**HelpAge International**
*age helps*

# Experiences of policies and practices of empowering older people in Africa

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# Outline

- Summary
- Africa's ageing population
- High levels of poverty among older people
- Conflict and displacement
- The Impact of HIV and AIDS
- Social and cultural changes
- The Role of Policies in Empowering Older Persons
- Strategies to empower older persons
- Conclusions and recommendations

# Demographic change and the effects of poverty

- Africa's population is growing:  2007 = 50.5m; 2010 = 55.4m;  2050 =213 million

- North Africa by 2050 likely to have 20% of its population 60 and over

- Older persons are among the poorest in every community in Africa

- Economic indicators show that  poverty rates among households of older people run between 8 – 20% higher than the national average

- In Uganda, for example, 64% of older people are poor, compared with 38% of the total population, while in Tanzania, poverty among older headed households is higher by 22.4%

- Women  form the majority of older persons. 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

# Conflict and HIV and AIDS

- In conflicted affected communities poverty rates are 20% higher
- 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
- The degree to which older people's skills, capabilities and roles are recognised and supported during displacement has a significant impact on their ability to survive and recover
- Although Africa's population is 15% of the global figure, Sub-Saharan Africa alone accounted for an estimated 69 percent of all people living with HIV and 70 percent of all AIDS deaths in 2011
- Care giving for OVC and PLHIV and the pop of OP living with HIV

# Social and cultural changes

- Africa is facing an almost irreversible trend in which the social and cultural fabric has significantly changed

- Increased disconnect between the young and old and the values and norms changing - in dress, manners, conversation, sharing, and other symbols that used to hold families together

- The exchange and interaction between young and older persons; for instance, social interaction (story telling) and services are affected by the digital world (TV, radio, mobile phones, etc)

- Leads to alienation, abandonment, neglect and abuse of older persons

# Role of global and continental policies in empowering older persons

- Very few countries have national policies on ageing despite the global initiatives:  1982 Vienna, UN Principle 1991, IYOP 1999, MIPAA and AUPF and PAA
- 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
- Despite the slow pace, there is a clear correlation between policies and action towards empowering older persons
- Policies supported by legislation provide mandate to the institutions to firmly seek resources and put actions
- The citizenry  and civil society can demand action and accountability on the basis of commitments articulated in the policy documents

# Strategies to empower older person
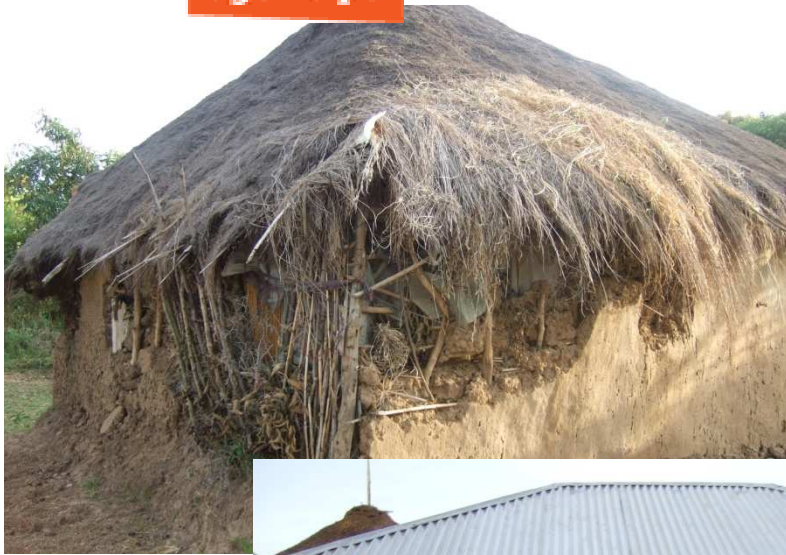
**Economic Capacity and Dignity**

- Lack of regular income is a key concern for the vast majority of older persons in Africa

- In most African countries, fewer than 1 in 10 older people; In Eastern and Southern Africa 19% access pension

- In Tanzania only 4% of older people receive contributory pension

- Older people care for OVC, and have to feed, educate, and look after the health care needs of children at a time when they have diminishing mobility and capacity to work and earn a living

- 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

# Burden of Care

*62 year old Veronica*



- *Lost her daughter in 2006 who left two orphans 2 years and 4 years old*

- *Benefited from small grants to start business, 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''.*

# Dignity

*Atieno cares for 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.''*

# Access to social protection

- The World Bank indicates that there are SP programmes or discussions in over 38 AU member states.
- Despite these, access to programmes is a challenge for many older persons due to lack of awareness and bureaucracy
- Working with regional organisations to promote the development and implementation of Social Protection policies:   The Livingstone Call for Action in 2006 and the African Union Social Policy Framework in 2008
- Supporting  governments in the development of policies and strategies, design, implementation and monitoring of various pilot programme
- Conducting  feasibility  studies and impact assessments to strengthen the evidence base for advocacy for social protection
- Working with older persons to increase their awareness  of their rights and entitlements and engage government agencies at the local and national levels to demand

# Age demands action

- Across the world, through ADA older people are claiming their rights and fight age discrimination

- Often on 1st October, delegations of older people meet their governments to call for change. But action continues all year round,  by monitoring pledges made by authorities

- 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 able to directly speak to leaders

- In a survey of more than 1,200 older people, 86% said ADA enabled them influence governments, while 95% believed it had raised the profile of ageing issues in their country

# The case of Rhoda

*''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.''*

- In 2009 she led an ADA delegation where she met Government officials to lobby for pension payments for all older people in Kenya.

- In 2012, she travelled to Brussels where she met several Members of the EU Parliament. She highlighted the challenges older people have in developing countries, urging the EU not to forget her generation. She passionately believes that the world's older people should unite as one voice.

# Older people as co-investigators

- 12 people (8 Men and 4 women) aged between 60 and 70 years mainly farmers were recruited and trained in qualitative research on a study on mobility of older people (Tanzania)

- Their participation was central to the design of the research. to include their perspective to shape the methodology.

- It focuses 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.

- At a national dissemination meeting one of the older researchers stood and spoke of their concerns to the Chief Medical Officer.

# Grievance mechanism in cash transfers

- Social Protection Rights programme gives beneficiaries an independent grievance and complaint mechanism
- There is increased citizen participation, empowerment and engagement with local authorities through the Rights Committee
- There has been a significant increase both in registration for national ID cards and also requests for corrections on previous cards
- Older people are demanding services without fear from their leader

# Older people's involvement in democracy in Uganda

- The Constitution of Uganda provides for the representation of groups marginalized due to gender, *age, disability or any other reason created by history, tradition or custom*

- Older people are able to sit in LC Executive meetings to lobby the councils on various issues that affect their lives

- Councils have began allocating resources for older people's activities

- An evaluation carried out in the district 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 should benefit older people

# Older people illuminated in Burkina Faso through literacy

- 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 demonstrated positive change  that range from reduced violence, access to justice, reduced incidences of preventable diseases, increased enrolment of children in school  as a result of support from grandmothers particularly as a testimony given by a 68 year old woman stated.

    *"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…."*

# Social spaces in Eastern DRC

- An estimated 1.7 million IDPs live in Eastern DRC
- Isolation, exclusion, property grabbing and lack of access to justice
- In 2010-11, HelpAge constructed 'social spaces' that serve as community centres
- A reduction in isolation: 89% of older persons interviewed attend the social space at least once a week; 24% go every day; and 29% attend two to three times per week.
- A focal point where they can register for other services
- A forum for dialogue to ensure protection and inclusion of older people
- Point for various activities story telling, literacy classes, conflict resolution; Income-generation activities
- About 95% said that social space increased their visibility and made them feel more confident.
- Women particularly felt empowered as they have the same access to the social space as men. 63% cent of those attending the social space are men

# Conclusions

- Empowerment where all citizens irrespective of age, gender, disability, ethnicity and place of residence have equal rights
- Older people's issues need to be mainstreamed into all facets of development processes.
- There needs to be concerted efforts to develop implementable strategies and legislation from which practical programmes will be developed.
- Ministries and Departments responsible for older people's issues need to be strengthened with financial and human resources.
- The role of Civil Society organisations as a watch-dog institutions needs to be recognised and supported.

# Recommendations

- Definition of Ageing
- Awareness of the demographic change
- Rights of Older Persons
- Guaranteeing incomes for older persons
- Micro finance
- Health
- Older People and HIV/AIDS
- Data on HIV and AIDS
- Conflict and Disasters
- Older Workers
- Governance
- Post MDG goals need to be relevant to all population groups

Thank you