

From the Editor

Welcome to this edition of our newsletter. Since the last one, a lot of developments have taken place in the Programme. We launched the first grants in September 2011 simultaneously in Kaberamaido, Kiboga and Kyenjojo, initially covering 2 sub-counties in each of these districts. We have since added Apac, Katakwi, Nebbi, Nakapiripirit and Moroto. As of July 2012, we have reached over 28,000 beneficiaries, with the coming on board of 6 more districts: Napak, Amudat, Zombo, Kole, Kyegegwa and Kyankwanzi.

We are starting to see real impacts and changes in the lives of the beneficiaries. Along with this, we are also increasingly receiving calls from around the country asking the Programme to extend (especially the Senior Citizens Grants) to all the districts in the country. Unfortunately, we are not yet able to heed this call to expand until we have enough resources. Nonetheless, we have put in place systems, mechanisms and processes that can be scaled up to national level as soon as resources are available. In this edition we share with you just a few of the stories of the beneficiaries on how the grants are changing their lives.

On the policy front, the Programme together with the Economic Policy Research Centre hosted a national dialogue on the role of social protection in Uganda's inclusive socio-economic transformation in April. The dialogue was attended by over 170 people from different Government ministries, departments & agencies, development partners and civil society. It was convened to disseminate the findings of poverty, vulnerability and inequality analysis conducted by the ESP as well as the policy implications. The draft social protection policy is also under review and consultation.

Good reading.
Editor

Senior Citizens Grants now reach over 28,000

By Phionah Kesaasi & Pius Ongom

Eighty-year-old Clementina Matama lost her eye-sight ten years ago and lives with her mentally ill daughter, in their neat grass thatched house in Obur Parish in Kaberamaido district.

Previously, because she could not work owing to her advanced age and poor sight, Matama lived a destitute life, struggling to get food for herself and her sick daughter.

But the introduction of the Senior Citizens Grants (SCG) under the Expanding Social Protection Programme has given Matama and her daughter a new lease of life. Today, with her regular and predictable monthly grant of UGX 23,000, she is assured of some income, and therefore some food.

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President Museveni helps a beneficiary to withdraw her money during the launch

President Museveni launches Senior Citizens Grants for Nebbi

By Simon Omoding

On the occasion to mark the International Women's Day, President Yoweri Museveni launched the Senior Citizens Grants for Nebbi district, while underscoring the need for Uganda as a country to look after her old people. The President said there was a need to extend the grants beyond the 14 pilot districts.

Nebbi become the fifth district to disburse the grants to older persons. Nebbi was part of the cohort of Apac, Moroto, Katakwi and Nakapiripirit that started disbursing the

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... (Continued from page 1) **Senior Citizens Grants now reach over 28,000**

Matama is among the over 28,000 older and vulnerable people from 14 districts around the country benefiting from the Senior Citizens Grants (SCGs) and Vulnerable Family Grants (VFGs).

The idea behind the grants is that they provide small, regular, and predictable income support. This regularity and predictability enables people to afford the basic needs of life, but also provides a platform for people to plan and start small projects that eventually help sustain them and therefore improve their life in the long term. It therefore supports the consumption and investment by poor and vulnerable people, thereby giving them hope and eventually helping them to work themselves out of poverty.

The recently released Uganda Poverty Status Report 2012 by the Ministry of Finance, Planning & Economic Development shows that although poverty in the country reduced to 24.5 per cent in 2009/10, more than 40 per cent of households remained vulnerable to poverty, living just above the poverty line, with a possibility of falling back to poverty.

Direct Income Support, such as that provided by the Senior Citizens Grants, addresses vulnerability by ensuring that poor people have the means not



Vice President Edward Ssekandi hands over money to a beneficiary in Kyenjojo

only to improve their lives in the short term but can also better cope with any damaging events that might befall them or their families such as sickness, loss of employment or a failed crop. Small but reliable income helps poor families to accumulate productive assets; avoid distress sales; obtain credit on better terms; and diversify into higher risk but high return activities.

At full coverage expected to be reached by June 2013, the Programme will reach 95,000 households.

The Senior Citizens Grants go to individuals of 65 years and above. However, the age of eligibility in Karamoja is 60 years in recognition of the fact that the extreme poverty in that region and insecurity have led to reduced life expectancy.

... (Continued from page 1) **President Museveni launches Senior Citizens Grants for Nebbi**



President Museveni in Nebbi

grants in May 2012.

Kaberaido, Kiboga and Kyenjojo districts started implementing the Senior

Citizens Grants and Vulnerable Family Grants in September 2011.

In her speech, the Hon. Rukia Nakadema Isanga, Minister of State, Gender & Culture said "The majority of the beneficiaries of the Senior Citizens Grants are older women without any other form of income security. Ugandan women play a key role in caring for their families particularly grand children especially those that have been orphaned by HIV/AIDS. The Senior Citizens Grants go a long way to complement Government's efforts to empower women and address their unique vulnerability and needs."

The Minister was happy to note that in particular, the grants support older women to empower their granddaughters and other members of their families to access

better quality food, health, education and sanitation services. This way, she said, girls effectively participate in and benefit from Uganda's socio-economic transformation.

Stephen Kasaija, Head of the Social Protection Secretariat said, "the Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development chose to launch the second phase roll out of the grants in Nebbi on International Women's Day due to the strong benefits that the Senior Citizens Grants are expected to bring to Uganda's women. The majority of the beneficiaries of these grants are older women. At national coverage, 59 per cent of all beneficiaries will be women."

With just 2 percent of the national budget, Uganda can cover about 1 million older persons with direct income support.

MoFPED highlights vulnerability, endorses Direct Income Support in new Report

The Ministry of Finance, Planning & Economic Development (MoFPED) has released the 2012 Poverty Status Report highlighting the challenges of vulnerability and endorsing direct income support as a policy priority. The report titled, "Reducing Vulnerability, Equalising Opportunities and Transforming Livelihoods," focuses on reducing vulnerability and equalizing opportunities, as well as ensuring income security as key drivers of poverty reduction in Uganda.

The report notes that although the share of Ugandans living in poverty decreased from 56.4 to 24.5 per cent between 1992/3 and 2009/10, access to risk-coping mechanisms remains inadequate.

The risks faced by the poor are a recurrent theme throughout the report. It argues that "risks faced by the poor are not just a symptom of low incomes, but have important implications for the national development process."

The report states that "vulnerability affects household decisions regarding savings and investment, employment, school attendance, agricultural technology and perhaps fertility...reducing vulnerability must therefore be viewed as an integral part of Uganda's development strategy."

It further argues that "Government efforts that equalize opportunities by favouring the poor can spur growth, and ultimately benefit all Ugandans. This requires the universal provision of public services. To enable the poorest to exploit

these opportunities, it is necessary to address the insecurity that pervades their economic lives. This will not only improve the lives of today's poor; it will ensure their children benefit from and help to build tomorrow's transformed society."

In his foreword to the report, Keith Muhakanizi, the Deputy Secretary to the Treasury, said: "This report demonstrates how poor households will not invest in their own productive capabilities until they have sufficient economic stability... As policy makers we must remember that the uncertainty households face always influences the choices they make. This has implications for almost all policy interventions."

He observes that children born into more vulnerable environments are much less likely to complete primary school. "Vulnerable households find it difficult to make the long-term trade offs required to keep their children in school....This vulnerability trap is inequitable, and also undermines economic growth....In assisting those who remain vulnerable, it is my hope that we can learn from the experience of Latin America. Deliberate policy measures there – particularly large cash transfer programmes and efforts to expand education opportunities to the



Dr. Albert Musisi of MoFPED making a presentation. The PSR recommends direct income support

most disadvantaged – have successfully addressed deep inequality, with a significant dividend in terms of economic growth."

The ESP Programme led the analysis that went into the chapter on inequality of opportunity in the new report.

The report notes that "an expanded social protection programme will directly contribute

to the national development process, as those currently caught in the vulnerability trap will be provided a stake and an incentive to invest in Uganda's brighter future."

"There is not a straightforward choice between physical infrastructure and social protection – both are necessary and complementary components of Uganda's national development strategy," it states.

It says that "The necessary sense of security and belief in a brighter future can be provided in many potential ways – a guaranteed source of income perhaps from a steady and secure job, an effective insurance mechanism or social safety net, or a quality education for one's child.... National development requires that all Ugandans escape the vulnerability trap."

ESP and EPRC hold national dialogue on social protection & transformation

By David Tumwesigye

What are the chances that a Ugandan child, living with illiterate, poor grandparents in a rural community in Uganda, will survive to their 5th birthday, receive the nutrition and health care necessary to develop their full physical and intellectual potential, afford

the materials and uniform to complete primary and secondary education and acquire the skills to effectively contribute to Uganda's growing labour market? These are some of the issues that were discussed during the national Dialogue

convened by the Expanding Social Protection Programme in the Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development and the Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRC) on Thursday April 19th. The theme of the Dialogue was *Inclusive Socio-*

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... (Continued from page 3) **ESP and EPRC hold national dialogue**



Dr. Sarah Ssewanyana makes a presentation at the dialogue.

Economic Transformation for Uganda: The Role of Social Protection.

The Dialogue was attended by over 170 participants from different government Ministries including Office of the President, Finance, Planning & Economic Development, Office of the Prime Minister, Gender, Labour & Social Development, Education & Sports, Health, National Planning Authority as well as representatives from academia, development partners and civil society.

Studies show that for the past two decades, Uganda's economy has seen phenomenal growth. The GDP has grown at over 7 per cent annually whilst the incidence of poverty has more than halved, from 56 per cent in 1992 to 24.5 per cent in 2009/2010. It is clear that there have been improvements in well-being for many Ugandans. However, analyses also show that this growth has not been evenly distributed.

Speaking at the Dialogue, Sulaiman Madada, Minister of State for Elderly &

Disability Affairs in the Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development said, "With consistent, strong economic growth and the discovery of oil, it is clear that Uganda's ambition to become a middle income country is within sight. However, inequality of income, opportunity and access to basic services combined with high levels of vulnerability in a big section of the population present challenges for the inclusiveness of Uganda's social and economic

transformation, now and for future generations."

Dr. Sarah Ssewanyana, Executive Director,

Economic Policy Research Centre one of the convenors and presenters said, "Understanding the nature of poverty, the sources of risk and vulnerability, and the impacts of shocks in people's lives is essential for Uganda if the country is to generate an appropriate policy response to the national objectives of human development, economic growth and socio-economic transformation."

Professor John Roemer of Yale University who has pioneered studies in Equality of Opportunity made a presentation.

Social Protection is today globally recognised as a critical component of national development strategies and key to achieving inclusive, pro-poor, equitable development. Through social protection instruments like Direct Income Support, governments provide small but regular transfers of money to vulnerable or excluded citizens in the form of senior citizens grants, disability grants, or child grants.

Social protection instruments are widely seen as key and core to addressing poverty, vulnerability and inequality.

The findings of the studies provide some of the strongest evidence yet, in Uganda, to support Direct Income Support.



The World Bank's Rachel Sebudde makes a contribution as Hon. Kabakumba Masiko looks on

Ministers, MPs impressed by social protection's contribution to development in Brazil, S. Africa

By Stephen Kasaija & Beatrice Okillan



The Ugandan delegation at the Brazilian Social Security Office.

In a bid to expose Ugandan policy makers and implementers to the immense contribution that a strong social protection system can make towards a country's growth and social-economic transformation, the Social Protection Secretariat recently organized study tours to see some of the well-developed social protection systems in three different countries; Brazil, South Africa and Lesotho.

Brazil today is renowned for its success in bringing down poverty and inequality rates in an impressively short time, largely due to the impact of its social protection policy and programmes. From March 24- April 1, 2012, the Social Protection Secretariat conducted a study tour for a small group of Ugandan Ministers, elected Members of Parliament and government officials to Brazil.

The delegation comprised of Hon. Sulaiman Madada – Minister of State for Disability & Elderly Affairs (Head of Delegation), Hon. Alex Onzima- Minister of State for Local Government, Hon. Ronald Kibuule- Minister of State for Youth & Children Affairs, Hon. William Nokrach- Chairperson Sessional Committee on

Gender, Labour & Social Development, Mr. Moses Byaruhanga- Senior Presidential Adviser on Political Affairs, Mrs. Christine Guwatudde Kintu - Permanent Secretary- Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development, Mr. Moses Bekabye, Advisor, Ministry of Finance, Planning & Economic Development, Mr. John Byaruhanga- Ag. Principal Economist, Ministry of Finance, Planning & Economic Development and Mr. Stephen Kasaija - Head Social Protection Secretariat.

The delegation visited and held discussions with teams from the Brazilian Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Planning, Budget and Management, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, National Council for Food and Nutritional Security, Social Security and Family Commission at the National Congress, Senator Eduardo Suplicy at the National Senate, the UN Resident Coordinator in Brazil, and also had field visits to various institutions implementing Brazil's social protection services.

Brazil was specifically selected for Uganda's learning because it offers lessons of particular relevance:

(i) **Inequality:** The role of Bolsa Familia, a family grant in reducing social and economic inequality in Brazil is well documented. In Uganda, although the poverty rate has significantly reduced and the Government has already met its MDG1 target, inequality has recently slightly increased, resulting in greater interest in issues of inequality and exclusion.

(ii) **Human Development:** The role of the Brazil's social protection system in enhancing human development outcomes in particular nutrition,

health and education was a critical area of learning.

(iii) **Middle-Income Status:** Uganda's National Development Plan 2010-2015 articulates Uganda's ambition to achieve middle income status by 2017. Understanding the role of social protection as both a catalyst and indicator of middle income status (as has been Brazil's experience) is of particular interest.

The most salient lesson from Brazil was the positive impact on reducing poverty and inequality, which in turn has bolstered the domestic economic growth and led to social cohesion and stability. This point was reiterated by government officials, politicians and academics through-out the trip.

The delegation recommended:

- That the Government of Uganda should prioritize Direct Income Support to older persons and commit to rolling out Senior Citizens Grants by integrating the requirement into the Government of Uganda budget.

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Uganda needs a national social protection system

By Prof. Ezra Suruma



Allow me to use this opportunity to support the establishment of a comprehensive national program for the assistance of people who are unable to earn an income. These include those Ugandans who at some point in their lives find themselves too young, too old or too disabled to look after themselves.

I want to appeal to all Ugandans to recognize, accept and support a national program for the assistance of fellow Ugandans who at some point in their lives find themselves unable to earn an income that can afford them a standard of living that is considered worthy of a human being.

Since we became independent, we have seen catastrophic fluctuations in political and economic stability. Fortunately, the last 25 years have recorded more economic growth and more political stability than the first 25 years of independent Uganda.

As we grapple with the issues of economic growth and the distribution of that growth among

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Ministers, MPs impressed by social protection contribution to Brazil's development

From the 13th to 20th November 2011, the Secretariat organized another tour to South Africa and Lesotho. Lesotho and South Africa were chosen because both countries are implementing successful social protection schemes targeting vulnerable groups, similar to what Uganda is piloting; the schemes in both countries are funded and implemented by the respective governments.

The team comprised of Hon. Kabakumba Matsiko – (then) Minister for the Presidency and Kampala Capital City Authority- Leader of Delegation, Hon. Dr. Christine Ondo - Minister of Health, Hon. Fred Jachan Omac, Minister of State for Finance- General Duties, Hon. Cos. Kamanda Bataringaya- Minister of State for Primary Education, Hon. Sulaiman Madada- Minister of State for Disability & Elderly Affairs, Hon. Musa Ecweru – Minister of State for Disaster Preparedness and Refugees, Hon. Timothy Lwanga- Chairperson Budget Committee of Parliament, Hon. Flavia Rwabuhoro Kabahenda- Woman MP Kyegegwa/Member, Gender, Labour

and Social Development Committee, Mr. Ssansa Mugenyi- Ag. Director, Monitoring and Coordination- Office of the Prime Minister and Ms. Beatrice Okillan – Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development/ESP.

In S. Africa the team noted that the motivation for Direct Income Support was the need to correct imbalances that were created by the apartheid regime such as high levels of poverty and inequality, poor access to basic social services and economic growth of 4-5 per cent that did not correspond to job creation and wealth distribution.

In Lesotho, the motivation was the erosion of the extended family system, due to urbanization, the HIV/AIDS epidemic that left a lot of orphans under the care of older persons; and the need to enable older persons to live in dignity.

The delegation also saw that direct income support schemes make governments popular. In Lesotho, the old age pension has translated into tangible political

support and is a major vote winner for the current government. The scheme is largely seen as a fulfillment of manifesto promises pledged to the people and the selection of pensioners is accepted as politically neutral.

In both S. Africa and Lesotho Direct Income Support is one of the most effective poverty reduction tools that the Governments have implemented. The grants enable beneficiaries to improve their productivity and as a result improve their income which has formed a basis for transformation of society as it enables the people to meet their basic needs of survival as they try to improve their conditions of living.

Both delegations recommended that the Government of Uganda should prioritize Direct Income Support to older persons and commits to rolling out SAGE to the whole country. They also recommended increasing awareness of the contributions of Direct Income Support to national development.



Jane Mpagi, Director Gender and Community Development in the Ministry Of Gender, Labour and Social Development makes a contribution at the dialogue.

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Ugandans, we must also grapple with the problem of those in our society who cannot cope with the demands of earning an income. I would define a decent income as that level of income that permits a Ugandan citizen to access a daily meal, shelter, access to water and to medical care and some clothing.

The programme for expanding social protection in Uganda has focused on the specific problems of assisting Ugandans who are too old to help themselves as well as those households which have extreme labour capacity deficiencies – households, for example, with few able bodied people and people living with disabilities, children or the elderly.

By limiting itself to these two groups it hopes to show that the problem is manageable if the payments are small and the targeted population is narrow. This is pragmatic. However, the Social Protection Secretariat estimates that the extension of the Senior Citizen Grants of UGX 23,000 per month (indexed to inflation) to every Ugandan above the age of 65, would require no more than 2.8 per cent of the 2015/2016 government budget, reducing to 2.0 per cent by 2019/2020. This suggests that over time the senior citizens grants could be extended to eligible citizens without severely overstressing the

national budget.

The imperative for pension payments to people over 65 years of age is in my opinion very strong. In our culture it is expected that children will look after their parents and grandparents during the latter's old age. Unfortunately, many children have moved to urban areas, or abroad or they themselves lack the means to look after themselves let alone their aged parents. We must put in place a payment, however small, to prevent our older persons from falling into an appalling state that is less than human. Equally strong is the case for universal health insurance, support for orphaned children and those with disabilities.

Despite formidable challenges, I believe that Uganda will emerge as a modern state when it eventually implements a comprehensive social protection policy. As a country, and as people, we must emerge from a condition in which some of our citizens are permitted to subsist in a subhuman state. We must say no to dehumanization, no to destitution and no to the utter neglect of the aged, the disabled, the blind, the sickly and the poor. The principle of social protection of those who cannot protect themselves must receive public acceptance as a matter of national policy.

Adoption of social protection could move Uganda into the direction of economically advanced countries, for example the Nordic countries, where there is a high standard of living and significant equity in the distribution of income. I believe that "Prosperity for All" which might have appeared yesterday to be a pipe dream is now a real possibility. We should now seize the opportunity to transform Uganda into a land that puts real people first. The adoption of a national protection system will transform us into a country that cares for her people. Indeed if a state cannot arrange the means to look after its sick, dying, elderly and the orphans it risks rendering itself irrelevant.

It is therefore for the sake of ensuring that every Ugandan citizen receives some income that will accord him or her some minimum measure of honor and dignity as a human being that I support social protection and that I appeal to you all to accept it as an integral part of Uganda's present and future social and economic policies.

Prof. Ezra Suruma is a Senior Presidential Advisor and a former Minister of Finance, Planning & Economic Development. He made this statement at the national Dialogue hosted by ESP and EPRC.

MPs, Government officials appreciate impacts of Senior Citizens Grants in Kiboga, Kaberamaido

By Phionah Kesaasi, Kate Kivanyuma and David Mwanani

A delegation of Members of Parliament and officials from the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development on June 1, 2012, toured the sub counties of Lwamata and Kibiga in Kiboga district to assess the progress of the implementation of Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE) and to see for themselves the impacts the grants are making in the lives of beneficiaries. In Kiboga district, the Programme now covers 4 sub-counties including Bukomero and Dwaniro.

The legislators who were mostly from the Parliamentary Forum for Children and the Gender Labour & Social Development Committee were accompanied by Hon. Sulaiman Madada, State Minister for Elderly and Disability Affairs.

The 21 member delegation included; Hons. Cerinah Nebanda (Butaleja), Rtd Col. Fred Mwesigye (Nyabushozi), Stanley Omonya (Okoro), Tonny Ayoo (Kwania), Lowila Oketayot (Pader), Grace Kwiyucwiny (Zombo), Sarah Netalisire (Manafwa), Milton Muwuma (Kigulu South), Jacob Opolot (Pallisa), Kenneth Lubogo (Bulamogi), Joy Ruth Acheng (Kole), David Muhumuza (Mwenge North), Lydia Chekwel (Kween), Rosemary Nauwat (Amudat), Kiyingi Bbosa (Mawokota), Kabahenda Flavia Rwabuhoro (Kyegegwa), James Kabajo Kyewalabye (Kiboga East) and Rosemary Nyakikongoro (Sheema).

Briefing his colleagues at the district headquarters before the field tour Hon. Madada explained that Direct Income Support such as the Senior Citizens Grants is one of the best ways to reach vulnerable sections of the population. He said that Members of Parliament have an important role to play to ensure that government appropriates more money to the Programme in the budget.

The delegation toured the pay points in the two sub-counties and later visited the home of some beneficiaries. In their interactions with MPs, the beneficiaries could not hide the joy and relief that the grants are bringing into their lives.

Chrizestom Lwabwambali, 67, of Nsala village

Lwamata sub-county with 8 grandchildren said that the 23,000 shillings he gets has enabled him to afford the basic requirements for his household. "Since the program began I have managed to buy essentials such as books to send the children to school. I no longer have to hassle to get basics like salt and soap." He said he has also been able to buy two goats and three chickens out of the savings he makes from his monthly income.

Kiboga Chief Administrative Officer, Ms Roselyline Adong Ruhoni informed the MPs that a total of 1,691 senior citizens and 775 vulnerable families have been covered in the districts, injecting over UGX 350.9 million to the local economies since September 2011.

Mr. Israel Yiga, Kiboga LCV Chairperson said that the people's welfare has improved. He noted that as local political leaders the poor old people no longer beg them for basic needs like salt, soap or sugar. "Now they can afford that by themselves," he said.

Hon. Flavia Kabahenda (Woman MP Kyegegwa district) who is also the acting chairperson of Parliamentary Forum on Social Protection, challenged the MPs to ensure that more funding is committed to extending the Programme because of the direct benefits it brings to the people.

Earlier in May, another delegation of ministers, MPs and technical officers from different government departments visited Kaberamaido district to see the progress of implementation of the Programme in that district.

The delegation included Hon. Alex Onzima, Minister of State for Local Government, Hon. Ronald Kibuule, Minister of State for Youth and Children Affairs; Hon. William Nokrach, MP - Chair Sessional Committee on Gender, Labour & Social Development, Hon. Rukia Nakadama, Hon. Mutyabule Florence Tibafana, (Namatumba) / Chairperson, Parliamentary Forum on Children, Hon.



L-R: Hons. Kenneth Omona, Alex Onzima, Sulaiman Madada get a demonstration at a pay point

Flavia Kabahenda Rwabuhoro, (Kyegegwa) acting Chairperson/ Parliamentary Forum on Social Protection, Hon. Kenneth Omona Olusegun, Member of Parliament, Kaberamaido County, Hon. Clement Kenneth Ongalo Obote, Member of Parliament, Kalaki County.

The senior government officers included Mr. John Mitala, Head of Civil Service/ Secretary to Cabinet, Mr. Vincent Opio Lukone, Permanent Secretary, Office of the President / Deputy Secretary to Cabinet, Ms. Christine Guwatudde Kintu, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development and Mr. Herbert Baryayebwa, Director, Social Protection, Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development.

The delegation witnessed first-hand the operations of the Programme in Kaberamaido. They visited pay points, interacted with Kaberamaido District Local Government officials and visited six beneficiary families in Bululu Sub County.

From the interactions two issues were noted; firstly that the Programme has successfully put in place systems and processes to run a direct income support Programme-that can be used for national scale up. Secondly, from the interaction with beneficiaries it was clear that the small, regular and predictable grants are making impacts in the lives of the people.

According to Mr. Albert Ejoku, LCV Chairperson Kaberamaido, the Programme is playing a critical role in transforming their lives.

Beneficiary Voices

Relieving the son's resources to cater for other family needs



One of the commonest problems that older persons have is ill-health. Debolah Animo of Omirimiri Village, Bululu Sub-county, Kaberamaido district is no exception. At 87 years she is sickly and one of her biggest costs is medical bills. Up to this point, she has had to rely on her son, himself a father of several children, to foot her bills. "In the past I have sometimes had to sell the produce I have in the granary to get some money to pay for the old woman's medical bills," says the son.

Debolah is one of the many older persons who are benefiting from the Senior Citizens Grants. Since getting her first payment in September 2011, she has used her money to pay for some of her medical bills. She says she also buys some food and household items like soap, sugar clothes and saves some.

Her son helped her to buy a goat from her monthly savings. They plan to save some more money to buy more goats to rear with the hope of trading them in for a cow when the goats multiply.

Receiving this grant has had a positive impact on Animo's life and that of her family. For her, she has been empowered because she is able to buy a few items that she needs without waiting for her son to provide. For her son, it means some relief as the old woman's income caters for some of her own needs, thereby relieving his own resources to do other things for the family.

At least I am assured of food

Dinah Areo walks with the help of a walking stick. At over 80 years, she still does some small farming-mainly producing food for herself. She lives alone in her grass thatched hut. Dinah does all her household chores all by herself except for going to the shops- a few kilometres away to buy whatever she needs. "If I need anything from the trading centre like medicine, I send my grandchildren. I am too old to walk that distance yet I need to get medication", she says.



As a beneficiary of the Senior Citizens Grants, Areo has reliably and predictably received her Ugx 23,000 monthly stipend since September 2011. Most of the time, she says, she uses her money to transport herself to the health centre and to buy medicines.

From her savings, she has managed to buy three chickens which have now produced a few more first generation chicks. She says she bought the three hens at shs.25,000 from one of her neighbours.

The rest of the money she has spent on buying food. "Being able to buy my own food has greatly helped me, now am assured of what I eat and I feel even my health is improving because I eat better and I have reduced on the strain that I had to work for food," she says.

Restoring hope in an old man's life



Valentino Elayu lost his two wives a few years ago. Since then he has lived alone, struggling to fend for himself. At 82, Elayu is weak and unable to work the way he did when he was younger. Back in the day, he had a herd of cattle, which he looked after, which in turn supported his livelihood. The cows were however looted in the mid 1980s. Elayu was therefore left a frustrated man.

A resident of Obur, Omirimiri, Bululu Sub-county, Kaberamaido district, Mzee Elayu was one of the very first people to receive the Senior Citizens Grants when they were launched in September 2011. With the grants, he now intends to rebuild-at least partially- what he lost in the past.

Having consistently received his grants for the last seven months, Mzee Elayu has been able to open his land; to grow food and crops for sale. "I used the first payment to hire labour to plant cotton and simsim," he says. "And I have used some to buy food; now I am assured of what to eat."

Clearly, the fact that the grants come regularly and predictably are helping him. The assurance of receiving a monthly payment has qualified Valentino to join a saving and credit scheme in his village called Rubanga Ber. "I save Shs.1,000 every week and at the end of the year I expect to receive shs.52,000 with interest. I want to use these savings to buy more animals like pigs and goats to improve my life," he says.

For Aporo and her husband their priority is their grandchildren

The desire to provide for one's family needs will drive many to do whatever it takes to fulfill that need. Louisi Aporo's family has always been involved in agriculture, yet they still could not provide enough for their grandchildren. "I used to sell some of the cassava we had for food to provide other needs for the children," says Louisi.

The couple lives with eight grandchildren -some of them orphaned and others left at home by their mothers who no longer stay with their fathers. The love for their grandchildren has seen them support the children through school. They are attending Universal Primary Education in a nearby school.

On receiving their grant money, the couple says that they used most of it to plough their gardens. They have managed to buy for themselves a mattress and can now sleep comfortably. "I bought a mattress at shs.45,000; my husband and I contributed each from our grant to buy it," Louisi says. They have also bought two goats at UGX45,000 and 35,000 respectively. Now the burden of providing for household items like sugar, soap, and salt for the family has also been lightened since they get their monthly grants.



For them the future of their grandchildren lies in them getting an education. They planned to use their grants for the month of April and May (2012) to cater for scholastic materials for their grandchildren for the second term, which was due to start.

MPs form Parliamentary Forum on Social Protection

Members of Parliament have initiated a Parliamentary Forum on Social Protection to advocate for the expansion of Social Protection in Uganda. The forum aims to engage Government to fulfil its commitment by allocating resources for Social Protection as stipulated in the Constitution, the National Development Plan and the NRM Manifesto. The forum will also regularly monitor and provide oversight for the effective implementation of the SAGE pilot.

The Forum is a brainchild of MPs who visited other social protection programmes in South Africa, Lesotho and Brazil who recommended that Government should prioritise Direct Income Support to older

persons and commit to a phased scale up of Senior Citizen Grants to all districts. They emphasized the need to build more government awareness and commitment to social protection through, amongst others, formation of the Parliamentary Forum.

The following Members were elected as an interim Executive Committee to lead the Forum: Hons. Flavia Kabahenda Rwabuhoro -Chairperson, Alex Ndezi -Vice Chairperson, Sarah Lanyero-Secretary, Jacob Opolot-Treasurer and Harriet Ntabaazi- Publicity. The following were elected as interim representatives for the various regions in the Committee: Hons. Stanley Omwonya

(Northern), Kenneth Ongalo Obote (Eastern), Elizabeth Karungi (western) and Anifa Bangirana Kawooya (central).

The executive was elected during a workshop organized by the Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social to brief MPs about the Expanding Social Protection Programme. The workshop was held on 17 February 2012 at Hotel Africana and attended by 78 Members of Parliament comprising members of the Parliamentary Committees on Gender Labour and Social Development, Budget, Social Services, Equal Opportunities as well as Members of Parliament from the 14 pilot Programme districts.

ESP activities in pictures



The LCV Chairperson, Mr. Israel Yiga (third right) leads MPs to visit beneficiaries in their homes in Kiboga district



A participant makes a contribution at the ESP/EPRC public dialogue at Protea Hotel in Kampala



Elders in Karamoja attend a sensitisation meeting on Senior Citizens Grants

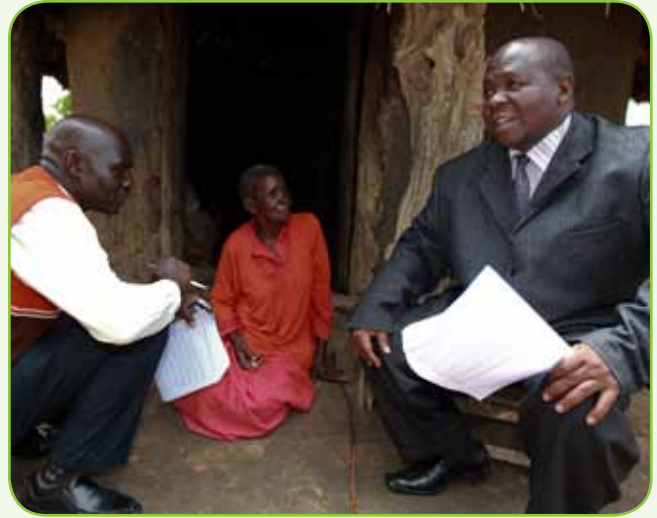


David Manani (second left) explains to Hon. Rukia Nakadama (extreme right) how the pay machine works.

ESP activities in pictures



The Permanent Secretary, MGLSD, Ms. Christine Guwatudde Kintu welcomes H.E Ssekandi to Kyenjojo



LCV Kaberamaido district Mr. Albert Ejoku, Hon Madada listening to a beneficiary in Bululu sub-county at her home



A beneficiary shows off his money in Bululu sub-county, Kaberamaido. Looking on are Hon. Kenneth Omona and Sulaiman Madada



Ministers and MPs - Musa Ecweru, Flavia Kabahenda, Kabakumba Masiko, Fred Jachan Omach interact with beneficiaries in Kibiga, Kiboga district



MPs visit beneficiaries at their homes in Kaberamaido



President Museveni greets Senior Citizens Grants beneficiaries in Nebbi

About this newsletter

ESP news is published by the Expanding Social Protection Programme as one of the ways to share information about direct income support and Social Protection in Uganda.

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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. The 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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