

From the Editor

Recent events in Uganda, where even the middle class have cried out about increasing prices and the general cost of living, have underscored more than ever, the importance of social protection for the poorest and most vulnerable amongst us who, without a doubt, are hit hardest.

Other countries, including in the East African Community have realized this too. In Kenya's budget this year, the country moved to double its spending on key Social Protection programmes. That, I believe, should be a spur to our own country's policies. We need to and must take care of our most vulnerable people.

This is where the SAGE programme comes in. In this edition, we tell you what we have been doing thus far and the way forward. Rest assured, the SAGE pilot has already kicked off administratively and the actual cash transfers will start in August.

The Expanding Social Protection programme is committed to continuing to build on the results achieved to date. We continue to engage widely, and from two important studies conducted this year – the Poverty and Vulnerability Analysis, and the Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices study, we have already received a lot of feedback that we can use to strengthen the programme as we go forward.

I hope that you will find this issue (and others to follow) useful in informing you and helping you to make your own contribution to support the development of this national social protection programme.

We encourage you to let us know your thoughts too: esp@socialprotection.go.ug and for more information, please visit our website, www.socialprotection.go.ug.

Local Governments Sign MoUs for SAGE Implementation



L-R, Hon Syda Bbumba, Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development, PS MGLSD Ms. Christine Guwatudde Kintu and PS MOLG Mr. John Muhanguzi at the signing ceremony

The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) has signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with three local governments to prepare for the implementation of the Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE).

The local governments of Kaberamaido, Kiboga and Kyenjojo each signed the MoU, which specify the roles and expectations of the various stakeholders in the

SAGE implementation. They also streamline SAGE operations within local government structures.

"The signing of the MoUs represents a key first step in our collaboration with the Ministry of Local Government and the selected districts in the implementation of the Expanding Social Protection Programme," said Hon. Syda Bbumba, the Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development.

...(Continued on page 2)

Ugandans Express Support for Cash Transfers

By Simon Omoding

Whilst knowledge of cash transfers amongst the general public and key stakeholders is limited, when the basic concept is explained, 46% of the general public, 63% of district level civil servants and 50% of tax payers state that they would support cash transfers.

Of those members of the general public who would not support cash transfers, 67% stated that this is because a transfer of sh20,000 – sh30,000 is too little and more should be given.

...(Continued on page 4)

MGLSD and MoLG Sign MoUs for SAGE Implementation ...*(Continued from page 1)*

Others present were Hon. Sulaiman Madada, Minister of State for Disability and Elderly, Hon. Rukia Nakadama Isanga Minister of State for Gender and Culture Affairs, Hon. Ruth Nankabirwa, Minister of State for Fisheries and several MPs from the three districts.

“The development challenge we face is that even if a country is progressing, there are some members of the community

who are left behind,” said Ms. Christine Guwatudde Kintu, the Permanent Secretary, MGLSD.

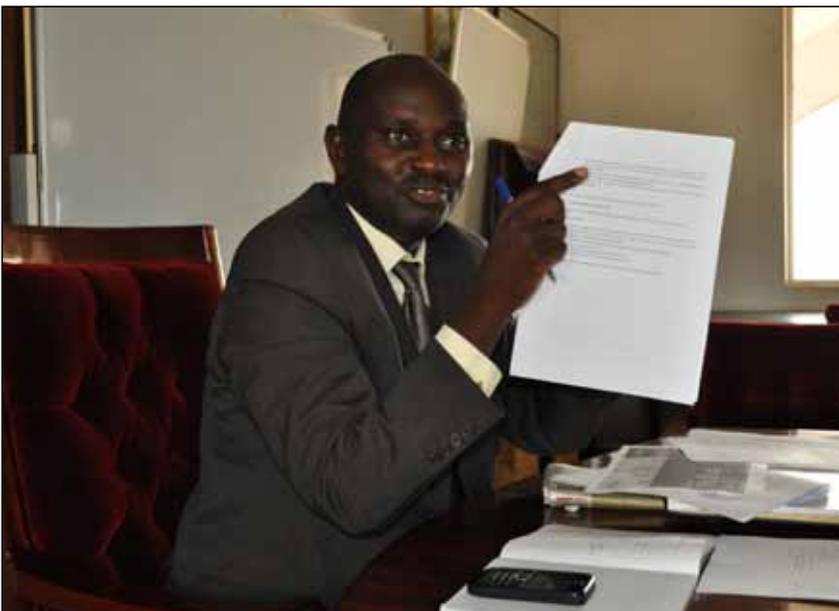
“Such groups can easily live in destitution and fail to contribute to, or benefit from a country’s growth and development. Evidence from even developed countries indicates that vulnerable groups will always exist, irrespective of the level of development, and States must therefore intervene to mitigate their vulnerability,” she added.

SAGE is a pilot programme that will be implemented in 14 districts across the country. It comprises of two components: a Senior Citizen’s Grant (SCG) and a Vulnerable Families Support Grant (VFSG).

Eligible beneficiaries will receive a regular monthly grant of Ushs 22,000, which will help them to access basic services and also provide a platform on which they can build productive livelihoods.

ESP Ready to Implement Cash Transfers in August

Mr. Stephen Kasaija, Assistant Commissioner for Planning, Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development was appointed to head the Expanding Social Protection Programme in March 2011. ESP News interviewed him about developments at the programme since he arrived.



Put this whole Programme in context; what is Expanding Social Protection Programme about? Many people think it is just about dishing out cash!

Uganda, in her constitution, policies and international commitments, has guaranteed that every Ugandan is entitled to a dignified life, decent standard of living and the ability to access basic services.

However, there are various groups who bear some risks and

are therefore more likely to be vulnerable to poverty or other risks. For instance, as people grow old, they increasingly lose their productive power at the same time as their health care needs increase. Others are vulnerable because of their physical inability or loss of parents (child orphans), while others are at risk of falling into poverty or destitution through loss of a job or death of a main income earner. These are the vulnerabilities ESP seeks to address.

Ultimately, the programme intends to put in place a social protection system in the country which over the longer term is able to support all Ugandan citizens – both those who are currently poor and vulnerable and those who are at a risk of becoming poor or vulnerable.

The Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE), a component of ESP which is involved in giving cash transfers is actually a pilot. It is intended to test some of the possible instruments that can be used and easily scaled up nationally. SAGE is testing cash transfers as one of the tools that can be used to take care of the vulnerable population. We hope that SAGE will give us lessons in terms of possible methodologies, approaches, principles and evidence of success that we will need as a country to develop our social protection system, and gradually extend it to cover all categories of vulnerable groups.

At the ESP launch in September 2010, it was announced that beneficiaries would start to receive cash grants in May 2011. This has not happened. Why?

This programme is the first of

its kind in Uganda. There was no precedence to learn from. We had to start from scratch. Starting innovative systems requires time. For example, the actual delivery of cash transfers requires a service provider. We opted for a private sector player and bringing one on board was a protracted process with competitive market bidding and technical evaluations.

We also lacked a reliable, effective and robust registration systems required for targeting beneficiaries. Uganda does not have such efficient civil registries. As a result we have had to work with various relevant partners to creatively get round this challenge without compromising our fool proof systems.

Also, the Programme is implemented by MGLSD in the districts. This means that we have had to enter arrangements with the different Local Governments, requiring us to recruit and place staff in the districts, train them and put all necessary administrative arrangements in place.

Putting these systems and processes in place took longer than we anticipated. Nonetheless, we have made progress on all these fronts and we are ready to start disbursing the grants in August 2011.

You have spoken about processes. What about the management; can we say we have a good secretariat to run the cash transfer operation at this point?

Yes. I would say we have a well-staffed, equipped and system focused secretariat. In terms of human resource, we have hired people - internationally, regionally and nationally - who bring a wealth of experience and technical expertise in various required areas both at the secretariat and at district level.

In terms of infrastructure, the districts have allocated the programme offices which we have furnished and equipped



Members of Parliament and Local Government district officials at the signing of MoU with the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development

with all necessary equipment. We have also been putting in place management systems.

It sounds like everything is in place now. So when will the first cash transfers actually go out?

Unless something drastically changes, we hope to give out the first grants in August 2011.

Will this happen in all 14 pilot districts at the end of August?

No. We are going to phase the roll out. At the end of August 2011, we plan to start with three districts of Kiboga, Kyenjojo and Kaberamaido, starting with two sub-counties in each of these districts. We will expand progressively into the other districts and cover all the sub-counties in the targeted districts.

How is the cash going to actually be delivered to the beneficiaries?

The cash will be delivered by mobile money system, where the private sector payment service provider will make cards with personalized pin codes (like SIM cards) for all beneficiaries on an officially approved clean list that we at the Secretariat will provide. The provider will install Point of Sale machines in locations accessible to beneficiaries, managed by service provider agents. On a given payment day, beneficiaries can access the cash grants by inserting their cards in the Point of Sale machines and entering

their confidential pin code.

In view of the current inflation, is the programme going to revise the Ug. Shillings 22,000 grant it plans to give out?

The Programme has an in-built provision for annual revisions to cater for inflation and keep the real value of the grant. But for now our main pre-occupation is to get our systems running and operational then we can come back to the adjustment at a later stage. The revision in grant size will definitely take place, but it is not the most important thing we have to do at this point.

You said earlier that the Programme is new. What are you planning to do to ensure that there is a good understanding of the programme in the communities and among other stakeholders?

We have in place robust training and communication strategies. We have detailed training sessions for all levels of stakeholders right from the central government through districts, sub-counties, villages and communities, all intended to create a sound understanding of the programme. The communication strategy on the other hand will deploy various communication tools, including this newsletter, to create awareness and to inform our various stakeholders.

Ugandans Express Support for Cash Transfers ...*(Continued from page 1)*



Did you know? An elderly person in Masaka participates in the Knowledge, Attitude and Practices study.

These are some of the findings of a survey just concluded by ESP, undertaken by Synovate, in partnership with UBOS. The survey, on knowledge, attitudes and practices on poverty, vulnerability, social protection and cash transfers was commissioned by ESP and conducted in Kampala and six other districts across the country. It included interviews and focus group discussions with members of the public, opinion leaders and stakeholders.

The findings of the analysis provide evidence not only to inform ESP's communication strategy but also to provide support for some of the key design principles upon which the SAGE programme is based.

The survey found that the main drivers of poverty in Uganda are understood to include disease, lack of education and unemployment.

Being born into a poor family was surprisingly not highly recognised as a main cause of poverty (except by the media). This highlights the need for ESP to raise awareness of the impact of persistent poverty today on the health, welfare and productivity of tomorrow's generations.

The main vulnerable groups were identified as the elderly, orphans, widows and people with disabilities. There was strong consensus that the elderly are a particularly vulnerable group.

93% of the general public felt that it was the responsibility of the Government to support the poor but only 26% were satisfied with government efforts.

Concerns around corruption and mismanagement of funds were voiced strongly by all categories. 'Opinion leaders' (which includes Members of Parliament, religious leaders and Ministers) cited corruption as a key driver of poverty. Of the middle class, 85% were dissatisfied with government efforts to address poverty, with 30% of these citing corruption as the main reason for their dissatisfaction.

Understanding of social protection is limited. 40% of the general public respondents had never heard the term and of those who had, 31% understood it to mean "assisting the poor". However, despite the lack of knowledge and understanding of formal social protection, people were generally aware of informal social protection practices.

The writer is the Communication Manager, ESP

KEY FINDINGS

Poverty

- ➔ The top three causes of poverty, as perceived by the general public and the stakeholders are disease, lack of education and unemployment.
- ➔ Others perceived to be vulnerable to poverty are orphans, the chronically ill and child headed households.

Social Protection

- ➔ Only 15% of the general public could correctly define social protection
- ➔ 56% of the stakeholders understood it to mean giving out food.
- ➔ Despite the lack of knowledge of the formal definition of social protection, people were generally aware of the already existing informal means of social protection.

Cash Transfers

- ➔ Only 16% of the stakeholders and 2% of the public correctly knew what the term means
- ➔ Respondents generally felt that cash transfers are a good initiative, but 67% felt that the amount in question is too small.
- ➔ 13% of the respondents felt that cash transfers will cause people to become lazy.
- ➔ The main sources of information about cash transfers are through already existing programmes within the regions (25%) and friends and neighbours (44%).

Secretariat Commissions Analysis to Support Social Protection Development

By David L. Tumwesigye

The Social Protection Secretariat has commissioned a team to lead in-depth analysis of poverty and vulnerability in Uganda. This work will directly contribute to the development of the social protection policy for the country.

The work, which was commissioned in April 2011, will analyse data from the Uganda National Household Surveys conducted by UBOS in 2005/6 and 2009/10.

The analysis is jointly undertaken by a team of analysts led by Ms. Emily Wylde an international economist, and comprises of Mr. Zephania Ogen- Senior Economist, MGLSD, Ms. Angela Kiconco, a Senior Statistician in UBOS and Dr. Sarah Ssewanyana, a Socio-Economist and Executive Director, Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRC).

A Technical Working Group (TWG) has been constituted. This aims to stimulate cross-institutional discussions on common methodological and technical issues in poverty analysis in order to promote consistency and provide a common platform for poverty research within Government. It includes the Core Team as well as economists and statisticians from MGLSD, MoFPED, UBOS, the World Bank, EPRC, the National Planning Authority (NPA) and Academia. The TWG is chaired by Mr. James Muwonge, Manager Social Economic Statistics at UBOS.

This was done after recognizing that in addition to the MGLSD, there are a number of different actors, including MoFPED and UBOS, who are also working on poverty analysis on the UNHS data. The scope of work was designed to foster coordination



Children in Masaka: The study assesses the risks and vulnerability affecting different categories of the population, including children.

and eliminate duplication of efforts.

Although at this stage the methodological discussions revolve largely around the analysis being produced as part of this exercise, it is envisaged that the Technical Working Group will evolve into a long-term economists and statisticians forum for poverty analysis.

The work will be conducted in 3 phases. The current (and first) phase entails:

- (i) Assessment of risk and vulnerability affecting diverse demographic categories of population of Uganda in the context of the dynamic nature of poverty;
- (ii) Analysis of the poverty headcount and gap for demographic and geographic groups;
- (iii) Correlations of poverty with other welfare indicators such as the utilization of health and education facilities,

asset ownership and land ownership;

- (iv) The nature and impact of shocks on households and the extent to which they contribute to poverty

This phase will be completed in September 2011.

Later phases of the work will involve building a micro-simulation model to estimate the potential impacts of a range of nationwide social assistance grants on the poverty gap and headcount, the impact of cash grants on enrolment and drop-out at school. An econometric model that can assess the implications of poverty and inequality for national economic growth and simulate the impacts of cash transfer programmes on economic growth will also be built. The model will demonstrate the potential of social assistance grants to increase household incomes, purchasing power and contribution to Gross Domestic Product.

The writer is an Economist with ESP

An Introduction to the SAGE MIS

By Justus Oguna

The Management Information System (MIS) is not a concept that's unique to ESP. Many organisations striving for effective management will have one.

The SAGE MIS therefore serves to underscore the commitment of the programme to effective and efficient programme delivery.

The SAGE MIS is the computerized system that will handle all information for and about the ESP Programme by providing operations and management with the information they require. It will play a central role in ensuring that no manipulation of targeting and selection of beneficiaries occurs.

Functions of the MIS in Cash Transfer – How it Works

- a) **Registration:** Data from the civil registration process is imported into the MIS using tools developed in the MIS.
- b) **Targeting:** The MIS then automatically calculates the scores for each household using either the Vulnerable Family Support Grant (VFSG) or the Senior Citizen's Grant (SCG) targeting methodology.
- c) **Enrollment:** After the scores are computed, the MIS selects the beneficiaries who have met the set criteria in each of the districts and enrolls them into the payment process.
- d) **Printing of Beneficiary Details:** The MIS also enables printing of the beneficiary list which is then sent to the Private Sector Payment Service Provider for the actual payments of the beneficiaries.
- e) **Storage and Reporting on Monitoring & Evaluation Data:** Monitoring and evaluation data is stored in the MIS and reports are also produced from the MIS which helps in decision making and programme implementation.
- f) **Storage of Change Management information:** Changes that occur during the lifetime of the programme such as deaths, births, permanent departures etc are recorded through the MIS using forms filled at the Village, Parish and Sub county levels. These changes are later on used by the MIS during re-targeting. Beneficiaries are either retained in the Programme or removed from the list, depending on the specific changes.
- g) **Capturing and resolution of complaints and grievances:** Complaints and grievances recorded during programme implementation are also recorded in the MIS.



A young girl attends to household chores for the family: The MIS will calculate scores for vulnerable families including child-headed households.

The writer is the MIS Manager, ESP

SAGE Implementation Guidelines Finalised

By Augustine Wandera

As the distribution of the first grants comes closer, a manual to be used in the implementation of the Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE) has been finalised.

The SAGE Implementation Manual was compiled to provide guidance to all partners involved in the implementation,

monitoring and evaluation of the SAGE programme.

It provides a clear allocation of roles and responsibilities for individuals and organisations involved in programme implementation. It is also intended to serve as the foundation for effective accountability within the

programme. It therefore forms a key component of the Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) between MGLSD, MoLG and Local Government Authorities (LGAs). The Manual will be regularly revised as implementing partners gain experience and generate learning.

The writer is the M&E Manager, ESP

Laying the Foundation

By Dora Anyango

Since early this year, the SAGE Unit and the Training Team have been working to ensure the readiness of districts to implement the SAGE cash transfer pilot program and have trained more than 200 people in the three initial districts to date.

District SAGE Orientation

Chief Administrative Officers, District Councilors (outgoing and newly elected) and technical staff from each of the three districts participated in a one-day orientation to social protection in general and to SAGE in particular. The major objective of this training was to build understanding among senior district officials and ensure their familiarity with the SAGE pilot programme.

SAGE staff recruitment, induction and posting

In order to support the operations at the Local Government level, the Programme recruited nine technical personnel and three drivers and deployed them to their respective duty stations, after a comprehensive eight-day induction where they learned about social protection globally and the different options for Uganda. They also had familiarization sessions with the work of the SP Secretariat and other departments of the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development which gave the bigger picture of what the Ministry, which is now their new home, does as a Government institution.

District SAGE Team Training

Having completed the recruitment in the three districts, there was a need to build the capacity of the newly recruited staff to lead the implementation of the SAGE programme at the district level. In May 2011, the Secretariat organized for both the newly recruited staff and the district Community Development Department technical staff to



SAGE district staff in Kyenjojo attending training facilitated by ESP staff

convene in Entebbe for a five-day training course in SAGE implementation practical issues. Using the SAGE Implementation Manual as a guide, participants were taken through all the elements of SAGE, from targeting to monitoring, from grievance mechanisms to payment processes. Most critically, they explored their roles and responsibilities in coordinating the many activities that are involved in implementation within each district.

Sub-County, Parish and Community rollout of SAGE

The SAGE teams are now initiating other district-based training activities, including orienting and training sub-county and parish level officials. These will oversee activities as SAGE moves to the community level in time for the first cash transfers.

In order to support the ongoing training activities of the SP Secretariat, the MGLSD

has appointed a cohort of Master Trainers who have also participated in the comprehensive SAGE training. They will play a support role during the pilot program and subsequent roll out to the other 11 districts.

The Journey Continues

The Expanding Social Protection program is committed to building the capacity of GoU officials at all levels to lead the SAGE pilot. This commitment to capacity building will promote high quality implementation of the pilot, ensure that lessons are learned for future expansion, and establish a cadre of capable officials to lead any future national expansion of SAGE and other social transfer programmes.

The writer is the Training Manager, ESP

How SAGE Works in the Districts

By Shem Mwesigwa



Sub-county and parish chiefs are active participants in the district SAGE training sessions.

The management of SAGE is designed in a way that would maintain a high level of technical expertise, while at the same time being implemented largely through existing local government structures. As such, the SAGE technical staff is integrated within the Community Development Departments (CDDs) at district level.

The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), working with the District Technical Planning Committee, oversees the implementation and management of SAGE through the local authorities at district level.

Direct oversight is provided by the District Community Development Officer (DCDO), who reports to the CAO and also supervises the SAGE technical staff – a Technical advisor, an M&E officer and an MIS officer. Long-term staffing needs will be determined based on experiences from the pilot.

The DCDO will routinely engage with the district Social Services Committee for political supervision and is responsible for submitting quarterly reports through the CAO to the PS MGLSD.

A Senior CDO will be allocated by the DCDO to manage day-to-day activities of the SAGE

programme, including delivering training to sub-county staff. Sub-county facilitators will be appointed from among sub-county CDOs, while sub-county-chiefs will provide oversight of operations at that level.

Parish chiefs will coordinate all SAGE activities at the parish and village level, ensuring effective and timely communication between the village and sub-county level, as well as delivering training to Parish Development Committees (PDCs) and village council chairs. In turn, PDCs will support delivery of community orientation and provide a channel for complaints and other feedback from the community to the parish level. Village chairpersons are responsible for community mobilisation and supporting effective upward and downward communication to and from the Parish level.

On a day-to-day basis, district, sub-county, parish and village level officials will communicate with each other, coordinate activities, request and provide guidance, inform each other of progress made and challenges encountered. Monthly sub-county and district-level programme coordination meetings will be convened.

A likely challenge is that many key positions within the local governments staffing structures

are vacant. Each district will therefore have to consider a clear strategy for filling the various gaps.

The writer is the District Liaison Officer, ESP

Some Key Roles of the District

Implement the SAGE programme in accordance with the SAGE Implementation Manual and mainstream SAGE into district plans and budgets

Create awareness amongst the various constituencies as to the rationale, objectives and implementation modalities of the SAGE pilot.

Establish appropriate linkages between SAGE and other government and non-governmental development interventions in the district.

Support the institutionalization of the birth and death registration (BDR) system as a basis for assessing the eligibility of individuals and households, and support the enrollment of eligible beneficiaries.

Enhance transparency, empowerment and accountability through publicly displaying lists of beneficiaries identified by the MGLSD

Incorporate SAGE objectives into the district performance management system; review periodic progress and financial reports on programme implementation prepared by Social Protection Secretariat and monitor implementation of SAGE in the district to ensure adherence to plans and procedures and attainment of programme objectives.

Ensure that SAGE operational funds are used efficiently and for the purposes intended as well as ensure the security of programme assets.

Work with the MGLSD to identify and advocate an appropriate post-pilot staffing structure for SAGE at district-level.

To Benefit or Not to Benefit

By Stephen Barrett

One question recurs during discussions about the Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE) pilot: How does the programme intend to choose beneficiaries?

In a country that has almost 25% of its citizens in poverty and many more clustered just above the poverty line (the significant progress made in poverty reduction over the last two decades notwithstanding), it is a fair question.

The basic fact is that SAGE will reach approximately 95,000 households, potentially up to 600,000 people – during the 5-year pilot period. It is important to note from the onset that the objective of the pilot phase of SAGE is to design and test simple, scalable and cost-effective delivery mechanisms which can then be used to roll the programme out across the whole country as the first step in establishing an integrated Social Protection system in Uganda. Yet, even with this known – and hopefully understood – the question remains.

‘Poverty targeting’ is extremely difficult and expensive to do with any reasonable degree of accuracy. It can also create poverty traps, social conflict and stigma. SAGE, therefore, will use simple demographic proxies for poverty and vulnerability which can be more easily implemented, understood and accepted at all levels, in particular by communities. Beneficiaries will be selected for one of two grant mechanisms that are very different in nature – the Senior Citizens’ Grant (SCG) and the Vulnerable Families Support Grant (VFSG).

The VFSG is a household transfer, which takes into consideration indicators of vulnerability which are linked to the labour capacity



Women attend a community meeting in Masaka. Where present, adult women aged 18-70 will be selected as the recipient of the VFSG.

and dependency burden in households, like sex, age, disability and orphan-hood status. In order to render the process transparent and manageable for community members, the number of criteria used in the VFSG is restricted.

The SCG is an individual entitlement (although there is strong evidence internationally that such individual grants are shared among family members, including children) that uses a single indicator, age.

In theory the VFSG and SCG could be implemented in parallel. However, given resource limitations associated with the pilot phase, they will be implemented in different sub-counties. Allocation of the grant mechanisms to different sub-counties will be done on a randomised basis by the Social Protection Secretariat so that only one grant mechanism, either the VFSG or the SCG, will be implemented in any one sub-county.

Targeting in the Senior Citizen’s Grant

- Targeting for the SCG will be automated based on national

civil registration datasets which the government has been working to strengthen over the past year.

- Within the MIS older people aged 65 years and above (60 years and above in the case of Karamoja) are identified as beneficiaries.
- If any individual believes that they have been incorrectly excluded from the beneficiary list, they should raise an appeal. The SAGE Implementation Manual stipulates the procedures for this.

Targeting in the VFSG (Labour Capacity and Dependency Targeting)

- The VFSG is intended to reach households containing a high proportion of older people, pre-school children and people with disabilities. Orphans and their caregivers are also prioritised.
- An eligibility threshold will be set for each district based on analysis of the UNHS 2009/10. Only

those households scoring above the threshold will be targeted.

- ➔ Within the MIS, the VFSG scoring system is applied to the civil registration data sets collected by government. Numerical scores are applied to the members of each household according to the age, sex, disability and orphan-hood status and all the households scoring above the district eligibility threshold are targeted.
- ➔ In the event that households have the same score, the MIS will automatically give preference to single-headed households – by age of head – and after that preference will be based on the age of household heads.
- ➔ The MIS will automate the preliminary identification of a recipient for each household. Where present, adult women aged 18-70 will be selected as the recipient. Otherwise adult men or, in the case of child headed households or extremely old people living with children, the eldest child will be selected.
- ➔ Beneficiaries are provided with the opportunity to authorise an alternative recipient to enrol on their behalf.
- ➔ The parish chief records any appeals and refers them to the Sub-County (A)CDO.
- ➔ Re-targeting will be done every 2-3 years in each sub-county.

The writer is the SAGE Manager, ESP

Regional and International News

Kenya Doubles Cash Transfer Coverage in 2011/12 Budget

The Kenyan Government has increased the amount of funding to its social safety net for the vulnerable, scaling up the allocations for disabled persons, elderly persons, orphans and vulnerable children.

Reading the 2011/12 budget on June 8 to the Kenyan Parliament, the country's Minister for Finance, Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta said that these are times that the Government must be seen to care for these groups of persons.

"Mr. Speaker, we recognize the hardship our people are going through, more so the vulnerable groups such as the elderly, the physically challenged and orphaned children," Mr. Kenyatta said.

"In expressing Government's deep care, I have allocated under the

Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development an additional KSh.385 million, bring to total KSh.667 million for the disabled persons; KSh.2.8 billion to bring under program additional 100,000 orphaned and vulnerable children; and finally additional KSh.470 million, which scales up the allocation to KSh.1 billion for the elderly persons," he said.

Mr. Kenyatta revealed that the amount will enable the government to increase the current coverage by two-fold.

The amount includes upward adjustments of the monthly transfer to KSh.2,000 to the elderly (about UgSh57,400), a motion that the Kenyan parliament overwhelmingly adopted and passed.

Social Transfers Key to Realising Human Rights

Amidst globally growing recognition that social transfers are a key element to realizing human rights, the Centre for Social Development in Africa hosted an International Symposium at the University of Johannesburg from 23-25 May.

The symposium brought together specialists from UN and donor agencies, scholars, experts, researchers and practitioners from countries such as South Africa, Uganda, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Botswana and Zimbabwe.

One of the general concerns that came up was that it is often unclear how social protection is defined and what the goals of social protection are. Consequently, social protection has become a catch phrase for numerous policies, programmes and goals leading to unrealistically high expectations of what can be

achieved with social protection. Consensus on the core aspects of social protection and what social protection policies aim to achieve would clarify such ambiguity.

It was also agreed that there is a need to more firmly link social and economic policies. Specifically, social protection and labour policies need to be addressed simultaneously.

While social protection was acknowledged as having a positive impact on the livelihoods of the poor, its implementation has many challenges, including corruption and lack of capacity in many countries and unsustainable donor-driven programmes. It was agreed that donors' contribution to social protection expansion would improve if donors strive to support national policy priorities, minimize policy intrusion, and streamline donor support.

HelpAge International Launches Pension Watch Briefing Series



An elderly man and woman with their grandchild in Masaka. Older persons are prioritised as beneficiaries of the ESP programme and other social protection programmes worldwide.

HelpAge International has launched its new Pension Watch briefing series. The series shares lessons on the design and implementation of social pensions, as well as other social protection issues. They include thematic briefs as well as more detailed overviews of particular social pension schemes.

The briefings address questions such as:

- What is the cost of a universal pension? Calculations have been done for 50 low and middle-income countries.
- What role can cash transfers play in fragile states?
- How can governments finance social protection?
- What is good practice in the design of management information systems?
- How easy is it to register age for cash transfer schemes? And what are the opportunities for strengthening civil registration?

The briefings can be found on the HelpAge Website at: <http://www.pension-watch.net/about-social-pensions/pension-watch-briefing-series/>

UNICEF Calls for Increased Social Protection for Children Affected by HIV and AIDS

Global efforts to improve the lives of children affected by HIV and AIDS are increasing but still fall short of the growing needs of millions.

At the end of 2010, an estimated 16.6 million children lost one or both parents to AIDS – 14.9 million of these in sub-Saharan Africa, according to a UNICEF report released on June 3.

“These children have already experienced the tragedy of losing a parent or a loved one to AIDS – only to be subjected to stigma, discrimination and exclusion from school and social services,” said UNICEF Director Anthony Lake.

“We urgently need to invest in national social protection programmes that fight poverty

and stigma, and which address the special needs of HIV-affected families, to help these children reach their full potential,” he added.

Statistics from the UNICEF website reported that by 2009, there were an estimated 1,200,000 children (aged 0-17) orphaned by AIDS, out of the 2,700,000 estimated orphaned due to all causes.

About this newsletter

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Feedback

For any views and feedback on this newsletter or social protection in general, please write to

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About the Expanding Social Protection programme

The Expanding Social Protection (ESP) programme is a Government of Uganda initiative under the Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development, with the overall goal to reduce chronic poverty and improve the life chances for poor men, women and children in Uganda. The ultimate development objective of the 5-year Programme is to embed a national social protection system that benefits Uganda's poorest as a core element of the country's national policy, planning and budgeting process.

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