

THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA  
Ministry of Gender, Labour  
& Social Development



better life chances for all

EXPANDING  
**SOCIAL  
PROTECTION**

# THE SENIOR CITIZENS GRANT (SCG)

## STAKEHOLDERS' HANDBOOK

### How SAGE Works in the Community

EXPANDING SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAMME,  
MINISTRY OF GENDER, LABOUR & SOCIAL  
DEVELOPMENT, UGANDA

MAY 2022

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# List of Acronyms

<b>CAO</b>	Chief Administrative Officer
<b>ESP</b>	Expanding Social Protection Programme
<b>DCDO</b>	District Community Development Officer
<b>DFID</b>	Department for International Development (UK)
<b>DISO</b>	District Internal Security Officer
<b>DLG</b>	District Local Government
<b>DPC</b>	District Police Commander
<b>FCDO</b>	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
<b>GoU</b>	Government of Uganda
<b>IA</b>	Irish Aid
<b>MGLSD</b>	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
<b>NIRA</b>	National Identity Registration Authority
<b>NSPP</b>	National Social Protection Policy
<b>RTSU</b>	Regional Technical Support Unit
<b>SAGE</b>	Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment
<b>SCDO</b>	Senior Community Development Officer (in charge SAGE)
<b>SCG</b>	Senior Citizen Grants
<b>SOPs</b>	Standard Operating Procedures

# Foreword



In our engagements with districts, local level leaders, religious, cultural, civic and opinion leaders, the Ministry has always challenged those leaders to support the Ministry to communicate and explain our Programmes to the people so that they understand what Government is doing for them. These leaders have – in turn - challenged us, arguing that they are not empowered with the information, to enable them to explain Government Programmes to the population.

This *Stakeholders' Handbook* for the Senior Citizens Grant is one of our attempts to package information in an easy and fast to use format so that local leaders of all categories can easily access it, and be able to answer any questions, explain basic things about the Senior Citizens Grant – both to our beneficiaries (older persons) and to the wider members of the community. Lack of information/awareness can lead to low accessibility to the Programme. For the case

of the Senior Citizens Grant (SCG), the target population is older persons. This section of the population tends to have visual, aural, speech and other disabilities, and many times a short memory span. This complicates their access and retention of information- and makes them more vulnerable to exclusion (from benefiting from the Programme) and exploitation (from unscrupulous people (in the absence of information on their rights & responsibilities). A low awareness on how the Programme works can also cause social dissatisfaction if the general public and political actors don't clearly understand the eligibility criteria and how the Programme works.

It is therefore important that the Senior Citizens Grant is well understood in the communities.

I hope you find this Handbook useful in your understanding of the Senior Citizens Grant and in your community information dissemination work.

**Aggrey D. Kibenge**  
*Permanent Secretary*

# About this Handbook

**T**his handbook is intended to provide basic, practical information about the Senior Citizens Grants (SCG) in the communities. It is a handbook for stakeholders - community leaders (including local government -political and technical leaders, opinion, religious, cultural - and all kinds of leaders in the community) - to help them understand the Programme to inform the community accordingly. It is intended to be an easy and light guide to community leaders - those who have direct interaction with the SCG beneficiaries and yet have no formal engagement with the ESP Programme on how different aspects of the Programme work.

Local leaders have many opportunities in which they interface with the people in the community- they have speaking opportunities at public and community events like funerals, community meetings, cultural events, home visits, places of worship, among others. They are also the ones to whom the community members turn, to inquire, clarify, and ask for more information about any specific issue. Yet there is no formal channels for them to access information about the SAGE Programme.

The idea of this handbook is therefore to provide basic information to empower those

local leaders (in their various capacities) regarding the Senior Citizens Grant so that they are armed with the right information, to enable them to effectively use platforms available to them to communicate, explain and ensure that the community understands the SCG, well. The leaders will also be able to answer any basic questions that people ask about the grant. This handbook is therefore intended to be a leader's "manual" from which the local leaders can draw to be able to answer any questions about the Programme.

We hope that you will find this handbook useful. We welcome any suggestions towards improving it.

**Stephen Kasaija**

*Head, Programme Management Unit*

# How to use this handbook

**T**his handbook is not essentially intended to be read from cover to cover. Rather it is intended to be read in a “trouble-shooting” manner. That is to say, the user is able to go directly to any section/page depending on the issues s/he needs to answer/clarify. If for example, a local leader is asked a question on how beneficiaries for the Senior Citizens Grant scheme are selected, s/he only needs to go directly to the page or section that has answers to that specific issue (section 3.1.).

This handbook should be useful to anyone in any sort of authority in the community

**Simon E. Omoding**

*Editor*

## Introducing Common Terminologies: SCG, SAGE, ESP & PMU

### 1.1 What is the Senior Citizens Grant?



The Senior Citizens Grant (SCG) refers to the monthly grant provided by the Government of Uganda to older persons. Under this scheme, older persons receive Shs. 25,000 every month, which is paid out every two months. Beneficiaries therefore expect to receive Shs. 50,000 at every payment. However, beneficiaries may receive more, if they have savings on their account or somehow they have outstanding payment arrears due to them over a period of time.



### 1.2 Why does Government of Uganda provide the Senior Citizens Grant?

The Senior Citizens Grant is a social protection instrument designed to provide a minimum level of income security to older people who were previously not in formal employment. This intervention is intended to protect them from falling into destitution; by providing the grant, the Government is addressing old age poverty. The SCG responds to the constitutional and public concerns on the welfare of older persons—which reflects Ugandan values of support for the elderly. The SCGs – also known as social pensions - aim to reduce poverty among the elderly and their families.

## 1.3 What is SAGE?

SAGE stands for Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment. SAGE is the scheme within the Expanding Social Protection Programme, under the Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development that is directly responsible for the management and payment of the grants. At the moment, SAGE is only managing one grant—the Senior Citizens Grant. In future, however, if some other grants (e.g. disability grants, child grant, etc.) are started, they will all be managed under SAGE.

## 1.4 What is ESP?

ESP stands for Expanding Social Protection Programme. It is the Programme of the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development. The ESP Programme has two elements to it: the first is the Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE), which manages the direct income support scheme(s)- such as the Senior Citizens Grant. The second element of the ESP is the policy element which coordinates the National Social Protection Policy. Under this second element, ESP deals with other social protection interventions e.g. cash for work schemes, etc. Started in 2010, the ESP is funded by the Government of Uganda, UK aid and Irish Aid.

## 1.5 What is PMU?

PMU stands for Programme Management Unit. It is the unit responsible for implementation and day-to-day management of the Expanding Social Protection Programme and therefore, SAGE and the Senior Citizens Grant. The unit falls under the Directorate of Social Protection in the Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development.

## 1.6 What are RTSUs and where are they located?

RTSU stands for Regional Technical Support Unit. RTSUs have been set up to support district local governments to deliver the Senior Citizens Grants to older persons. One RTSU supports a number of districts in a specific region. There are currently (March 2022) 10 RTSUs in place. These are: Kampala, Mbarara, Mbale, Nebbi, Gulu, Moroto, Kaberamaido, Kamuli, Kiboga and Kyenjojo.

During the Pilot phase of the ESP, the Programme operated fully staffed offices in every implementing district to support local governments to deliver the grants. In the second phase of the ESP Programme, RTSUs provide a more cost effective support mechanism.

**The current RTSUs and the districts they serve are as follows:**

**Nebbi RTSU** is responsible for 11 districts in the West Nile region. These are: Adjumani, Arua, Koboko, Madi Okolo, Maracha, Moyo, Nebbi, Obongi, Pakwach, Yumbe and Zombo

**Gulu RTSU** is responsible for 15 districts in Acholi and part of Lango sub regions: Agago, Amuru, Apac, Gulu, Pader, Lamwo, Kitgum, Kole, Kiryandongo, Lira, Nwoya, Omoro, Otuke, Oyam and Kwanja.

**Moroto RTSU** is responsible for: Kaabong, Abim, Kotido, Kween, Moroto, Napak, Amudat, Nakapiripirit, Bukwo, Nabilatuk, Karenga, Kapchorwa,

**Kaberamaido RTSU** is responsible for 13 districts: Amuria, Alebtong, Katakwi, Kaberamaido, Amolatar, Kapelebyong, Kalaki,

Kumi, Ngora, Bukedea, Dokolo, Serere, Soroti, **Kamuli RTSU** is responsible for 15 districts: Kayunga, Kamuli, Mayuge, Namayingo, Bugiri, Pallisa, Bugweri, Buyende, Iganga, Jinja, Kaliro, Kayunga, Luuka, Mayuge, Namayingo, Buvuma, Buikwe.

**Kiboga RTSU** is responsible for 15 districts: Buliisa, Hoima, Kiboga, Kyankwanzi, Nakaseke, Nakasongola, Kibaale, Kasanda, Mubende, Kikuube, Kagadi, Masindi, Mityana, Luweero and Kakumiro.

**Kyenjojo RTSU** is responsible for 14 districts: Kyegegwa, Kyenjojo, Bundigubyo, Bunyangabu, Ibanda, Kabarole, Kagadi, Kamwenge, Kasese, Kazo, Kitagwenda, Ntoroko, Kiruhura, Sembabule

**Mbarara RTSU** has 15 districts: Buhweju, Isingiro, Kabale, Kanungu, Kisoro, Mbarara, Rwampara, Mitooma, Bushenyi, Sheema, Ntungamo, Rubanda, Rubirizi, Rukiga, Rukungiri Mbale RTSU has 14 districts: Budaka, Bududa, Bulambuli, Busia, Butaleja, Tororo, Butebo, Kibuku, Manafwa, Mbale, Namisindwa, Namutumba, Pallisa, Sironko

**Kampala RTSU** has 14 districts: Bukomansimbi, Butambala, Gomba, Kalangala, Kalungu, Kampala, Kyotera, Lwengo, Masaka, Mpigi, Mukono, Rakai, Wakiso, Lyantonde.

## 1.7 Which districts receive the Senior Citizens Grants?

In November 2018, the Government made a decision to roll out the Senior Citizens Grant to all districts in the country, starting with people who are 80 years and above in the new districts, while keeping all those who were already on the

Programme since inception. By August 2020, the grant was reaching older persons in all the 146 districts in the country.

**The roll out has however evolved over the years as follows:**

- (a) **2010 - 2015:** The Programme was only in 15 pilot districts: Amudat, Apac, Kaberamaido, Katakwi, Kiboga, Kole, Kyankwanzi, Kyegegwa, Kyenjojo, Moroto, Nakapiripirit, Napak, Nebbi, Yumbe and Zombo
- (b) **2016 - 2018:** The grant was rolled out to 40 additional districts: Kaabong, Abim, Kotido, Koboko, Gulu, Pader, Agago, Lamwo, Amolatar, Pallisa, Amuria, Kween, Namayingo, Mayuge, Kamuli, Kayunga, Nakasongola, Kibaale, Kisoro and Bundibugyo. Others were: Kitgum, Nakaseke, Kabale, Bugiri, and Amuru, Dokolo, Sembabule, Kasese, Sheema, Mubende, Alebtong, Adjumani, Otuke, Moyo and Kumi.

Since Financial Year 2016/17, the following seven districts were created from the old benefiting districts and they too continue to receive the grants: Omoro (from Gulu), Butebo (from Pallisa), Pakwach (from Nebbi), Ruhinda and Rukiga (from Kabale), Kagadi and Bukomero (from Kibaale). This means that by 2017, the Programme was in an additional 47 districts.

- (c) **2018 - National roll out:** In November 2018, Government decided to roll out the Programme to all the districts in country. The remaining districts –

including Kampala Capital City Authority, all the new cities, all municipalities and town councils- were brought on board by August 2020.

## **1.8 For how long will beneficiaries receive the SCG, will it stop?**

The Senior Citizens Grant is conceived as a social service/pension that the Government of Uganda provides to older persons much like the health services or education. The idea is that once older persons are enrolled on the grant, they receive it for the rest of their life.

## **1.9 What is social protection?**

Social protection refers to interventions by government or other private players that aimed at addressing risks and vulnerabilities to

life shocks that expose individuals to income insecurity and deprivation leading them to lead undignified lives. It is a basic service and a human right that ensures dignity of people.

In Uganda, examples of social protection interventions include the Public Service Pensions, the National Social Security Fund (NSSF), among others. The purpose of these interventions is to ensure that people are guaranteed a decent life upon retirement. Other social protection initiatives are found in various government programmes such as the Orphans and other Vulnerable Children Programme, Community-Based Rehabilitation Programme for persons with disabilities, School Feeding Programme and Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE), among others.

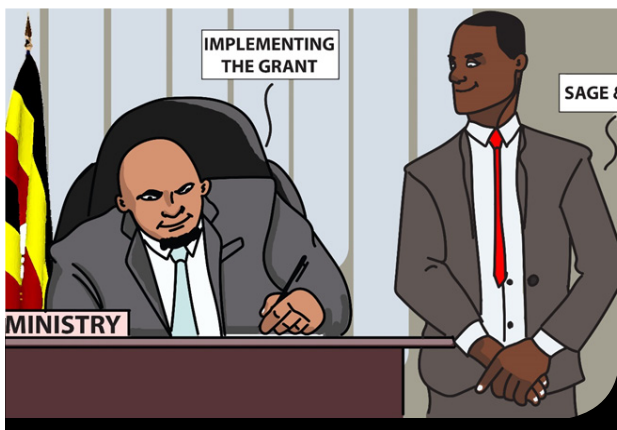
# Chapter 2

## Who pays the Senior Citizens Grant?

### 2.1 The role of the Government of Uganda

The Senior Citizens Grant is an intervention by the Government of Uganda through the Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development, to address poverty and vulnerability among older persons. It is therefore an initiative of the Government of Uganda, supported by development partners. In the Senior Citizens Grant, the Government is meeting obligations and commitments under the Constitution, National Development Plans (NDPII, III) and Vision 2040 for taking care of older persons as a special interest group, and leaving no one behind.

### 2.2 The role of the Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development



Within the Government of Uganda, the Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development holds the mandate for social development, and

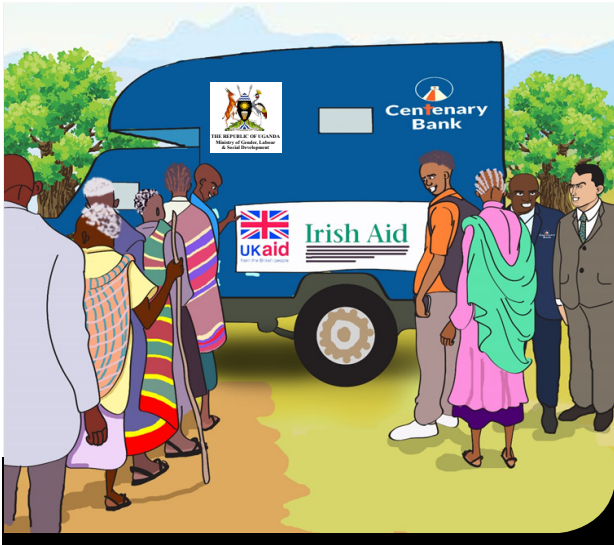
specifically social protection. The Ministry is therefore the lead entity in Government in the implementation of the Senior Citizens Grant. That is why the Expanding Social Protection Programme and SAGE, which implement the Senior Citizens Grants, are located in this Ministry.

### 2.3 Role of UKAID/UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Officer – FCDO (previously called Department for International Development (DFID))

The development arm of the UK Government-UKAID, which is also now called FCDO, supports the Government of Uganda by providing funding to the ESP/Senior Citizens Grant Programme. The idea however is that the Government of Uganda gradually takes over funding the grants fully from June 2021.

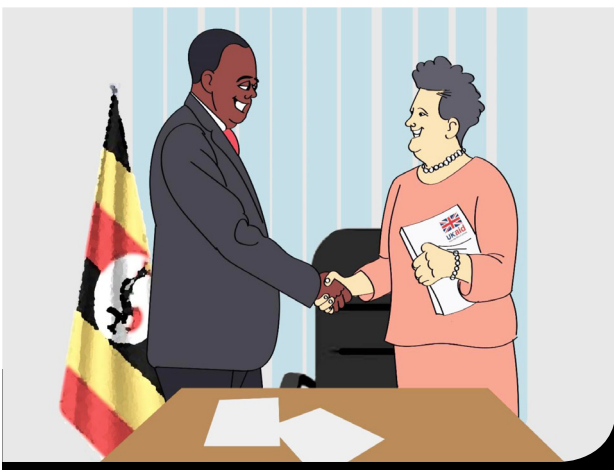


## 2.4 Role of Embassy of Ireland in Uganda



The development arm of the Government of the Republic of Ireland (Irish Aid) also supports the Government of Uganda by providing funding for the Senior Citizens Grant. Irish Aid especially has interest in Karamoja region. Like UKAID, Irish Aid support will end in 2022.

## 2.5 National Roll out to be taken over by Government of Uganda



Funding from both UK aid/FCDO and Irish Aid has been especially important for starting the

Programme from the pilot to date. It is planned that increasingly the Government of Uganda will fund more areas of the Programme but taking over full funding of the Programme by June 2022.

## 2.6 Role of the Payment Service Providers: Post Bank Uganda, Centenary Bank



The Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development uses competitively selected private actors to deliver the grants to older persons. Post Bank Uganda was selected through a competitive bidding process in 2016 to deliver grants to older persons. Post Bank's contract expired in March 2021. Ahead of the national roll out in June 2020, the Ministry together with the development partners run another tender to advertise the role of payment service provider. Centenary Bank won the tender and took over as payment service provider from Post Bank. Between July 2020 and March 2021, Post Bank and Centenary Bank run side by side as Payment Service Providers. However, when Post Bank's contract ran out, then Centenary Bank took over as the sole payment service provider throughout the country.

## 2.7 Will the Programme have other development partners in future?



It is possible that in future other development partners will come in to support social protection in the country. They may come in to fund specific areas of their interest e.g. social protection for children, persons with disability, women, and people affected by climate change, epidemics and pandemics, and so on. However, it is important to note that even when other development partners come to fund these programmes, they are doing so in support of the Government of Uganda in line with the National Social Protection Policy and the third National Development Plan (NDPIII).

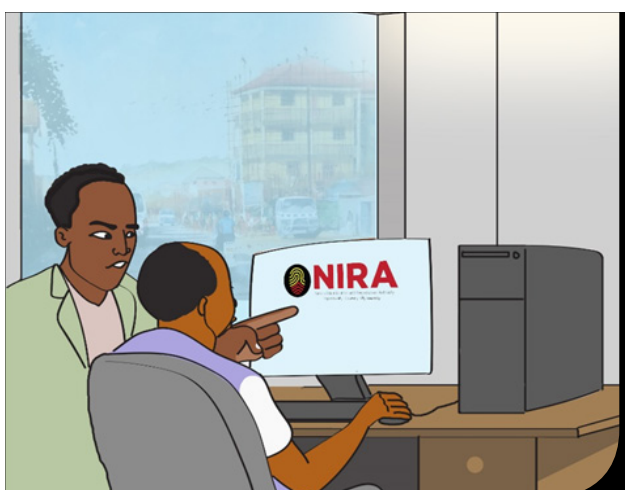
## How the Senior Citizens Grant works: How beneficiaries are identified, selected, registered, verified, enrolled and paid

### 3.1 Identification & selection of beneficiaries

The Senior Citizens Grant is an old age grant. It targets older persons. The Programme currently uses the National Identification & Registration Authority (NIRA) database for identifying eligible older persons. The Programme derives a provisional lists of potential beneficiaries from the NIRA register of all people who are 80 years and above in a particular sub county. This list is then subjected to verification to ensure that those people meet the selection criteria

The Senior Citizens Grant currently has two categories of beneficiaries. The beneficiaries in the districts that were in the Programme before June 2019, and those that joined the Programme after June 2019 (national rollout).

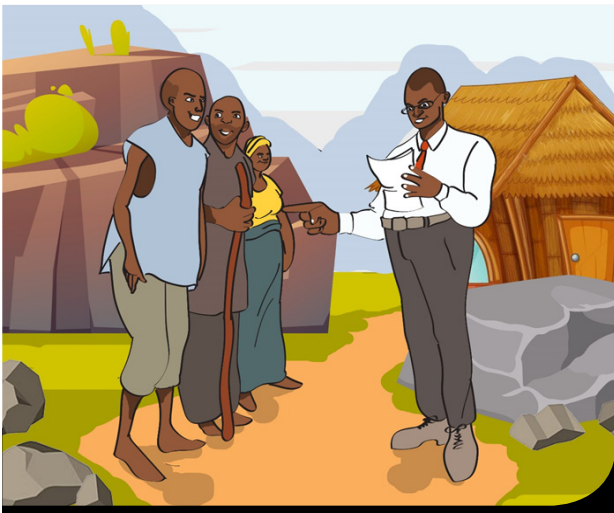
#### (a) Beneficiaries joining after June 2019



All new beneficiaries joining the Programme under the national rollout are required to:

- Be 80 years and above
- Be registered with NIRA and hold a valid national ID (those who registered with NIRA but lost their ID cards, or have not picked them are deemed registered as long as they have a NIN). Those whose date of birth was captured wrongly and reflect them as younger than 80, even if they are actually 80 years and above, will be required to first correct the details on their card with NIRA).
- Not receive another government pension

**(b) Beneficiaries in the Programme before June 2017:** These beneficiaries joined the Programme during the pilot and were selected based on achievement of 65 years of age in the rest of the districts (and 60 years in the case of districts in Karamoja region). Beneficiary selection criteria used in the pilot districts at that time, was that one had to be of age, Ugandan and resident in the area for at least a year. The pilot districts were: Amudat, Apac, Kaberamaido, Katakwi, Kiboga, Kole, Kyankwanzi, Kyegegwa, Kyenjojo, Moroto, Nakapiripirit, Napak, Nebbi, Zombo and Yumbe.



**(c) FY 2016/2017 roll out:** In the initial roll out districts (those that joined the Programme starting from Financial Year 2016/17), were selected on the basis of being among the oldest 100 people in the sub county. This means that to be selected in these districts, one had to:

- Be among the oldest 100 people in their sub county of residence,
- Be registered with the National Identification & Registration Authority (NIRA), and posses a national ID
- Be Ugandan and resident in the area for at least a year
- Not receiving any other government pension

Under the national roll out, all older persons selected in category (b) and (c) above remain on the Programme, even if they are not yet 80 years. However, the Programme will also do mop up registration in districts covered under (b) and (c) above to capture all people who have turned 80 in these districts, or who are 80 years and above but may have been missed by the earlier selection criteria for one reason or another, provided they are registered with NIRA

and hold valid national IDs. In (a), (b), (c) above, all people newly turning 80 years and above, will also be captured as they attain the required age.



## 3.2 Verification of beneficiaries

Verification is the process where people targeted on the NIRA register are subjected to a test to confirm their eligibility, i.e. to confirm that:

- They are alive
- They are the people whose details are on the NIRA list
- They are 80 years and above
- They are not pensioners
- They are registered with NIRA and have a valid national ID

This exercise takes place at the pay point. For those who are infirm and not able to come to the pay points, the Programme from time to time conducts home visits to verify them from their homes.

### 3.3 Registration & Enrolment of beneficiaries



Once beneficiaries are verified, the Programme then registers them. Here they fill the provided beneficiary form, which captures their details as provided in the ID register. Once they are registered, the payment service providers capture their biometrics (fingerprints, passport size photos for entry into the payment service provider system. Accounts are then opened for them. Once this is done, then the beneficiary is ready to be paid his/her grant.

### 3.4 Payment of beneficiaries



The Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development from time to time contracts different private sector payment service

providers. In the past, the Ministry contracted MTN who used their Mobile Money system to make payments to beneficiaries.

In 2016, the Ministry contracted Post Bank Uganda to pay using their mobile banking system. In March 2020, and as part of the full national rollout requirements, the Ministry through an open and competitive process contracted Centenary Bank as the next payment service provider, who took over when Post Bank contract expired.

Under the ongoing Covid-19 situation, the processes 3.1 to 3.4 all happen on one day, at the pay point. However, there may be circumstances when these processes have to take place at separate times. When this happens, the beneficiaries and the communities are informed accordingly.

### 3.5 If a beneficiary has a problem with registration & payments

Generally, there are two types of challenges a beneficiary on the Senior Citizens Grant could face. The first one could be related to payment. For example, a beneficiary goes to the pay point, only to find no money on their account, or less money than expected on the account, etc. These are payment complaints and must be addressed to the payment service provider (Centenary Bank) for action.

The second type of challenge a beneficiary could have is programme related. For example, the beneficiary's name is deleted from the pay roll, or a person who believes they are eligible and should have been selected, but were excluded during targeting and identification. These kinds of challenges should be addressed to the Programme Management unit for action. Experience however shows that a majority of complaints tend to be payment related rather than Programme related. Most of the issues

in Programme category are related with the national ID registration (See section 7.0 for various ID related challenges and solutions).

### 3.6 When a beneficiary dies

When a beneficiary dies, the family is obliged to report the death to the parish chief. The parish chief will notify the DCDO and the Programme about the death accordingly. Payments to the deceased beneficiary are stopped. If the deceased beneficiary has any balance of funds in his/her account of less than UGX 1 million, the next of kin/alternative recipient will be allowed to withdraw this money, using family/ clan meeting minutes, dully signed by attendees authorising a particular individual to withdraw the deceased benefits on behalf of the family. If, however, the amount exceeds UGX 1 million which is rare, the Bank regulations will apply (then next of kin/family will be required to get powers to attorney of the deceased to access the money).

### 3.7 Do deceased beneficiaries receive transition grants?

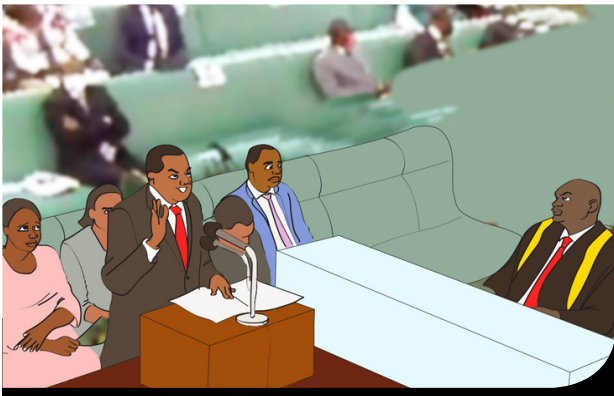
It is important to note that the Programme has stopped payments of the transition allowances (which had been the case during the pilot). When a beneficiary dies, they will not be paid any transition allowance as was the case in the past. The reason for this is that Government of Uganda intends to cover as many older persons as possible with the grant. Once a beneficiary dies they are exited from the list, and the next older person in line by age is entered into the Programme.

# Chapter 4

## Roles of different offices in SAGE Programme Implementation

Under the ESP Programme, different offices play different roles:

### 4.1 Members of Parliament:



- Making appropriate and relevant laws for social protection in the country such as the Older Persons Law, etc.
- Appropriate budget to make sure that government puts money into social protection interventions like the Senior Citizens Grant in the national budget
- To monitor releases to ensure that Government releases the money to pay the grants timely and in full.
- To monitor and supervise to ensure that the Senior Citizens Grant reaches beneficiaries who it is intended for, at the right time in their constituencies
- Provide as much information about SCG as possible to beneficiaries and communities

### 4.2 Resident District Commissioners:



- To monitor and supervise to ensure that the Senior Citizens Grant is delivered well in the district to the rightful older persons
- Ensure security in the district, for the beneficiaries and their communities
- Explain how the Senior Citizens Grant works to the community to ensure that they understand the programme and its implementation
- Provide as much information about SCG as possible to beneficiaries and communities
- Ensure that beneficiaries (especially the very old, deaf, blind and vulnerable) are not cheated at any point of programme implementation
- Ensure that beneficiaries remain law abiding and good members of the communities

- To keep law and order in the district
- To look out for any abuse, cheating, fraud, theft of beneficiary grants or Government funds

### 4.3 LCV Chairpersons & District Councillors

- To monitor and supervise in the district/sub county to make sure that the Senior Citizens Grant is delivered well, to the right people in the district/sub county
- Explain how the Senior Citizens Grant works to the community to ensure that they understand the Programme and its implementation
- Provide as much information about SCG as possible to beneficiaries and communities
- Using appropriate mechanisms, ensure that they help beneficiaries (especially the very old, deaf, blind and vulnerable) in their communities to understand their entitlements and to ensure that they are not cheated at any point of programme implementation
- Ensure that beneficiaries remain law abiding and good members of the communities
- To keep law and order in their locations
- To report any suspected abuse, cheating, fraud, theft of beneficiary grants or Programme funds to programme management
- Ensure the security of older persons so that they are not exposed to any safety/security risk on account of receiving the SCG

### 4.4 Chief Administrative Officer (CAO):



government on the Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development and is enjoined to ensure all commitments by the district in the MoU are met

- As the technical head, is responsible for good implementation of the Programme in the districts per the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development
- Ensures that the district community development department appropriately mobilises and organizes for efficient and smooth payment of the grants in liaison with Centenary Bank and PMU/RTSU
- Provide as much information about SCG as possible to beneficiaries and communities
- Ensure beneficiaries are well mobilised for

payments

- Ensure SCG beneficiaries are linked to other social services in the district
- To take action on anyone planning or suspected of abuse, cheated, fraud, steal of beneficiary grants or Programme funds

#### 4.5 District Security Officials (DPC, DISO)



- Ensure security of person and property in the district and locations, including of older persons
- Apprehend and present before the law any unscrupulous individuals who attempt to cheat older persons
- Provide as much information about SCG as possible to beneficiaries and communities
- Ensure that beneficiaries remain law abiding and good members of the communities
- To apprehend anyone planning or suspected of abuse of older persons, cheating, fraud, theft of beneficiary grants or Programme funds

#### 4.6 District/Sub county/ Parish Older Persons Councils

- To ensure that the rightful older persons receive the Senior Citizens Grant
- Look out for the most vulnerable older persons who could get excluded to ensure that they are supported to enrol and receive the grant
- Support older persons who may have impediments in accessing the grants e.g. issues related to national ID registration, to resolve these issues so that they are enrolled and start accessing the grant
- Ensure that vulnerable older persons in their jurisdictions are not taken advantage of e.g. those who have alternative recipients actually receive the money they are entitled to, they are not extorted from, etc
- Ensure that older persons are treated with care, dignity and respect at all points of the Programme implementation by payment service providers, ESP Programme staff, District local Government staff

#### 4.7 District Community Development Officer

- To ensure that the Programme is implemented in strict accordance with the established guidelines
- Working with the Senior CDO-SAGE and sub county CDOs, ensure that the district community development department appropriately mobilises and organizes for efficient and smooth payment of the grants in liaison with the payment service provider and PMU/RTSU
- Provide as much information about SCG as possible to beneficiaries and communities
- Adequately mobilise beneficiaries to ensure they are paid on time, and the right

amounts of money

- To protect and promote the rights of older persons and to ensure that they are treated and served with care, dignity, respect and on time, all the time
- Ensure that client complaints are channelled to the appropriate authority for resolution in a timely manner, and feedback is provided
- To report any suspected fraud, theft, exploitation or other inappropriate behaviour in confidence, without fear of coercion, discrimination or reprisal.

## 4.8 Senior Community Development Officer-in charge SAGE

### Working with the DCDO:

- Ensure that the Programme is implemented in strict accordance with the established guidelines
- Liaising between the DCDO and sub county CDOs, ensure that the district community development department appropriately mobilises and organizes for efficient and smooth payment of the grants in liaison with Post bank and PMU/RTSU
- Provide as much information about SCG as possible to beneficiaries and communities
- Adequately mobilise beneficiaries to ensure they are paid on time, and the right amounts of money
- To protect and promote the rights of older persons and to ensure that they are treated and served with dignity, respect, care and on time by the payment service provider staff and other stakeholders
- Ensure that client complaints are channelled to the appropriate authority for remedial action in a timely manner, and feedback is provided
- To report any suspected fraud, theft, exploitation or other inappropriate

behaviour in confidence, without fear of coercion, discrimination or reprisal.

## 4.9 LC III Chairpersons/Town Clerks & LC III Councillors

- Ensure that the sub county/division implements the Senior Citizens Grant as per the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the district and the Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development
- Provide as much information about SCG as possible to beneficiaries and communities
- Ensure that the sub county/division community development department appropriately mobilises and organizes for efficient and smooth payment of the grants in liaison with Post bank and PMU/RTSU
- Ensure beneficiaries are well mobilised for payments
- Ensure SCG beneficiaries are linked to other social services in the sub county
- To keep law and order in the district
- To apprehend anyone planning or suspected of abuse, cheating, fraud, theft of beneficiary grants

## 4.10 Sub County Chiefs (Senior Assistant Secretaries):

- Ensure that the sub county implements the Senior Citizens Grant as per the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the district and the Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development
- Ensure that the sub county community development department appropriately mobilises and organizes for efficient and smooth payment of the grants in liaison with Post bank and PMU/RTSU
- Provide as much information about SCG as possible to beneficiaries and communities

- Ensure beneficiaries are well mobilised for payments
- Ensure SCG beneficiaries are linked to other social services in the sub county
- To keep law and order in the district
- To apprehend anyone planning or suspected of abuse, cheating, fraud, theft of beneficiary grants or Programme funds

## 4.11 Subcounty Community Development Officers

### Working with the DCDO and Senior CDO-SAGE:

- Ensure that the Programme is implemented in strict accordance with the established guidelines
- Working with the DCDO and Senior CDOs-SAGE, ensure that the district community development department appropriately mobilises and organizes for efficient and smooth payment of the grants in liaison with Post bank and PMU/RTSU
- Provide as much information about SCG as possible to beneficiaries and communities
- Adequately mobilise beneficiaries to ensure they are paid on time, and the right amounts of money
- To protect and promote the rights of older persons and to ensure that they are treated and served with dignity, respect, care and on time by the payment service provider staff and other stakeholders at the pay points
- Ensure that client complaints are channelled to the appropriate authority for remedial action in a timely manner, and feedback is provided
- To report any suspected fraud, theft, exploitation or other inappropriate behaviour in confidence, without fear of coercion, discrimination or reprisal.
- Encourage beneficiaries to raise their complaints and grievances through the appropriate channels

## 4.12 Parish Chiefs

- Ensure that at the community level, beneficiaries are appropriately mobilised and organized for efficient and smooth payment of the grants in liaison with the CDOs
- Adequately mobilise beneficiaries to ensure they are paid on time, and the right amounts of money
- To protect and promote the rights of older persons and to ensure that they are treated and served with dignity, respect, care and on time by the payment service provider staff and other stakeholders at the pay points
- Undertake pay point management to ensure they are well organised, convenient and conducive for offering the service to older persons
- Look out for the most vulnerable of older persons e.g. those with disability, extremely old, etc. to give them priority during payments; where possible provide seats for waiting, etc to make the service responsive to the most vulnerable
- Ensure that client complaints are channelled to the appropriate authority for remedial action in a timely manner, and feedback is provided
- To report any suspected fraud, theft, exploitation or other inappropriate behaviour in confidence, without fear of coercion, discrimination or reprisal.
- Encourage beneficiaries to raise their complaints and grievances through the appropriate channels
- Ensure pre-payment addresses are well delivered to pass the right and necessary information to older persons
- Report deaths of beneficiaries
- Provide feedback to the beneficiaries and

communities on any issues regarding the SCG

- Ensure smooth processing of Programme documents- death forms,
- Provide feedback to beneficiaries if they raised a complaint or a grievance
- Ensure beneficiaries and the communities have all the information they need know about the SCG

### **4.13 Religious, cultural, opinion, civilsociety, community leaders**

- Ensure that the beneficiaries are properly mobilised for payments, at every payment cycle
- Look out for the most vulnerable of older persons, to ensure they are not omitted from the Programme
- Provide as much information about SCG as

possible to beneficiaries and communities

- Ensure beneficiaries are not cheated and that they receive the correct amounts of money due to them
- Ensure SCG beneficiaries are linked to other social services in the sub county
- Support beneficiaries to put their grant to good use
- Ensuring that older persons are treated with respect, dignity and care
- Promote strong religious and cultural values of respect to older persons
- Help older persons who have problems accessing their grant to have the issues resolved with the Programme management

## The Payment Service Providers

For the period 2016-2020, the Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development together with development partners UKAID/ FCDO and Irish Aid selected Post bank Uganda through a competitive bidding process as the service provider for payments. In March 2020, Centenary Bank was, through another competitive bidding process, selected and over all districts when the Post Bank contract expired in March 2021.

**Here are processes that the Bank takes beneficiaries through:**

### 5.1 Enrolment

After eligible beneficiaries have been verified, that is confirmed to be of the eligible age, are alive and not pensioners, they are then entered to the Bank payment systems. Enrolment means that the banks capture the biometric details of the eligible beneficiaries- including passport/ facial photos, fingerprints that are then captured in their systems. This information is used for opening bank accounts for beneficiaries at the Bank.

This is an important part of the registration process, because even if a beneficiary is confirmed and verified to be eligible, but if they are not enrolled with the Bank, they will not receive payments because they remain unknown by payment service providers without these details.

### 5.2 Payments

Once the beneficiary is confirmed, verified, and enrolled with the payment service provider, it means they can now be paid. Once payments are ready, the Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development or the programme fund manager issues instructions to banks to transfer money to beneficiary accounts. Once the accounts are credited, beneficiaries can then be paid.

In principle, beneficiaries receive Shs. 25,000 every month. However, to make it easier for older persons, so that they don't have to come to the pay point every month, and incur costs associated with coming to the pay point (e.g. transport), the Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development decided to pay beneficiaries every 2 months-and hence they receive Shs. 50,000 and sometimes shs. 75,000 for 3 months.

### 5.3 Customer care by Payment Service Providers

The payment service providers play the last mile in the delivery of the Senior Citizens Grant. Their staff/agents directly interact with the clients/ older persons/beneficiaries. Social protection is not just about addressing poverty and vulnerability – it is also about empowerment, participation, justice and building strong citizenship. It is for this reason that the Programme has a human rights approach

of delivering the service. The Programme aims to observe the rights and dignity of the beneficiaries (older persons).

For that reason, the Programme aims to achieve a high quality service delivery at the core of which is treatment of beneficiaries with respect, dignity and care, irrespective of their status in society, condition, education/knowledge levels, age, gender, religious or political affiliation, or any other consideration.

It is therefore expected that all actors-including staff of the payment service provider, Centenary Bank, ESP Programme staff, local government staff, and any other person who is involved in the line of offering the services to older persons provide utmost customer care that maintains the rights, respect, dignity and care of older persons.

If a beneficiary feels that they have been treated without respect, dignity and care, they have a right to complain and demand that they be respected, treated with dignity and care. They also have a right to complain to the Programme management. Members of the community and all leaders in the community should look out for good customer care for beneficiaries, and report to the Programme management where they feel that older persons have not been treated with respect, care and dignity. The Programme Management will take up any such incidences with the management of the Payment Service Providers.

## 5.4 Mobilising beneficiaries for payments

Mobilisation of beneficiaries for payments is extremely important. Poor mobilisation means that beneficiaries remain unaware of the payments and therefore do not turn up to receive their money, which defeats the purpose

of the Programme. It is therefore extremely important that mobilisation of beneficiaries is well done at every payment cycle.

Although the principle mandate of mobilising beneficiaries for payment lies with the Payment Service provider, the Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development/ESP/PMU, the district local government and the entire community network are involved in mobilisation of beneficiaries for payments.

- At the moment the following channels of communication are used to pass information/mobilise beneficiaries for payments:
- Letters from the ESP/PMU to the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) announcing the payments
- The Local Government information system-from the CAO to the DCDO/Senior CDOs/ Sub county CDOs/sub county chiefs/parish chiefs
- Radio announcements
- SMS messages sent on phones of district leaders, local leaders, religious, cultural and opinion leaders
- Messages announced in places of worship (churches, mosques, temples)
- In community events like funerals, weddings, celebrations

All leaders in the community (political, technocrats, religious, cultural, opinion,) are encouraged to pass correct information about the Programme using all avenues available to them. Leaders are encouraged to use:

- The pulpit in places of worship on Fridays (for Muslims), Saturday (Seventh Day Adventists), Sundays (Catholic, Anglican and born again Christian faiths), other prayer days for Bahai etc.
- Speaking opportunities in public events

(community meetings, funerals, weddings, celebrations) to pass information

- Regular meetings (district council meetings, LC meetings, teachers meetings, catechists meetings, religious leaders meetings, etc.)
- Use church communication tools such as Sunday bulletins, newsletters, radio stations, etc to pass information about payments of the Senior Citizens Grants to mobilise older persons who subscribe to specific faiths, so that they don't miss payment of their grant

## 5.5 Payment methods

At the moment, Centenary Bank uses their Bank agents through specified pay points. When it is payment time, arrangements are made between the ESP/PMU, the district local government and the bank on a payment schedule by district, by Sub County, by pay point. Beneficiaries are then mobilised to go to the pay points to receive their money from the Centenary Bank agents at the SCG pay points. It is important that beneficiaries are well mobilised to go for their payments in every payment round.

## 5.6 If not satisfied with Bank services

It is expected that the services by the payment service providers are to the best of their ability in the circumstances. If beneficiaries are not satisfied with services provided by the service providers, they have a right to complain to the Programme Management Unit using available channels.

## 5.7 Alternative Recipients

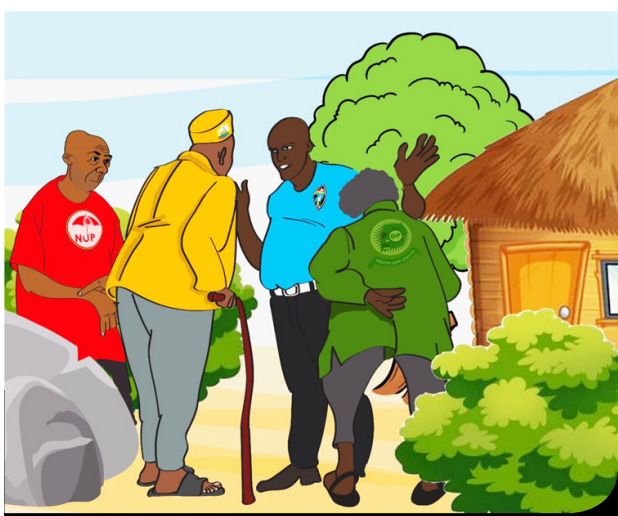
Under the SAGE Programme, each older person (beneficiary) is allowed to nominate one person they trust as their alternative recipient, if they wish. The alternative recipient collects the money on behalf of the primary beneficiary (SCG beneficiary) in the event that the primary beneficiary is infirm 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.

However, there is a process to be followed in enrolling an alternative recipient. A beneficiary cannot handpick anyone to send them to the pay point to receive their money. For someone to be enrolled as an alternative recipient, the beneficiary has to fill an alternative recipient forms. The alternative recipients are enrolled following a similar process like the primary beneficiary. They are required to have a national ID from NIRA and to come to the pay point together with the primary beneficiary and have their biometrics (photo, fingerprints) taken by Centenary Bank.

Because of this process, it is not possible for beneficiaries just to send anyone to the pay point as their "alterative recipient." It is important that beneficiaries and those who help them do understand this process. It is because of this misunderstanding of the process of nominating and enrolling the alternative recipient that the payment service providers refuse to honour many people sent to the payments as "alternative recipients."

## Eligibility Criteria & How Beneficiaries are/were Selected

### 6.1 An Old Age Grant



The Senior Citizens Grant is an old age grant. The Programme does not segregate by political party affiliation, sex (male or female), religion (Christian, Muslim or otherwise), by tribe or any other differences. As long as one meets the set criteria, they qualify to be on the Programme.

### 6.2 National Roll Out

In November 2018, the Government of Uganda decided to roll out the grant to all districts in

the country, starting in financial year 2019/20, starting with people who are 80 years and above, registered with the national ID and not receiving any other Government pension. To benefit under the national roll out, one had to meet those three criteria. All older persons joining the Programme after June 2019 will have to fulfil these criteria. These are beneficiaries in the new districts that had not been on the Programme before and new beneficiaries in the older districts who are 80 years and above but had been left out because of the criteria at the time or otherwise.

### 6.3 Phased roll out districts: 100 per sub county districts (5-2010-2015)

In phased roll out announced by Government in FY 2016/17, the Programme enrolled only the 100 oldest persons per Sub County at any one time; each sub county had only 100 oldest people enrolled on the Programme.

<sup>1</sup>The new districts in the national rollout of the Senior Citizens Grant are: Arua, Budaka, Bududa, Bugweri, Buhweju, Buikwe, Bukedea, Bukomansimbi, Bukwo, Bulambuli, Buliisa, Bunyangabo, Bushenyi, Busia, Butaleja, Butambala, Buvuma, Buyende, Gomba, Hoima, Ibanda, Iganga, Isingiro, Jinja, Kabarole, Kalangala, Kaliro, Kalungu, Kampala, Kamwenge, Kanungu, Kapchorwa, Kazo, Kibuku, Kiruhura, Kikuube, Kiryandongo, Kitagwenda, Kyotera, Lira, Luuka, Luwero, Lwengo, Lyatonde, Madi-Okollo, Manafwa, Maracha, Masaka, Masindi, Mbale, Mbarara, Mitooma, Mityana, Mpigi, Mukono, Namisindwa, Namutumba, Ngora, Ntoroko, Ntungamo, Obongi, Nwoya, Oyam, Rakai, Rwampara, Rubirizi, Rukungiri, Serere, Soroti, Sironko, Tororo, Wakiso.

## 6.4 Pilot district criteria

Selection of beneficiaries in the pilot districts was done between 2011-2015. At the time, the Programme was only in 15 districts. All people 65 years and above (60 in the case of Karamoja) were registered and enrolled on the Programme. The criteria for selection were:

- One had to be of old age; men and women- 60 years in Karamoja and 65 years and above in the rest of the country
- One had to be a Ugandan; and lived in benefiting districts for at least one year.
- One had to be known by the community

Over the years, some people have attained the eligibility age, but not enrolled on the Programme. New enrolment in the pilot districts will follow the national rollout criteria.

## 6.5 When does one stop being eligible

The Senior Citizens Grant is a life grant so once enrolled; a beneficiary receives it until they die. One, however, stops being eligible when they die. The heir of a deceased beneficiary will therefore not be entitled to the Senior Citizens Grant, unless they are eligible on their own accord.

The second way of losing eligibility is if someone wrongly registered on the Programme. For example, if at registration and enrolment the person provided information that made them eligible, and later on it is found that the person (advertently or inadvertently) provided wrong information based on which they were enrolled- and there is new information that renders them ineligible, then such an individual is declared ineligible and removed from the Programme. Such circumstances could include: someone who receives another government pension, are not 80 years. If such people are found to have committed a crime by deliberately providing wrong information about themselves to get registered on the Programme, then they may be prosecuted for criminal offenses.

## 6.6 Pensioners

Older person who already receive another government pension are ineligible for the Senior Citizens Grant because that would tantamount to double payment since both the Senior Citizens Grant and another pension are paid from the same source: Consolidated Fund. For this reason, older persons on a government pension are disqualified from the Senior Citizens Grant.

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<sup>2</sup>Districts reached under this approach include: Kaabong, Abim, Kotido, Koboko, Gulu, Pader, Agago, Lamwo, Amolatar, Pallisa, Amuria, Kween, Namayingo, Mayuge, Kamuli, Kayunga, Nakasongola, Kibaale, Kisoro, Bundibugyo, Kitgum, Nakaseke, Kabale, Bugiri, Amuru, Dokolo, Sembabule, Kasese, Sheema and Mubende

<sup>3</sup>Apac, Amudat, Kole, Kabaramaido, Katakwi, Napak, Moroto, Nakapirpirit, Kiboga, Kyankwanzi, Kyeggwa, Kyenjojo, Nebbi, Yumbe, Zombo

## Common National ID related Challenges and How to Deal with them



### 7.1 Importance of the National ID

To be enrolled for the Senior Citizens Grant, one must be 80 years and above, registered with NIRA and holding a valid national ID, and must not be pensioners. Registration for the national ID is therefore very important for accessing the grant. Here are common national ID related challenges and solutions to them

### 7.2 Older persons who are 80 years and above, registered for the national ID, but have since lost their ID cards

Such older persons are considered registered with NIRA as long as they have been allocated a National Identification number (NIN). This NIN remains in the NIRA register. It means that such persons are captured by the SAGE process. They therefore are eligible and are

advised to report to get registered and enrolled at the pay points and receive their Senior Citizens Grants. However, they need another identification document which certifies that they are the persons by that name and image in the NIRA register. Such older persons can use other documentation such as driving license, passport, voter's card, etc to confirm their identity against the details available on the NIN.

### **7.3 Older persons who registered with NIRA but have not yet picked their national ID cards**

Older persons who successfully registered with NIRA, and have been allocated a NIN are similarly on the NIRA register but have not picked their IDs such older persons are therefore eligible to be paid their Senior Citizens Grants. They too just need another identification document to certify their identity. They are advised to pick their national ID from NIRA

### **7.4 Older persons who registered for their national ID in another district, and now reside in a different district**

If an older person registered in any other district but are currently residing in a different district,

they will be able to go to any pay point in their current district, to receive their payment, provided that they fully registered with NIRA, and were not paid in the district their ID was registered from.

### **7.5 Older persons who are 80 years and above, hold a valid national ID but their names don't appear on the SAGE register**

Processing payments from NIRA, or NIRA didn't timely enter their data into the registry such older persons are able to report to any pay point and receive their payments after validation of the NIRA Card in consultation with NIRA office. One of the reasons for such scenarios is that the persons registered for the national ID and their details were entered into the NIRA register after the SAGE Programme had extracted data to process payments for a particular round of payments. Their details therefore entered the NIRA register, after SAGE had taken the list of eligible people. Such people remain eligible and will be paid. They are advised to go for registration and enrolled to start receiving their grant, so long as their NIRA documents are found to be genuine.



## **7.6 Older persons who are 80 years and above, but are NOT registered with NIRA for the National ID**

It is a requirement passed by Cabinet that for older persons to benefit from the grant, they must be Ugandans and registered with a national ID. District NIRA offices countrywide are open and every unregistered person is encouraged to go and register. However, given challenges in accessing NIRA district offices by frail older persons, the Ministry through the council for older persons is working out modalities to have the weak and frail older persons registered through NIRA outreaches at lower levels.

## **7.7 Older persons who are 80 years and above, but a wrong date of birth is captured on their national ID**

Change of personal information is a legal matter. Such older persons whose age is wrongly reflected on their national ID, following appropriate procedure, need to apply to NIRA to change their date of birth. However, in the interim, the Ministry through the Council of Older persons is exploring a temporary mechanism to enable them get their ages re-verified based on credible evidence for possible consideration as temporary beneficiaries, as the ideal option of getting IDs corrected is pursued.

## **7.8 Infirm beneficiaries who are (bedridden) not able to come to the pay point for verification, enrolment and payment**

Infirm beneficiaries who are not able to come to the pay point but hold a valid national ID will

be registered and enrolled at their homes. The Ministry/ESP Programme from time to time makes arrangements with the payment service provider to go to the villages/homes to register, enrol and pay such older persons. However, infirm beneficiaries who are not registered for the national ID or whose details on the ID are wrong will have to undergo the processes stated in 7.6 and 7.7 above.

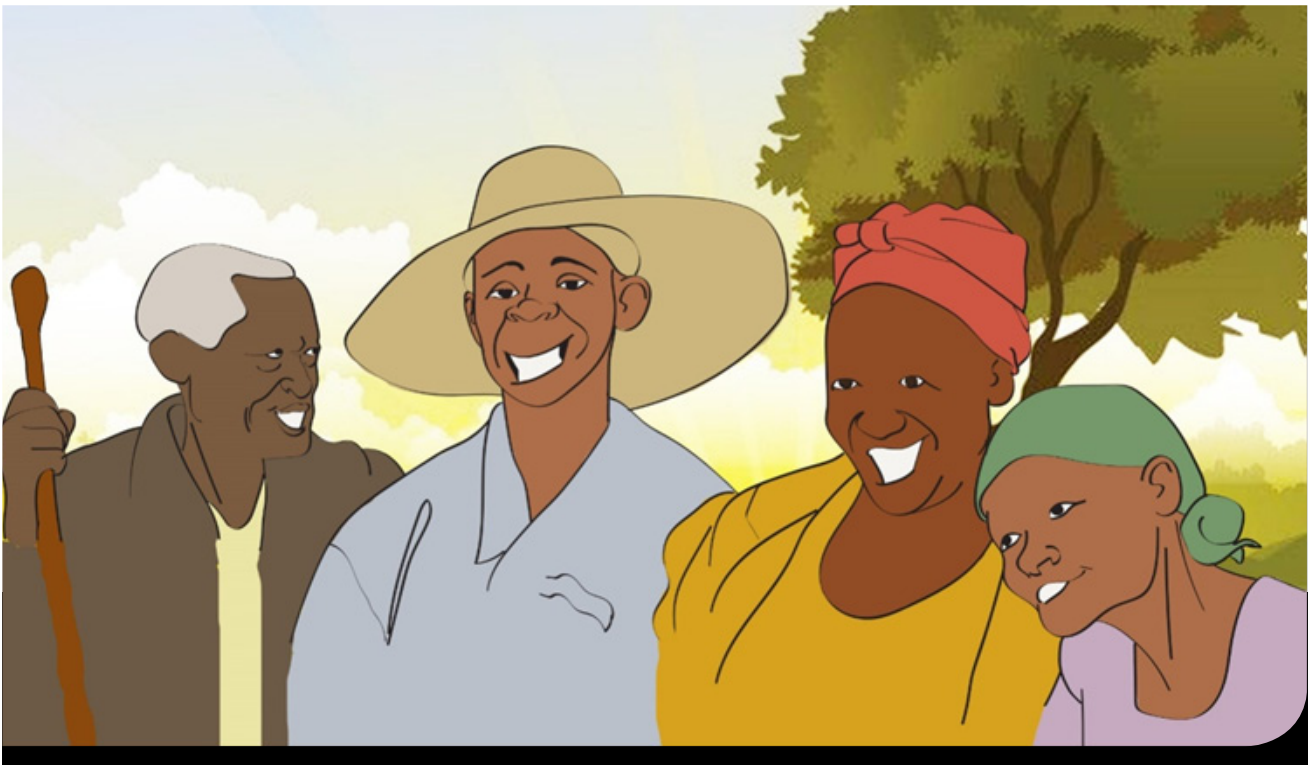
## **7.9 Persons who are younger than 80 but their age was wrongly captured on NIRA register (making them 80 years and above)**

Such persons have been removed when they reported for registration and enrolment, with the help of the local government officials and communities at pay points. If they are any left, they will be removed immediately they are identified. If they are still there, they are required to come forward and declare their status before the Programme finds them.

## **7.10 Pensioners who were captured and remain on the payroll**

Pensioners are not eligible for the Senior Citizens Grant. Pensioners still on the pay roll will be removed through the Ministry of Public Service, District Local Governments and the community.

## The Size of the Grant: How much Money?



### 8.1 The Shs. 25,000

The Government of Uganda pays Shs. 25,000 per month under the Senior Citizens Grant scheme. In the pilot phase, this amount was increased annually to cater for inflation. However, the Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development took a decision in 2016 to stop the annual increment. This is for two reasons. Firstly, there was a big demand for the Programme and many older persons remained unreached. It was therefore prudent that Government worked to ensure that more

older persons are covered with the Shs. 25,000 rather than increasing the amount for the few who were already receiving the grant. Now that national rollout has been achieved, but with a cut off age of 80 years, the next task is to lower the age to 70/60. Thereafter, resources permitting, consideration for increasing the amount can be discussed and made.

However, evidence from the pilot shows that even with the Shs. 25,000, beneficiaries can make significant livelihood changes, investments and create bigger impacts in their lives.

## 8.2 Why Shs. 25,000

This amount was calculated based on what the poorest people in the community spend every month. Secondly, the UGX 25,000 was estimated as what the Government of Uganda realistically could pay at national scale. This sum is determined with sustainability and affordability in mind. However, will more resources in the Government kitty, a consideration will be made to increase this amount at an appropriate time.

## 8.3 Little Money?

Older persons have called on the amount to be increased while discussions on increasing the amount is welcome emerging evidence from the Senior Citizens Grant and from other countries that pay similar amounts show that a seemingly small 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 their lives and livelihoods. They have made savings, invested in livestock and farming, improved their housing, etc. All this shows, it works. However, when Government resources allow, a consideration for increment will be made.

## 8.4 Will government add more money?

While it might be true that with more money, the beneficiaries would be able to make more impact. In future, resources permitting, and after all eligible older persons are reached, then

Government might consider increasing the amount and lowering the eligibility age.

## 8.5 Why doesn't Government pay all the money once annually, or pay whole amount at once?

The Senior Citizens Grant is a social protection instrument aimed at addressing poverty and vulnerability amongst older persons in Uganda. Direct Income Support programmes such as the Senior Citizens Grant are intended to provide regular and reliable transfers of money to vulnerable or excluded citizens.

The idea of the grant is to provide income security by way of direct income support of regular and reliable transfers of money. That is why the money is given in small, regular (every two months), and cannot therefore be paid in a lump sum.

## 8.6 Older persons in neighbouring countries receiving more money?

It may be true that older persons in similar schemes in other countries receive more money than the Shs. 25,000 under the Senior Citizens Grant. It is however important to realise that each country has different capabilities based on the size of their economy and therefore revenues generated by government. The Government of Uganda decides on an amount that is affordable and sustainable by its economy.

## Beneficiary Complaints & Grievances



### 9.1 It is your right to complain

A complaint refers to concerns or expressions of dissatisfaction raised by the beneficiaries about aspects of Programme implementation. A Grievance refers to concerns or expressions of dissatisfaction raised by any member of the community about the Programme.

It is important to eligible and beneficiaries of the Programme know that it is their right to raise grievances and complaints and to seek redress/ resolution of them. The primary beneficiary, alternative recipient or indeed any member of the community on behalf of the beneficiary can make a complaint.

The Complaints and Grievance (C&G) mechanism is a central element of the SAGE Programme and its implementation. The C&G Mechanism is included in the design and delivery of the Programme. The C&G Mechanisms is put in place in the Programme to ensure that both eligible and actual beneficiaries have a clear understanding of the Programme and where they feel dissatisfied, they follow a clear process to raise their complaints and appeals.

It is important that beneficiaries and the entire community understand the Complaints & Grievance mechanism as part of awareness of their duties, rights and obligations.

## 9.2 Types of complaints

There are two types of complaints that a beneficiary can raise. The first type is related to the Programme such as contesting eligibility/ineligibility, if one for example, thinks that they meet all the eligibility criteria but were not selected, or if they were enrolled on the Programme and then reported dead and deleted from the pay roll, yet they are still alive, deactivated for missing validation, etc. These kinds of complaints should be directed to the Programme Management.

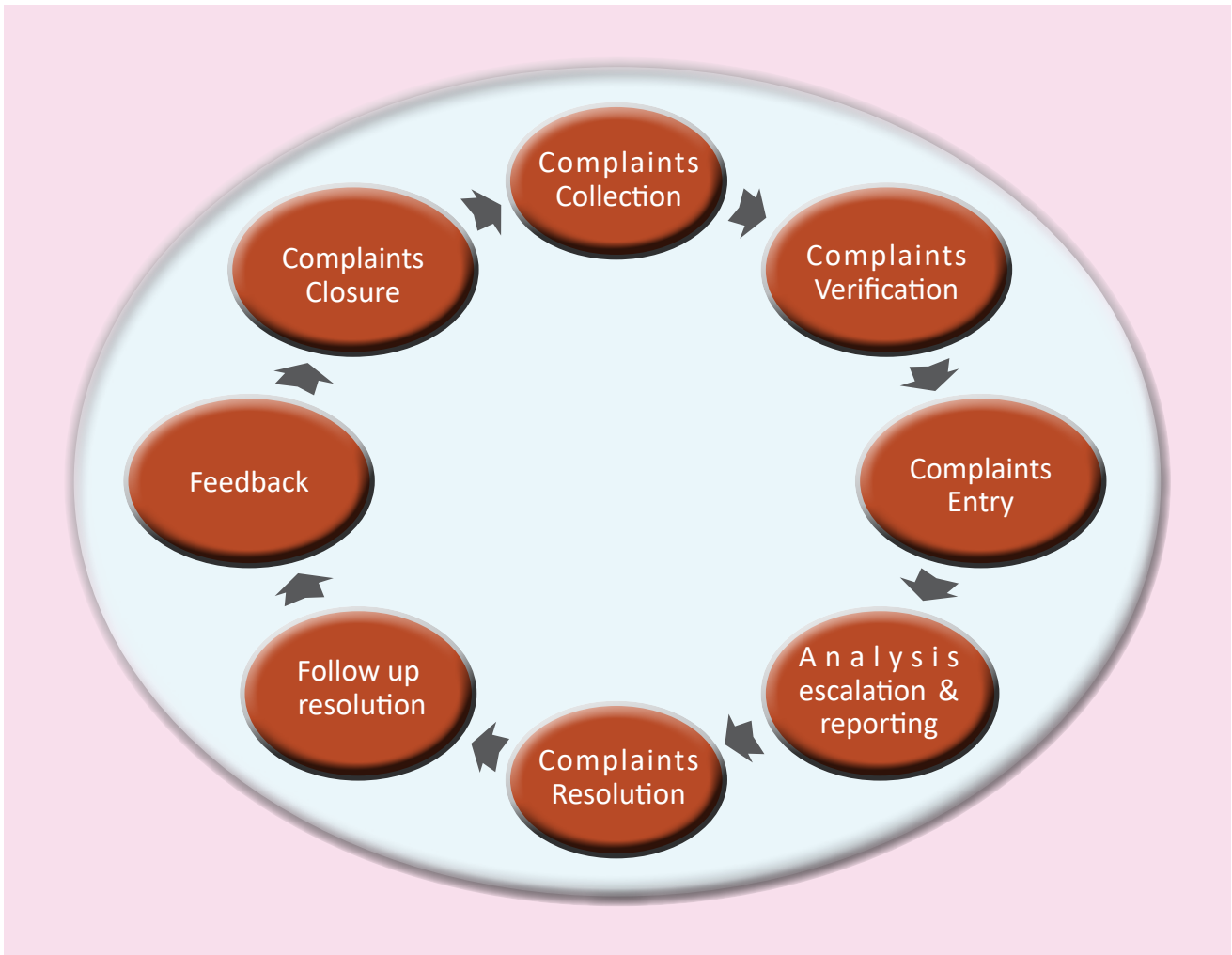
The second type of complaint is related to payments e.g. no money on the account, less money on the account, etc. All these complains should be directed to the payment service providers at the pay point.

## 9.3 Complaints mechanisms


The Grievance and complaints system comprises people, processes and procures that have been put in place to ensure proper management of complaints & Grievances. The Complaints and Grievance (C&G) system collects/receives complaints, analyses, processes complainants and grievances to generate solutions and provides feedback to the complainant.







## 9.4 Complaints Management process



The complaints management process is comprised of eight steps as detailed above and explained below:

Stage	Description
(a) Complaints Collection	<p>Here the issue is raised by the complainant or their representative and is recorded by the pay point administrator. This can be done at the pay point, CDOs office or by the parish chief/CDO who will ask the beneficiary for more details about their complaint and after confirmation that is a valid complaint.</p> 

	<p>The officer then helps the beneficiary fill the details of the complaint into the complaint form and thereafter insert the original yellow complaint form into the complaints box. The complainant is given the green copy of the complaint form and the triplicate (pink copy) stays in the complaint booklet.</p>
<p><b>(b) Complaint verification</b></p>	<p>When the complaints are received at the RTSU offices (from the complaints box or CDO), the RTSU Operations Officer reviews the complaints from their respective districts. The complaint details are crosschecked against the Programme database to determine their validity, completeness and possible actions required for closure or resolution.</p> 
<p><b>(c) Complaints entry</b></p>	<p>After the complaint has been verified, the M&amp;E Officer at the RTSU enters the details of the complaint form into the Programme Management Information System (MIS) for reporting, analysis, investigation, resolution and feedback.</p> 
<p><b>(d) Analysis escalation &amp; reporting</b></p>	<p>On the 5th of every month, the Senior Programme Officer Complaints and Grievances (SPO C&amp;G) reviews each complaint entered in the previous month, analyses the complaints and submits them to relevant officers for resolution</p> 
<p><b>(e) Complaints Resolution</b></p>	<p>The SPO C&amp;G on a weekly basis reminds the complaint resolvers to complete the action required to address the complainant and resolve the complaint within the mandated 30 days resolution timeline.</p> 

**(f) Follow up resolution**

At this point, the required action is taken by authorized staff to address the complaint. This is done by the SAGE Operations Coordinator for the Programme complaints and Manager Customer Services for payment complaints.



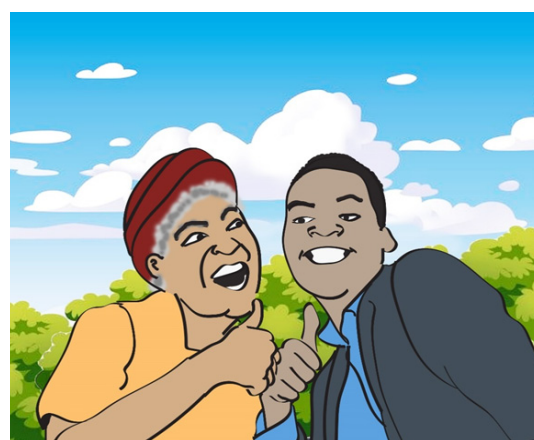
**(g) Feedback**

After a complaint has been resolved, the resolvers communicate this to the SPO C&G. The SPO C&G enters this update against each of the complaints in the MIS database. After this is entered into the MIS, the respective RTSU Operations Officer will receive this update immediately through an email and thereafter inform the beneficiary of the outcome/resolution through the CDO and parish chief. Alternatively, at the pay point during the subsequent payment, the resolution feedback is included in the prepayment address.



**(h) Complaints Closure**

Following the resolution feedback, the paypoint administrator will follow up each complaint and beneficiary to confirm that the complaint has been resolved and the beneficiary can access all their entitlements. Once this confirmation is obtained, the pay point administrator informs the RTSU who will feed this post-payment feedback into the MIS and recommend complaint for closure.



## 9.5 How to make a complaint

**A beneficiary or their representative can make a complaint:**

- At the pay point (on a payday/during payments) to the pay point administrator (who can be parish chief, CDOs,). The administrator will fill a form/log in the complaint to the complaints booklet
- Using complaints boxes at pay points
- Calling the Programme Management Unit office
- Sending an e-mail to the Senior Programme Officer, Complaints & Grievances- esp@socialprotection.go.ug
- At the RTSU offices
- Through politicians, a complainant reports to the office of either a Councillor, older persons' executive, Local Council 111 chairperson, Local Council V chairperson, Resident District Commissioner (RDC) or member of parliament (MP).

## 9.6 Feedback

Once the complaint is received, it is processed by the SPO C&G, who will then cascade the feedback back to the beneficiary using the same mechanisms as the complaints came up. It is expected that within 30 days from the day of logging in a complaints, a beneficiary should have received feedback on actions taken on the issue.

## The ESP Programme Client Charter: Duties, Rights & Responsibilities of Stakeholders



### 10.1 Empowerment, Human Rights Approach, Strong Citizenship

The Senior Citizens Grant under the Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE) is

funded by Ugandan, British and Irish taxpayers and is designed to protect and promote the rights of older people and other vulnerable families to basic social security as provided for in the Ugandan Constitution.

Implementation of SAGE is governed by a range of statutory and administrative instruments including, amongst others: the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda; the Civil Service Code; the Penal Code; The National Council for Older Persons Act 2013, the MoUs between the MGLSD and District Local Governments, institutional policies, and is underlain by the Client Charter of the Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development.

In line with the above-mentioned instruments, the SAGE Programme Charter articulates a range of specific Principles, Rights and Responsibilities for the good implementation of the Programme.

Social protection is not just about addressing poverty and vulnerability – it is also about empowerment, participation, justice and building strong citizenship. The SCG grants are targeted at the vulnerable sections of the population with the objective of supporting them to get out of poverty, live dignified lives and empowering them by enhancing their civic awareness and participation. However, the vulnerable individuals and households rarely have a strong understanding of their rights and, often they lack the ability to voice their concerns effectively. For that reason, SAGE seeks to adopt a rights-based approach; where rights of the beneficiaries and the communities where grants are implemented are at the centre of the services of the Programme.

The Charter provides a framework of Principles, Rights and Responsibilities that oblige all SAGE programme actors and activities. All participants' Rights and Responsibilities are clearly defined and recognised. By observing these Rights and Responsibilities, the delivery of the Senior Citizens Grants will be done in a way that is transparent, accountable, allows for participation and involves the most marginalised and vulnerable. If participants' rights under the Charter are breached, they also have the right to a system of redress.

## 10.2 Core Principles of the SAGE Programme Charter

- Transparency and accountability; will be exercised on both the part of the Programme, and on the part of the beneficiaries, community members, civic leaders and other actors. Transparency is here taken to mean acting in a way that is open (disclosure), ensuring all parties are informed at every point of an activity with accurate information. Accountability means being answerable in actions to all parties.

Service delivery quality and client service orientation: The SAGE Programme aims to achieve a high quality service delivery through the accurate targeting of eligible people and the delivery of payments regularly, reliably and accessibly. The Programme and all its service providers and associates will also treat Clients with respect, dignity and care, irrespective of their condition, status in society, education/knowledge levels, age, gender, religious or political affiliation, or any other consideration.

- Zero tolerance to corruption, fraud, theft and exploitation: The Programme will not tolerate any attempts to defraud or exploit the Programme, its Clients or any other Programme stakeholder. This includes theft of Client benefits, deliberate targeting of ineligible individuals and the extraction of illegitimate commissions or fees from beneficiaries or potential beneficiaries at any point during programme implementation.
- Inclusion: The Programme will strive to ensure that those who are eligible by set criteria will not be excluded by reason of disability and inability, gender, or any other

circumstances that otherwise eligible persons find themselves in

- Do no harm: The Programme will strive to ensure that its clients and partners in implementation are to the extent possible, not exposed to harm by reason of accessing or delivering the grant – by way of exposure to infection, personal harm, etc
- Grievance handling: The Programme commits to transparent, timely and impartial management of grievances from Clients and other stakeholders. Duties, rights & responsibilities of beneficiaries

### 10.3 Rights of beneficiaries

- The right to be informed of all their rights and responsibilities, developments and all key policy decisions regarding the Programme
- The right to understand all aspects of the Programme and to make informed decisions
- The right to be treated fairly and with respect and dignity at all times, irrespective of gender, ethnicity, age or any other status.
- The right to privacy and confidentiality
- The right to raise grievances, concerns or complaints regarding the Programme, its staff, local leaders or Programme contractors, at any point of implementation, in confidence, without fear of coercion, discrimination or reprisal
- The right to appeal in case of unfair exclusion from registration.
- The right to opt out of the Programme at any time, if and when one so wishes
- The right to interact with Programme officials and receive information in one's language of choice irrespective of educational attainment, age or gender

### 10.4 Duties/ Responsibilities of Beneficiaries under the Programme

- To give correct, complete and accurate information for purposes of enrolment and any other use for implementation of the Programme. Intentional provision of incorrect, wrong or incomplete information by beneficiaries or their caretakers on behalf of beneficiaries, with the aim of misleading the Programme is criminal and will be dealt with according to the guidelines of the Programme and the Laws of Uganda.
- Observe Programme guidelines at all times: Beneficiaries who attempt to defraud the Programme through uttering false documents, presenting themselves for payment more than once during a payment round, etc will be named, shamed and suspended from the Programme
- To ensure that as much as possible they understand the Programme, how it works and their entitlements so that they cannot be lied to, cheated or misled
- To safeguard their Programme property such as cards at all times and never to hand them over to anyone else except at the pay point for the purpose of their approved payment
- To use every method in their means to check their money at pay points to ensure that they receive what they are entitled to, or owed, and are therefore not cheated
- To ensure that they report to the Programme managers immediately if they believe they have been cheated, misled or lied to regarding the grants or the Programme
- To complain through the designated channels if they feel their rights have been violated or they have been discriminated against in any way or treated in disregard of the Principles of the Programme

- To ensure that they nominate a reliable, trustworthy and credible person as their alternative recipient in the event that they are not able to collect the grants themselves
- Ensure that the nominated alternative recipient is dully enrolled with Post bank
- To ensure that they put the grant money they receive into lawful and good use
- To report any acts of fraud, theft, exploitation or other such acts

## 10.5 Duties/responsibilities, rights & of Alternative Recipients

- Ensure that once they are nominated by the primary recipient, they meet all the official conditions for enrolment process with Payment Service Providers
- Deliver all money due to the primary beneficiary at all times
- Ensure the primary beneficiary is dully and correctly informed about their accounts-balances, arrears if any, etc.
- Keep the primary beneficiary in their best interest.

## 10.6 Rights of Alternative Recipients

- The right to be treated fairly and with respect and dignity at all times, irrespective of gender, ethnicity, age or any other status.
- The right to raise grievances, concerns or complaints regarding the Programme, its staff, local leaders or Programme contractors, at any point of implementation, in confidence, without fear of coercion, discrimination or reprisal
- The right to a fair hearing
- The right to opt out of being an alternative

recipient, when one so wishes

- The right to interact with Programme officials and receive information in one's language of choice irrespective of educational attainment, age or gender

## 10.7 Rights, Duties/ Responsibilities of community members (and all associations and groups, including CBOs, local NGOs, cultural & religious institutions, etc) towards the Senior Citizens Grant:

In addition to the duties, rights and responsibilities of the Senior Citizens Grants programme beneficiaries set-out above, residents of communities benefitting from the Programme (including non-beneficiaries) have the following additional rights and responsibilities:

- The right to raise grievances, concerns or complaints regarding the Programme, its staff, beneficiaries, local leaders or Programme contractors, in confidence and without fear of discrimination or reprisal
- The right to security and non-disruption of livelihoods and privacy in the community
- The responsibility to ensure that they help beneficiaries most of whom are old, deaf, blind, helpless in their communities to understand the Programme, their entitlements and to ensure that they are not cheated at any point of programme implementation
- The responsibility to keep law and order in their locations
- The responsibility to report any acts of fraud, theft or such acts that may cause loss to beneficiaries or the Programme to the Programme management

## **10.8 Rights & Responsibilities of the District Local Government LC1-LCV5 in their district, sub county, parish or village**

### **10.9 The rights of the local government leaders under the Programme**

- The right to be informed of the principles and their responsibilities in the Programme.
- The right to understand all aspects of the programme and to make informed decisions and appropriately guide the communities
- The right to raise any grievances regarding Programme implementation in their districts, sub counties, parishes with the programme managers for resolution without fear of coercion, discrimination or reprisal.
- The right to be heard on any matter regarding the Programme

### **10.10 Responsibilities of the local government leaders**

- The responsibility to ensure that they understand the Senior Citizens Grant programme and its implementation
- The responsibility to ensure that they help beneficiaries (especially the very old, deaf, blind and vulnerable) in their communities to understand the Programme, their entitlements and to ensure that they are not cheated at any point of programme implementation
- The responsibility to mobilise the beneficiaries for payments
- The responsibility to ensure that beneficiaries remain law abiding and good members of the communities
- The responsibility to keep law and order in the locations

- The responsibility to immediately report to the Programme managers any suspected abuse, cheating, fraud, theft of beneficiary grants or Programme funds

### **10.11 Rights, Duties & responsibility of the Payment Service Provider and their staff**

#### **10.12 Rights of Payment Service Providers' (Centenary Bank) staff**

- The right to be informed timely about Programme implementation in their regions of work
- To be informed of proper payment procedures
- To be treated with respect by beneficiaries, local government officials and Programme staff.
- To receive adequate support in the organisation of pay points from local government staff.
- To be reasonably safe and secure in the process of exercising their duties.

#### **10.13 Responsibility of Payment Service Providers' staff**

- To ensure that they pay beneficiaries on time and only in designated places. This to include avoiding inconveniencing beneficiaries through late coming on paydays.
- To provide at least 48 hours written notification of any suspended or delayed payments to the district. Failure to do so may result in implementation of contractual provisions relating to liquidated damages.
- To treat beneficiaries, community members and other stakeholders with

respect, care and dignity at all times with due consideration given to the needs of elderly, infirm, deaf or blind clients.

- To ensure that all payment transactions are conducted openly and transparently at pay points, in the presence of beneficiaries and authorised witnesses.
- To refrain from fraudulent or otherwise inappropriate behaviour by personnel at pay points
- To immediately report any acts of fraud, theft or such acts that may cause loss to beneficiaries or the Programme
- To maintain and retain good and proper records in support of all Senior Citizens Grants client transactions.

## **10.14 Duties, rights & responsibilities of ESP staff (PMU/RTSU)**

### **10.15 Rights of Programme staff**

- To be adequately informed of their responsibilities and procedures to be adopted in the administration of the Programme

- To be treated with respect and dignity at all times
- To be reasonably safe and secure in the process of exercising their duties of supporting payments

### **10.16 Responsibilities of the ESP Programme staff**

- To protect and promote the rights of Senior Citizens Grant beneficiaries.
- To ensure that the Programme is implemented in strict accordance with the established guidelines. This specifically to include ensuring that: registration mechanisms are free from discrimination or exploitation of any sort, no illegitimate fees or commissions are charged to beneficiaries for accessing SAGE services.
- To ensure payment delivery is closely supervised as per programme guidelines
- To ensure beneficiary complaints are channelled to the appropriate authority in a timely manner
- To immediately report any suspected fraud, theft, exploitation or other inappropriate behaviour in confidence, without fear of coercion, discrimination or reprisal.

# Chapter 11

## How to get your beneficiary information

### 11.1 Your account balance



At every payment, a beneficiary is issued with a transaction chit, showing how much has been paid out to them. To know your account balance, please ask the Centenary Bank staff/agent at the payment van/pay point during the payment free of charge. Alternatively, a beneficiary can go to a Centenary Bank branch near them. Note however that they may be charged for this service if they go to the banking halls.

### 11.2 Programme payment cycles/schedules

The Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development has designated that beneficiaries will be paid their grant every two months. However, when government releases delay or not made in full then the Ministry retains the right to manage payment including paying some districts as others wait for the next release.



When payments delay, the ESP/PMU and the district local government will inform beneficiaries and other stakeholders accordingly through SMS messages, radio announcements, or other forms of communications. Should a beneficiary however need to inquire about a delayed payment, they should get in touch with the office of the District Community Development Officer in their district or the parish chief of their village.

## A brief on the National Social Protection Policy

### 12.1 Introduction to the National Social Protection Policy

In Uganda, different population groups, irrespective of their socio-economic status, face various risks and vulnerabilities associated with age, gender, disability, health, employment, poverty, environmental and natural disasters. These risks and vulnerabilities could render anyone unable to meet their basic needs like food, clothing, housing, health care and education thereby leading undignified lives. Every Ugandan needs guarantee of social protection across their lifecycle.

Through the National Social Protection Policy, the Government of Uganda intends to put in place a National Social Protection system that addresses these risks and vulnerabilities.

### 12.2 Elements of the National Social Protection system

In Uganda, the policy defines the social protection system as comprising of two pillars: Social security and social care and support services. Social security refers to protective and preventive interventions to mitigate factors that lead to income shocks and affect consumption among the economically active population.

Social Care and Support Services, on the other hand, are a range of services that provide care, support, protection and empowerment to vulnerable individuals who are unable to fully care for themselves.

### 12.3 Social security

Under Uganda's Social Protection Policy, the social security pillar is in turn composed of two elements: Direct income support and social insurance. Direct Income Support is non-contributory (that is beneficiaries do not contribute to it directly) regular, predictable cash and in-kind transfers that provide relief from deprivation to the most vulnerable individuals and households in society. Examples of direct income support include older persons' grants/pensions such as the Senior Citizens Grants, disability grant, child grants, etc. Cash for work schemes such as NUSAF III also fall under the direct income support.

Social insurance on the other hand is contributory arrangements (beneficiaries contribute to it) to mitigate livelihood risks and shocks such as retirement, loss of employment, work-related disability and ill health. Examples of social insurance schemes in Uganda include the Public Service Pensions Scheme (PSPS), the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) and Parliamentary Pensions Scheme and other

schemes by different institutions that are aimed at collecting savings from members to help them deal with risks and vulnerabilities in their lifecycle. The National Health Insurance scheme also falls under this pillar.

## 12.4 Social Care and Support services

Social care and support services provide support to people who are not able to take care of themselves. This includes such services as child protection, care for older persons and the chronically sick, community-based rehabilitation for persons with disabilities, asylums for victims of gender based violence.

## 12.5 Progress on some elements of the social protection system

The government is currently in the processing of implementing, starting or reviewing the different elements of the national social protection system. Here are some examples:

- **The Senior Citizens Grant-** this element is under the Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development- the government is currently reaching 150, 129 older persons in 47 districts around the country with the grant. Because of its impacts and popularity both Parliament and Cabinet have made resolutions that the grant should be rolled out to the whole country. Given competing government priorities, the Ministry of Finance, Planning & Economic Development and that of Gender, Labour & Social Development are in consultations on the best modality to achieve national roll out of the Senior Citizens Grant. When that decision is arrived at, the country will be informed.

- **National Health Insurance Scheme—under the Ministry of Health:** The Ministry has drafted the National Health Insurance Services Bill is awaiting debate and passing by Parliament. The Bill seeks to ensure that everyone resident in Uganda has a health insurance; as a social safety net, but also to mobilize resource to improve health services. If passed, Government will put in place a scheme where different categories of Ugandans will contribute to access health insurance services.
- **Liberalisation Social Security Bill-Under Ministry of Finance, Planning & Economic Development.** The objective is mobilise more savings from social security, increase coverage/number of people covered by social security, better governance of saving for sustainability; generate savings for investment and ensure adequate retirement income for working Ugandans. The Bill was presented to Parliament but was recalled for further consultations, improvement.
- **Informal sector social security coverage:** Until now, social security has only covered people working in the formal sector (employed and earning a salary). People in the informal sector e.g. private business had no cover, even if they actually had income to contribute. Now some developments have happened in that area, for example, the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) has introduced a voluntary informal scheme where people in informal employment can contribute for their social security. The Uganda Retirement Benefits Regulatory Authority (URBRA) has also licensed two informal schemes- Mazima Voluntary Individual Retirement Scheme and KACITA Provident Fund.
- **Cash for work-** NUSAF III is essentially cash for work Programme; which transfers cash to people through public works.

- **Public Service Reforms-** one of the three pillars of the pension reform under Ministry of Public Service. The idea is to reform the Public Service Pensions to introduce a contributory system while guaranteeing pensions for Government employees, create a Public Service Pension Fund to be managed professionally and efficiently, and make changes to the parameters that determine the level of pensions in the existing arrangement to achieve long-term sustainability

## 12.6 Importance of social protection to national development

Social protection is fundamentally important for Uganda's development because it provides a platform upon which individuals can build inclusive, resilient, productive and sustainable livelihoods. This way people lead secure, more productive, empowered and dignified lives, to contribute to and benefit from the country's economic growth.

Social protection is therefore important for Uganda's aspirations for socio-economic transformation and development. It supports the attainment of middle-income status. Income security, basic care and protection for the most vulnerable citizens is essential for stimulating local economies, supporting political stability as well as building and protecting the human capital necessary for sustained growth and development. Provision of social protection is both a catalyst for, and an indicator of a country's middle-income status.

There is therefore need to build a national consensus for the development of the national social protection system through the different elements of the system.

# Chapter 13

## Implementing the Senior Citizens Grant in the context of Covid-19

### 13.1 Covid-19 & SCG Implementation

With the outbreak of COVID 19 and subsequent lock down measures put in place by the Government in March 2020, the Programme initially had to suspend beneficiary payments. This was intended to provide time to re-work the Programme delivery mechanisms to ensure that payments and new registration procedures are compliant with the National Health Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) issued by the Ministry of Health and guidelines provided by the Government and the Covid-19 National Task Force.

The SOPs are intended to ensure that payments and enrolments of older persons are undertaken without exposing them to the risk of contracting Covid-19. The revised Programme SOPs were approved by the Covid-19 National Task Force. Following the approval of the SOPs, the Programme in partnership with the District Task Forces on COVID 19 and the district local government leadership resumed operations and service to SCG beneficiaries on 4th June 2020. These SOPs continue to be observed.

### 13.2 Standard Operating procedures -New Principles

In line with the new Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), the Programme developed

the following principles to be adhered to at all Programme activities (enrolment& payments)/ Pay points:

- Limiting physical contact, to the extent possible, (so as to reduce risk of exposure) between actors in all the processes
- De-congestion: Have as few people as possible) at the pay/redemption points, at a time- to observe allowable social distancing at every point (4 metres).
- Provide timely information to all stakeholders (District COVID-19 task force, Payment Service Provider, etc.) for timely decision making and the community for behaviour change
- Shorten/Reduce transaction time at every process
- Use of Personal Protective Equipment (Masks, gloves)
- Practice of object, hand and respiratory hygiene (hand washing/sanitizing surfaces, etc)
- Do no harm principle: No beneficiary, his or her family, community, and other stakeholders should enhance risk/exposure/spread/contaminate anyone.
- Full involvement of the District COVID-19 Task force in the implementation and monitoring of the exercise
- Reduce sharing surfaces

### 13.3 Adherence to SOPs in line with MOH Guidelines at the pay points

The following procedures have been introduced at pay points and have to be adhered to strictly:

- All actors - beneficiaries/alternative recipients, bank staff, district local government and Programme staff are required to wear face masks at all times while at the pay points
- All beneficiaries/alternative recipients wash their hands at the entrance and after receiving money from the bank staff
- Bank staff, Programme and district staff sanitize their hands and shared surfaces regularly after serving every beneficiary
- Beneficiaries to stand/sit 2 meters away from bank staff and 4 meters away from each other.
- At all times, all people at the pay point must observe social distance of 4 meters from each other.
- Temperature checks of all people entering the pay point done by health workers at the pay point entrance.
- No biometric verification will be used to avoid contact with surfaces of biometric scanners.
- After receiving the money, beneficiaries sanitize/wash their hands and go home right away. Staying at the pay points to chat after receiving payments is not allowed.

The second phase of the Expanding Social Protection Programme (ESP II) is implemented by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, funded by the Government of Uganda, UK Department for International Development, Irish Aid with technical assistance from DAI Europe and Oxford Policy Management (OPML)

## **Vision**

“A better standard of living, equity and social cohesion”

## **Mission**

“Promotion of gender equality, social protection and transformation of communities”

