal access to financial resources available to other age groups.

Health: Member States should institute mechanisms to ensure that older people can access affordable and appropriate health services, including the training of health care personnel which should include relevant curriculum to address the growing trend of Non Communicable Diseases

Older People and HIV/AIDS: Older people should be recognised for the sterling roles they are performing in providing care and support to people living with AIDS and the orphans and vulnerable children. Data on HIV and AIDS, prevention, care and treatment should be disaggregated to ensure older people are included in relevant policies and programmes.

Conflict and Disasters: In situations of conflict or natural disaster, older people should be accorded the same priority at the onset of the emergencies and need to be recognised in durable solution in return and recovery.

Older Workers: Governments, should recognise that older people – whether they choose to work or whether they have to due to circumstances beyond their control – have as much right as anyone else to work that is decent. Older people should also be included in initiatives that promote decent work.

Governance: Ensure older people are represented in local government structures and those at the national level where development and budgetary decisions are often made.

UN Member States are about to embark on detailed discussion on the future post 2015 development framework. We have seen in this paper that as population structures change, laws, policies, social attitudes and institutional practices must do the same. The post 2015 development framework presents UN Member States with an historic opportunity to ensure that national and international policymaking takes a life-course approach that will help ensure sustainable and equitable development for people of all ages. The voices of older women and men must be heard and their participation facilitated in the development of national, regional and international development policy.

The following recommendations are made in this regard:

The post-2015 sustainable development framework must be **Human Rights based** for all people of all ages. All goals and their targets must take account of the rights of people at all stages of their lives, from cradle to grave. The specific abuse and discrimination faced by older women must be recognised and stopped.

· The 'data revolution' called for by the High level Panel and the Secretary General must give priority to improved **data collection and reporting** which ensures **all data be collected, disaggregated, analysed and disseminated for all ages up to and over 100**, as well as by

gender and disability. Goals and targets adopted by Member States must be measureable and accountable to all their citizens, and have specific data on older age groups. Data must be age disaggregated to show how policies and budgets - including those to ensure regular income, education, decent work, protection in conflict and humanitarian crises and a supportive and safe environment - are delivering to all across the life-course.

·   The framework should have a goal on universal **social protection and decent work for all people of all ages.** Social protection and decent work are at the heart of the social contract between the State and its subjects. Social protection floors are rights-based, nationally owned and have clear measurable objectives. They play a distinctive role in poverty eradication and good governance and underpin the realisation of multiple goals beyond poverty and inequality.

·   Any health goals within the framework should be framed to ensure **maximize healthy life expectancy at all stages of life**, including universal health coverage to ensure the health of girls, boys, women and men across the life-course. With three quarters of the global burden of chronic and non-communicable disease affecting people over the age of 60, special emphasis must be given to diagnosis, care and effective treatment of older people.

·   The framework should have **a gender equality goal with indicators and targets that are inclusive of all people of all ages.** Lifetime gender based inequalities often result in older women experiencing financial and physical abuse and discrimination, along with poor health and increasing disability. Older men also face economic and social exclusion and discrimination linked to ageing.