

First payments made in 5 new districts

Payments to beneficiaries in five new districts that came on board the Programme in Financial Year 2016/17 were launched in the districts on June 1st, 2017. The districts are Bugiri, Amuru Kabale, Kitgum and Nakaseke.

Under the SAGE scheme implemented under the Expanding Social Protection Programme in the Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development, Government provides monthly grants of UGX 25,000 to older persons to enable them to access basic services, and to start income generating activities, where they can.

The Programme that was piloted 2010 to 2015 in 15 districts, was rolled out to 20 more districts in Financial Year 2015/16. The new lot of five have in financial year 2016/17. This now brings the total number of benefiting districts to 40.

In ESPI, all older persons 65 years and above (60 in Karamoja region) were registered, enrolled and benefited from the programme. In ESPII, the oldest 100 beneficiaries per Sub County in all beneficiary districts first will be enrolled. Under the scheme, beneficiaries receive UGX 25,000 but paid out every two months, hence beneficiaries receive UGX 50,000

The payment of the first grants is a culmination of a series of preparatory activities in the districts aimed at preparing both the local government district administration and beneficiaries for payments. District political and technical leadership were oriented and trained on SAGE implementation, district support teams were set up and the Regional Technical Support Units (RTSUs) established.

Evidence from the pilot shows that a direct income support injection to older persons households through the Senior Citizens Grant, improves the welfare of both the older persons and their families. This has been seen through improved: Food security, frequency, quantity and quality of meals, uptake of health services, uptake of education services among children living with older people, improved ability to deal with economic shocks. It also Increases the productivity of beneficiary households through Investment of grants in purchase of livestock, generates employment as older persons use the grant money to hire -labourers to open up their hitherto idle agricultural land, increases savings and investment and boosts local economic activity.

Wherever the Programme has been implemented, it has been well received by beneficiaries and the general public across the political divide as it reflects the Ugandan values of support for the elderly.