Experience of the Old in a Continent of Young…and Ageing

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TICAD VII Official Side Event [S067]
Towards Population Ageing in Africa
29 August 2019/ Yokohama, Japan

Ageing matters

- Africa expected to see 4-fold increase in its older population by 2050
- Older persons contribute greatly to the wellbeing of their households
  - 40% of people living with HIV are cared for by older people, with each older
carer supporting an average of two people living with HIV
- Older people make a significant – and severely underestimated - economic
contribution
  - 41% of older people in Africa are active in the labour force
  - Majority of older workers are in the informal economy
- ILO recognizes that older workers are “especially vulnerable to the most serious
decent work deficits in the informal economy”

Proportion living in absolute poverty by age group

Source: APHRC

Proportion reporting recent sickness by age group – poor population

Source: APHRC

Social pensions in Africa

Introduction of social pensions in Africa:
- 1950: Mauritius
- 1979: Seychelles
- 1990s: Namibia | South Africa | Botswana
- 2000s: Lesotho | Swaziland | Cape Verde | Zambia
- 2011: Nigeria (pilot) | Uganda (pilot)
- 2016: Zambia (universal) | Uganda (extension)
- 2018: Kenya (universal)

Other notable commitments:
- Mozambique: new social security strategy – shift to
categorical targeting based on life course risks
- Malawi: recent Presidential announcement that Malawi
would be working on a pension
- Zimbabwe: initiating a feasibility study

What Pensions Achieve
Older people face significant - and often prohibitive - financial barriers to accessing health services, including transportation costs, paying for care's support fees required to receive treatment and the cost of medicine. Such costs can prevent older people from following through the required referral pathways and accessing regular treatment for chronic conditions and pose a significant dilemma for older people as they weigh their health needs against other competing household needs.

Social protection can play an important role in removing some of the demand-side barriers to healthcare for older people, particularly those related to out-of-pocket expenses and transport costs. HelpAge-led evaluations of the impacts of cash transfers or social pensions on older people in Ethiopia, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, and Malawi consistently find that older people use transfers to pay for transport to get to health facilities, consultation fees and treatment costs and prescription.

Older recipients of Malawi’s social cash transfer report both improved health status and better access to health care.

**Link Between Social pensions and Access to Health Care**

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**Why an African Policy Maker is Unlikely to focus on Older People**

- They are not the biggest population group that needs focus.
- Health is free for all in my country. Older People are covered.
- Most development partners don’t talk about Older People’s issues.
- Where are they? I haven’t met/heard a group of older people demanding on anything.
- We had a department that is looking for older persons issues.
- They are not the biggest population group that needs focus.
- Most development partners don’t talk about Older People’s issues.
- Older People are cared for within communities and families anyway.
- We need to focus on economic growth and investing in youth gives me that!
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**Ageing in Africa - what can be done better**

- Increasing understanding and capacity in ageing and rights of older people – Policy makers and older people
- Improving the availability of data and evidence
- Donors, governments, UN and other institutions to increase financial allocation on ageing development
- The national indicators to be fit for purpose and age inclusive
- Coordination and regular review of ageing and older people frameworks at all levels
- Sector and planning processes at all levels to make deliberate efforts to include older people and report on their progress and challenges.
- Increase the visibility and participation of organisations of older people
- Implementation of regional and international commitments around older men and women’s rights