



Asked Questions about SAGE Implementation in Phase II

What is SAGE and the Senior Citizens Grants all about?

SAGE stands for the Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment. SAGE is part of the Expanding Social Protection Programme (ESP) implemented by the Government of Uganda under the Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development. The Programme provides grants to older persons as a means to address poverty and vulnerability among older persons. It was piloted in 15 districts of Apac, Kole, Amudat, Moroto, Nakapiripirit, Napak, Kiboga, Kyankwanzi, Kaberamido, Katakwi, Kyegegwa, Kyenjojo, Nebbi, Yumbe and Zombo. The Programme is funded by the Government of Uganda, USAID/Department of International Development (DFID) and Irish Aid

Social protection is about addressing risks and vulnerabilities, to ensure that all people especially the old, people with disabilities, the chronically ill, orphans and widows are enabled to meet their minimum life needs and achieve their full potential. It is meant to ensure that people are not destitute but they live a more dignified and happier life. By supporting them with grants, they are enabled to access basic health and education services, build secure, sustainable and productive livelihoods, and become more active and productive members of the communities.

In the past beneficiaries could use their birth certificates, graduated tax tickets and the like to register in the Programme. Why has SAGE now changed to using the National ID?

The SAGE Programme used birth certificates, old graduated tickets and even community mechanisms to establish people's age during the pilot of the Programme. This was mainly because at the time, there was no reliable government registry of citizens in place. Use of baptism certificates was therefore an improvisation. Social Protection Programmes anywhere in the world are highly reliant on civil registries.

In line with Government of Uganda efforts to make all civil registries compliant to the NIRA registry, the Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development took a decision starting from June 2015, that registration of beneficiaries to Senior Citizens Grant will be based on the National ID data. Although there are many older people who may not yet be registered on the National ID, it



remains the most complete and credible national civil registration information Uganda has to date.

If an eligible older person has not registered for a national ID, will he/she be able to register for SAGE?

No. No older person will be able to register for SAGE without a national ID. The Programme is however aware that there are eligible older persons who did not have opportunity to register with the National ID. The Programme Management Unit (PMU) of the Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development will soon sign an MoU with NIRA under which all eligible older persons who did not have opportunity to be registered in the National ID, will be supported by the Programme to be registered by NIRA, and if they fall within the oldest 100 per sub county age range, be enlisted on the SAGE Programme. Those with wrong details will also be rectified under the same arrangement.

How are beneficiaries selected in the new (roll out) districts?

In August 2015, The Government took a decision to roll out *Senior Citizens Grants* to the whole country. However, owing to inadequacy of available funding, Government decided to take on a phased roll out plan, starting with 40 additional districts over the period 2015-20. Government further decided that in these districts only 100 oldest persons per Sub County will be reached by the *Senior Citizens Grants*, as Government looks for more resources to cover more districts, and more eligible older persons in these districts.

Therefore the oldest 100 persons per Sub County are selected by age in the National ID registry for a particular sub county. However, this list generated from the National ID register is subjected to verification to ascertain that the people on the register are alive, live in the named sub county and that the age reflected in the National ID actually reflects the true age of the potential beneficiary.

What happens in districts where there are less than 100 older persons captured on the National ID data?

Under the MoU that PMU will soon sign with NIRA, eligible older persons who did not register with the national ID will be supported to do so. Once they are registered with the national ID, they will then be enrolled to the Programme.



If I am one of the oldest 100 in my sub county but I receive a pension from Government, can I still enroll to SAGE?

No, you will not be eligible to receive the Senior Citizens Grant. In Phase II of the Programme, Government decided to exclude older persons who already receive a pension from Government from receiving *Senior Citizens Grants*. The rationale behind this is that pensioners already receive a pension from the consolidated fund, their inclusion in the *Senior Citizens Grants* would tantamount to drawing a double pension from the consolidated fund.

If I am registered and enrolled to the Programme, how do I actually receive my grant?

All eligible beneficiaries who have been selected as the oldest 100 from the National ID register, have been verified as alive, resident in the sub county and are not benefiting from any other government pension are enrolled on the Payment Service Provider (PostBank) system. This means that an account is opened for them, their finger prints, passport photos are taken and they are issued with a beneficiary card by PostBank. Payments are normally made once every two months. Once payment time comes round, the Office of the CAO through the District Community Development Officer, Sub county CDOs and Parish chiefs mobilise eligible beneficiaries to inform them of the upcoming payments. Beneficiaries will be informed when and where the payments will take place. Beneficiaries go to the pay point, present their PostBank card to the PostBank team in the mobile banking van, their details will be confirmed and older persons will be paid their money.

MTN Mobile money was better than PostBank because its network traversed the whole country; why did you change to PostBank that uses more reach limited van?

Following the expiry of the MTN Mobile Money contract, a new competitive bid was advertised for a Payment Service provider, and PostBank came on top as providing more value for money, by providing a cheaper and more reliable service. At the moment PostBank is using Mobile banking vans to pay beneficiaries. In future, beneficiaries will also be able to access their money in PostBank branches. Furthermore Postbank plans to start agency banking through which it will be able to pay beneficiaries in their own communities using banking agents. Besides, PostBank does not experience problems associated with network failure as was the case with MTN Mobile money. We think this is still a much better solution.

If a beneficiary is too weak and too frail and is not able to come to the pay point to pick their money, what happens?



Under the SAGE Programme each older person (beneficiary) is allowed to nominate one person they trust as their alternative recipient. Alternative recipient receives the money on behalf of the older person (primary beneficiary) in the event that the primary beneficiary is infirm or unable to go to the pay point to receive their money in person. According to Programme procedures, older persons can change their alternative recipients following established procedure should they have a reason to do so. Alternative recipients however have to be enrolled (their biometrics captured by the Payment Service Provider- PostBank) the same way the primary beneficiary's is.

However, the decision to have an alternative recipient or not, is a pre-prerogative of the primary beneficiary. They are not compelled to have one, however frail-looking they may be.

If a beneficiary dies, does his/her family still receive a transition allowance?

In the pilot, when a beneficiary died, the next of kin would be paid a transition allowance equivalent to 4 months of the grant (i.e UGX100, 000). However, this grant has now been stopped to make this funding available to beneficiaries already waiting on the line.

If a beneficiary dies how is he/she replaced? Is there going to be another re-targeting exercise?

During the pilot phase, re-targeting of beneficiaries was done every 2-3 years to capture those who have newly graduated to the qualifying age of 65 (or 60) years. In the current phase of the Programme, re-targeting has now been abolished because of the phased modality of roll out. In the new districts, accession and succession to the Programme is done by age determined by the NIRA data, i.e when one beneficiary dies, the next in line (the 101st beneficiary on the list is verified and registered on the Programme) hence no need for re-targeting. However, in the pilot districts, re-targeting is now not possible as the plan is for Government to gradually take over the pilot districts (hence match them with the 100 per sub county levels).

Will all districts add 100 beneficiaries per Sub County every year for the next 5 years?

No. not all districts will add 100 beneficiaries per sub county every year. This exercise (called deepening) will only happen in 5 districts of Amolatar, Abim, Kaabong, Kotido and Pader. The Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development took a special recognition of some post-conflict districts in Karamoja and northern Uganda and decided that in these 5 districts, 100 older persons per sub county will be added on the Programme every year, over the period 2015-2020. In these districts, "deepening" will be undertaken. In the rest of the roll out districts, only 100 beneficiaries per Sub County will be maintained until 2020.



The amount Shs 25,000 per month is little money why can't Government consider increasing the amount?

Evidence from the pilot districts shows that Shs 25,000 per month is actually able to make impact in people's lives; it gives people purchasing power, credit-worthiness and capacity to join Savings groups and SACCOs from which they are able to do bigger things. Emerging evidence from SAGE pilot and from other countries shows that amount, paid regularly and predictably, makes a huge difference to the lives of poor and vulnerable individuals and families. We can see now that older persons who have received the grants have had significant transformation in the lives and livelihoods.

Besides, this amount represents about 20 per cent of the monthly household consumption of the poorest of Uganda's population. The amount is also sensitive to what is affordable at national scale (hence affordability for government at national roll out). It is also in line with what similar Programmes around the region give (about US\$8).

There are many older persons who are calling Government to provide them with that amount, but owing to government competing priorities Government is not able to provide them. The argument is therefore whether government should consider increasing the amount of money for the few older persons who are currently receiving the Shs 25,000, or to extend the same amount to older persons!

Will this money not encourage alcoholism among older persons?

Several studies have been undertaken in this area. Available evidence both from the SAGE pilot and from Programmes in other countries actually shows that social grants don't cause more consumption of alcohol. Older persons in fact plan and put their grants into good use.

How were the benefiting districts selected?

The selection of roll out Districts considered the combined poverty index prepared by Uganda Bureau of Statistics and the vulnerability index prepared by the Expanding Social Protection Programme to determine the most vulnerable Districts. After ranking the Districts, those with high scores per Region were taken on first since they were more vulnerable. There was a deliberate attempts to ensure regional balance.

When will the remaining districts in the country be covered?

When Government makes the required funding available



What will happen if one district is split to form another, or new sub counties or Town Councils created from the old ones which were benefiting from the SAGE Programme

The current roll out plan is specific in the number of districts, sub counties and town councils covered by the SAGE Programme. If new districts split from old ones, the new districts will be managed from the old ones. The sub counties that were on record at the time of registration of beneficiaries are taken as the administrative Units for purposes of the implementation of the programme. Newly created sub counties and Town councils will therefore not be considered as sub counties and Town Council (from which to select a new set of 100 beneficiaries), rather beneficiaries that were registered in those sub counties or Town Council will be covered under their old administrative units.

How is the Programme managed?

The lead government institution managing the Programme is the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development working through the Directorate of Social Protection. The Directorate is supported by a Social Protection Programme Management Unit which coordinates policy, advocacy and management of the grants. To enhance coordination with the different stakeholders, a multi-sectoral, multi-level institutional management framework has been put in place at the national level. This framework includes the Steering Committee (chaired by the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development and has members from different government ministries and civil society organisations as well as the development partners).

At the district level, the Programme is mainstreamed within the local government system. Accountability for Programme resources and results is held by the Chief Administrative Officers (CAO). Beneficiary cash is managed centrally and disbursed directly to beneficiary accounts, by the PMU, in conjunction with the Payment Service Provider, Postbank.

What are the RTSUs?

During the pilot, the Programme ran SAGE offices in all the pilot districts. In the context of national roll out, it is no longer tenable to maintain offices in every district. The Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development therefore took a decision to establish regional offices. The aim of these offices is to support the PMU work in the districts. The Regional Technical Support Units will be responsible for grant delivery, training and coordination over a number of districts. These regional offices have been opened in Gulu, Kaberamaido, Moroto, Nebbi, Kiboga and Kyenjojo.

