



TANZANIA'S EXPERIENCE WITH EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY MAKING ON AGEING

**PRESENTED IN THE REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON
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INTRODUCTION

In Tanzania older people are those who are 60 years old and above. their number has been increasing rapidly.

In 2002 they were 1.4 million, constituting 4% of the general population (33.5 million)

Now older people are estimated to be 2,520,000 and constitute 5.6% of the general population (45 million).

Older people in Tanzania face three main challenges these are:

- i. Availability of adequate income for them to live normal respectable life.
- ii. Availability and accessible quality health services
- iii. Adequate security and protection from violence and discrimination particularly those living in rural areas.



Introduction...

- The Government recognizes these challenges and in collaboration with other stakeholders, it continues to address them so that the older people can live like others.
- As the result of the 2002 review of the 1982 International Plan of Action that guided the course of thinking and action on aging, in 2003, the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania prepared the **National Aging Policy**.



Introduction...

- The National Aging Policy essentially addresses the fore mentioned challenges faced by the older people.
- The older people themselves have been organizing themselves to fend for themselves and speak with a consolidated voice.
- Presently there are 3 registered Older Peoples Organizations:
 - ✓ The Tanzania Older Peoples Platform
 - ✓ Tanzania Social Protection Network
 - ✓ Saidia Wazee Tanzania



Introduction...

- In addition to the 3 Registered Older Peoples' Association there are 38 Older people Associations in the regions (presently there are 28 regions). These are to a large extent local organizations formed to address local issues, mainly economic.
- Apart from the Government, there are other Stakeholders who support the Government's efforts towards addressing the challenges faced by the older people. These include:
 - ✓ HelpAge International - Tanzania Chapter
 - ✓ Foundation for the Civil Society and others



Introduction...

- As regards Health services for the older people the Government through the Ministry responsible for health prepared Guidelines for cost sharing in public health facilities.
- The Guidelines states the group of people who are exempted from cost sharing.
- Older people are among the group of people exempted from cost sharing in that Guidelines.



CHALLENGES FACED BY OLDER PEOPLE

1. Economic condition of older people

- a) The majority of older people (80%) in Tanzania live in the rural areas largely in poverty.
- b) Older people who had no formal employment, they are forced to continue working even when it is obvious that they have little remaining physical energy.
- c) This is aggravated by the fact they take care of 50% of orphans left by parents who died from HIV/AIDS.
- d) About 96% of older people are not covered by any social security fund



Challenges Faced by Older People

2. Availability of affordable Quality Health services

The majority of older people who live in the rural areas face difficulties in accessing quality health service.

This is due to:

- Unavailability of trained staff to serve older people.
- Unavailability of medicines and other medical supplies in public health facilities required to treat ailments which affect older people. 60% of deaths of older people is caused by non communicable diseases
- Poverty among older people preventing them to travel and pay for health services they need.



Challenges Faced by Older People

3. Adequate security and protection from violence and discrimination

- In the past older people were custodians of customs and traditions, advisers/mediators and child carers.
- In the weakened traditional life, older people are no longer playing this vital role.
- The young people are no longer fulfilling their responsibility of providing basic needs including food, shelter, clothing and protection to the older people.



Challenges Faced by Older People...

The belief in some parts of the country that very old people are witches has resulted into their being killed, even by their own relatives;

- ❖ A 2011 report showed that in a period of 5 years 2,866 older people were killed in 10 regions (573 per year). The figure jumped to 730 in 2013.
- ❖ In such killings even when the killers are caught they are rarely convicted
- ❖ There is evidence that the situation is spreading to other areas
- ❖ Women are more vulnerable than men



ADDRESSING CHALLENGES FACED BY OLDER PEOPLE

1. Poverty

i. Local Government Reform (National Poverty Reduction Strategy)

- Implementation of Local Government Reform aims at more participatory planning and budgeting processes in order to take into account priorities at community level. Councils are required to set aside funds to pay for the membership of older people in the health insurance schemes e.g. CHF and to buy medicines and supplies.
- The Government is in the process of introducing pension payment to older people who have had no formal employment. In Zanzibar older people aged 70 yrs and above are already receiving pension. They are paid 20,000/= per month.



Addressing Challenges Faced by Older People...

ii. Social Protection strategy

The social protection strategies/systems divided into 2 broad categories:

- Informal system, with an estimated coverage of about 80%, but with a minimal effectiveness.
- Formal system, with minimal coverage and reasonable effectiveness.

iii. Social Security Funds:

The Social Security Funds in the country have opened up to people in the informal sector who want to be paid pension when they become older people.

IV . Stakeholders assisting Older Peoples' economic ventures



Addressing Challenges Faced by Older People...

2. Health Services

- The Government has in place policy which enable older people access health services without having to pay.
- To ensure that older people get medicine for diseases which commonly affect them. In this year Budget for medicines 6% of the total budget has been set aside to buy medicines for ailments which commonly affect older people.



Addressing Challenges Faced by Older People...

- The Government has reviewed the training Curriculum for mid level Nurses so that such staff are trained on how to care for older people.
- The Government has instructed all public health facilities to establish special rooms and staff to serve older people.
- The current Health Sector Strategic Plan IV has included the issues of older people.
- Health Departments in councils have been instructed to each have in place a coordinator for the provision of health services to older people.



Addressing Challenges Faced by Older People...

- The Government has established a desk at the Ministry to coordinate the provision of health services to the older people.
- Local authorities have been directed to provide ID cards to older people so that they can easily be identified and therefore avoid unnecessary delays in being attended.
- The Government is in the process of introducing a universal coverage of health insurance scheme



Addressing Challenges Faced by Older People...

3. Security of Older People

- ✓ The Government is now dealing with people who propagate the witchcraft beliefs. These are the traditional healers who are propagating belief.
- ✓ The Government increasingly collaborating with other stakeholders including religious leaders in curbing the practice.
- ✓ The civil Society has also taken measures to get involved in mitigating the situation.

Thank you for your attention