

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

An Assessment of the Performance of Social Protection Program for the Elderly Persons

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Abstract:

The conventional social protection scheme in Kenya presupposes that children will automatically undertake the duty of providing care for their aged parents. But due to a number of factors like lack of gainful employment, migration, urbanization and breakdown of the extended family, the deadly HIV/AIDS pandemic among other reasons the children do not take up the responsibility of caring for their ageing parents as expected by society. Thus, the elderly is left to take care of themselves, receive no money for upkeep from their children, and are left struggling on their own. In addition, these elderly persons have been forced to take up the burden of looking after their mature children, grandchildren and relatives due to the aforementioned reasons and worsening financial situation in the nation. The purpose of this paper is to document the performance of the Social Protection Program for the old persons. Data was collected from the 11 officers employed at the Ministry of Labor, Social Security, and Services and the 384 beneficiaries. Through the old person cash transfer program, the elderly persons who are beneficiaries of the program have been economically as well as socially empowered and gained some form of social protection. If the social protection interventions are well executed it will steer the country towards the realization of Agenda 2030. Additionally, the Government should strive to obtain more finances for the Social Protection Program for the aged to make it all inclusive in order to entitle all old persons in Kenya to be part of the program. Training and sensitization of the aged is paramount so that they are enlightened about the program and can be part and parcel of it.

Keyword: Social protection program, cash transfer, poverty, vulnerability

1. Introduction

Devereux & Sabates-Wheeler (2004) defines social protection as all schemes whether communal or personal so long as they provide revenue to the poor, provide protection to the vulnerable against any danger to their livelihoods, augment the societal standing and civil liberties of the defenseless with the general goal of decreasing the financial and societal susceptibility of the underprivileged, helpless and defenseless community members.

The most commonly used Social Protection conceptual structure has been provided by Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler (2004). According to this theoretical framework, social protection measures have four key functions: protective, preventive, promotive and transformative. The social protection measures should be protective by providing reprieve against any social or economic lack. In being preventive they should avert deprivation or lack; promotive to augment income earning and man power development. Lastly social protective measures should be transformative by ensuring social parity and inclusion, through addressing power inequity that bring about vulnerability due to economic inequalities.

The three functions of protection, prevention and promotion were first originally advanced by International Labor Organization (ILO). The fourth function i.e. the transformative element was added so as to position social protection not only to alleviate poverty but also to change lives through implementation of appropriate policies that counter power inequity which leads to vulnerabilities.

Therefore, successful execution of social protection measures will lead to the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Goal 1 No poverty, Goal 2 Zero hunger, Goal 3 Good health and well being for people, and goal 10 Reduced inequalities.

1.1. Social Protection Globally

According to a study undertaken by ILO (2001), it was established that approximately 80% of the population worldwide don't have any type of social protection other than the hope provided by relations or community groups that they will provide some form of social protection or safety net to the aged. The study further goes on to state that this percentage is higher in sub Saharan African nations where more than 90% of the populace don't have access to any social security scheme. Social protection programs attempt to resolve numerous enormity of poverty and lack (gainful employment or source of income, education, health care, food security, income security). Thus, these social protection programs can be very instrumental in the fight against impoverishment and inequity. Social protection has a very important function in creating inclusive and sustainable development pathways.

Where there is no social protection, it is normally the vulnerable that are most affected and face the risk of falling further below the poverty line or even ensnared in poverty for generation after generation. Social protection is a very important tool that if seriously and thoughtfully implemented will lead to the actualization of at least 4 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The significance of social protection for equal progress has not been accorded the importance it deserves and has only been acknowledged recently. Better off nations and population groups with gainful employment and social security is the major reason why such nations achieved greater development between 1950 and 2005 as opposed to the nations and populations who have feeble admittance to fair and uniform development and social protection (Africa Platform for Social Protection, 2014).

International matters on the elderly have continued to progress from 1982 when the International Plan of Action on Ageing was taken up at the First World Assembly on Ageing in Vienna. The United Nations Principles for the aged were devised in 1991 and some of the areas included in the Principles are sovereignty, participation, concern, self realization, and dignity. The Second World Assembly on Ageing was held in Madrid, Spain in April (8th to 12th), 2002. This Assembly agreed to the Madrid International Plan on Ageing (MIPAA). MIPAA emphasizes on the necessity to merge the dynamic course of universal matters on the elderly in the general course of national growth. Social Protection actions can help the vulnerable citizens as well as the aged to counteract the aftermath of poverty and play a part in the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for example eradication of poverty. Social protection can be in diverse forms for instance cash payouts (retirement fund, child support grants, children feeding schemes) or by making available subsidized farming inputs (manure, seeds, etc) or public works. The aged persons really value cash transfer or payouts in view of the fact that they don't have an alternative source of livelihood. This is for the reason that their advanced age has reduced their ability to work and earn an income as opposed to the younger adults who are energetic and can work to earn a living. MIPAA is executed worldwide, at the region level, sub region and on a national scale (United Nations, 2002).

1.2. Social Protection in Africa

According to a social protection study undertaken by Waterhouse and Lauriciano (2009) in Mozambique, social protection measures have gained momentum in Africa because of the exhibited proof that regular social protection interventions have registered an increased impact with respect to minimizing social exclusion and helplessness, poverty and social risks as opposed to the 'impromptu emergency responses'. For example, the extensive cash payout schedule in Southern Africa have led to a decline in the poverty level; the Aged retirement fund in Lesotho which benefits persons aged from 70 years and above has caused a causal sequence in the society by establishment of employment opportunities plus reduced dependency rates (Help Age, 2006 and Waterhouse and Lauriciano, 2009). In Zambia increased asset amassing and venturing in productive activities has been witnessed amongst the recipients of Social Cash Transfer Schemes (MCDSS/PWAS/GTZ, 2005). In Zambia, Malawi and Namibia it was reported that there has been increased admittance to education by orphaned and vulnerable children (MCDSS/PWAS/GTZ, 2005 and Devreux, 2001). According to a study by Davies and Davey (2008), they put forth that the cash payout has had an outcome of the witnessed dual effect in the local economy with a regional multiplier effect of 2.02 to 2.45 whilst in Zambia, there is a sign of financial development as put forth by a study that more than half of the money paid out was used up within the vicinity, stimulating fiscal expansion (Lund, 2002).

The National Development Plan (NDP) of Uganda 2010 – 2015 recognizes social protection as one of the means through which the country can achieve social and economic development. The plan states the objectives for mounting social protection thereby reducing susceptibility and increasing efficiency of Uganda's human capital. Mounting and executing direct income support for the aged, disabled and marginalized sections of the community, devising an all-inclusive social protection strategy and intensification of systems for managing social protection agenda are some of the activities that have been identified in this plan. Thus, direct income support is incorporated in Uganda's development plan. In addition, the Ugandan administration has demonstrated her dedication to increasing social protection by supporting the Livingstone Call to Action (2006) which is dedicated to social protection furthermore appeals to African States to formulate plans that will lead to the realization of Direct Income Support program. The African Union Social Policy Framework (2008) which Uganda is a party to appeals to affiliate States to distinguish social protection as a State duty, as provided for in nationwide legislation. The National Policy for Older Persons, 2009 for Uganda consists of "Priority interventions" to "establish an older person's grants scheme". The National Orphans and Vulnerable Children Strategic Plan, 2010 makes out the necessity for "grants to vulnerable households."

1.3. Social Protection in Kenya

The Cash Transfer scheme in Kenya is among the approached exploited to put into practice the state's constitutional pledge against hunger and starvation to the nation's populace. Cash Transfer (CT) system is defined as disbursement of a phased money pay-out to the recipients of a social protection scheme financed by a regime or institutions not affiliated to any regime rather than giving aid to the recipients via non-pecuniary assistance such as foodstuff hand-outs, health assistance, scholarships. It's estimated that close to 46% of the inhabitants of Kenya exist in abject poverty. Kenya is coming to grips with grave problems such as social, governmental and financial challenges related to paucity, joblessness, and disparity as well as rising cases of food shortage. Kibaki's administration rigorously endeavored to stimulate the economy, employed actions geared at reducing poverty levels and the administration accomplished to diminish the fraction of the populace existing beneath the poverty level from 56.9% to 46% within a decade. However, the social, financial and governmental constraints placed on the nation with respect to meeting the fundamental wants of the nation's populace continue to put major social, financial and governmental stress. Consequently, Kenyan administration has been pressed to analyze her guiding principles as well as policy on social protection in support of the disadvantaged segment of the populace in particular on children who don't have parents, the aged and disabled (Ikiara, 2009).

Cash transfer program for the aged persons was initiated in Kenya by the government in 2007 through the Rapid Results Initiative (RRI) and the program was implemented by Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development (MOGCSD). The program was initially piloted in 3 districts that is; Nyando, Busia and Thika and the total figure of the recipients in the three districts was three hundred. Each district had a quota of 100 aged persons. The program's capacity was increased in 2009 to 33,000 in 44 districts (MOGCSD, 2012).

Kisumu East, Kisumu West, Kisumu Central, Seme, Nyando, Nyakach and Muhoroni are the seven sub counties in Kisumu where OPTCP is being put into operation.

2. Problem Statement

According to the Kenyan perspective, the "traditional social security system" presupposes family will undertake the responsibility of providing care for their aged parents. The fact of the matter is owing to various factors like joblessness, resettlement, crumbling of the extensive family, HIV/AIDS pandemic the children are unable to assume these responsibilities as expected by society. In addition, these elderly people have taken up the added burden of caring for their grownup off springs, grandchildren plus other relations because of the hard-financial situation in the nation. In addition, due to the onset of HIV/AIDS pandemic the traditional social protection mechanisms have been pushed beyond their limit, thus diminishing the figures of productive adult and putting fresh and heavy onus on the old persons (Kaleeba, 2002).

Accordingly, the aged are forced to take up the burden of caring for their sick adult children who ultimately pass on; are burdened with burial tasks; are forced to endure emotional distress; troubled with the orphans; and every so often, deal with HIV infected orphans who ultimately pass on. Concomitantly, all these burdens and tribulations are being experienced when the health and economic status of the aged is worsening due to degraded state of affairs and financial hardships. Majority of the aged reside up country where farming is the main source of livelihood. Rural households' ability to be secure in food production has been affected by catastrophes like drought and increased cost of farming inputs. Thus, farming can no longer be relied on as a source of livelihood. In addition, the prevailing economic hardships have made food shortage and poverty distinguishing features of the upcountry populace. Defenseless aged person has been burdened with raising a generation of Kenyan children (Oyugi, 2005).

The centre of attention of the vast majority of the studies undertaken on social protection has been on socio-economic impacts. Not any of the studies executed investigated the performance of the social protection program. However, the performance of social protection program is still not well-known. Therefore, this necessitated this study to be undertaken so as to look into the performance of the social protection program for the old persons in Kisumu County.

3. Materials and Methods

The research was conducted in Kisumu County purposely focusing on the recipients of the social protection program in the 7 subcounties namely; Kisumu East, Kisumu West, Kisumu Central, Seme, Nyando, Nyakach and Muhoroni and staff at Ministry of Labor, Social Security & Services who are tasked with executing the Social Protection Program for the old persons.

The study was carried out using descriptive survey research design since it allowed the researcher to collect data using the questionnaires. The staff of Ministry of Labor, Social Security & Services in charge of executing the Social Protection Program and the recipients of the aforementioned program was of interest to the researcher hence the researcher focused on these two groups. These included 4248 recipients and 7 Sub-county Gender and Social Development officers (SGSDOs) and their 4 clerical officers in Kisumu County.

Sub-County	Number of Beneficiaries	DSDOs	Clerical Officers
Kisumu central	449	1	0
Kisumu East	529	1	-
Kisumu West	534	1	1
Muhoroni	514	1	-
Nyakach	516	1	0
Nyando	848	1	2
Seme	858	1	1
Total	4248	7	4

Table 1: Sample Size Selection

Source: Ministry Of Labor, Social Security & Services, 2015

During this study, a census of the 11 staff (7 DGSDOs and 4 Clerical Officers) was carried out and 4248 recipients were selected using stratified random sampling method. The researcher made use of the Fisher et al. (2003) formula so as to attain a representative sample of the theoretical population. The theoretical population was approximated at 4248 households in the seven sub counties. The theoretical population was estimated at 4248 household heads in the 7 Sub-Counties. Therefore, the sample size of this study was 384 beneficiaries.

Sub-County	Number of Beneficiaries	Sample Size
Kisumu central	449	41
Kisumu East	529	48
Kisumu West	534	48
Muhoroni	514	46
Nyakach	516	47
Nyando	848	77
Seme	858	78
Total	4248	384

Table 2: Beneficiaries' Sample Size

Stratified random sampling technique was utilized to choose 384 recipients from the 7 sub-counties. The researcher made use of questionnaires which had open and close ended questions to gather data. First hand information was garnered from the staff at the Ministry of Labor, Social Security & Services and the recipients of the social protection program. Descriptive plus inferential statistics were employed to critically investigate the variables of the research. The researcher undertook multiple regression analysis in order to establish the link between the dependent variable and the four independent variables (Kothari, 2004). The R-Squared refers to the proportion of the response variable variation that is explained by a linear model.

The R-squared in this study was 0.609, meaning that the four independent variables account for 60.9% of the variance in the dependent variable. This evidently illustrates that there are other factors other than those taken into consideration which give an explanation of the 39.1% of the deviation in the dependent variable that is performance of social protection program.

4. Results and Discussion

The study established that a bigger percentage of the respondents affirmed that Social Protection Program was indeed formulated and executed in a supportive legitimate & systematic structure; that nongovernmental organizations were part of devising and executing SPP, the interviewees further pointed out there are blueprints in place that steer the execution of SPP. These results evidently demonstrate that the policy framework have evolved and has created an enabling and supportive environment in Kenya. Freedom of expression, political goodwill, inclusivity, openness and improved interaction between various actors are some of the characteristics of the policy environment in Kenya.

National Social Protection Policy, 2011 which is being enacted by the Government provides the structure for the execution of Social protection interventions for the old persons in Kenya. The program endeavors to improve the living of the aged along with enhancing their sense of belonging and social inclusion by lessening deficiency as well as encouraging continuity plus human development (MPND 2012). The National Social Protection Policy strives to guarantee a planned harmonization of innovative in addition to currently ongoing social protection schemes inside a general organizational as well as subsidy structure (Davies and Davey, 2008).

The results generated from the study exemplify how the cash transfers have been immensely beneficial to the recipients. The interviewees said that the bi monthly cash payments have enabled them purchase various kinds of properties like furniture, utensils, engage in improved agricultural activities, gain access to essential medical care, meet their

fundamental needs and most importantly it provided the households of the recipient with direct income hence improving their lives and social wellbeing. These cash transfers have led to the empowerment of the aged financially and improved their societal standing thereby lessening the degree of poverty and susceptibility.

The effect of cash transfers or payment is first felt by the recipients of the cash, and then trickles down to the family circle, extensive society and in due course spreads out to the nation, implying that a number of persons will be listed as recipients of the cash transfers in addition to the elderly persons who are directly given the cash. There is a lot of evidence on the circulative effect of social pensions afar from the immediate old beneficiaries (Ardington and Lund, 1995; Lund, 1993, Moller and Sotshongaye, 1996; Moller and Fereira, 2003).

The recipients of the social protection program are informed about the local committee and are actively involved in its selection; the local committee frequently visits to keep an eye on the funds. The aged persons have been taught and sensitized about the program and are cognizant of their civil rights and prerogative to the program. The interviewees indicate in their response that they don't experience any challenges in accessing the money paid to them since they have been sensitized and made aware about how to collect the money.

The above findings corroborate the research conducted by Ikiara. In his study "to assess the level of participation of elderly persons on implementation of Social protection" (Ikiara, 2009) put forth that management of the social protection program is anchored on involvement of partners. There are three indicators of participation: knowledge of a local committee, education on cash transfer fund and awareness of representatives of social protection program.

Social protection program has had an affirmative result on cutting down on poverty and susceptibility of the aged. This is evident through the manner in which the elderly has put to use the money transferred to them bimonthly to acquire domestic commodities like utensils, furniture, purchasing improved and better quality domestic animals breeds and practicing enhanced farming techniques. All in all, there has been a notable upgrading of living standards of the elderly. It was strongly agreed to by the interviewees that SPP has bettered the way of life of the aged together with their dependents, that there has been a remarkable decline in the number of the aged living in extreme paucity. The interviewees overwhelmingly all agreed that SPP provides the means to lessen poverty and that SPP is a crucial venture that will foster growth and development.

These results mirror the deduction by Devereux & Sabates (2004) that Social protection program is an influential instrument for fighting poverty plus inequality as it has the capacity to deal with various scales of poverty and exclusion. The interviewees said that the SPP has not only uplifted their economic standing but also greatly improved on their social inclusion.

5. Conclusion

Social protection policies, cash transfer, degree of participation and poverty influence the performance of Social Protection Program.

The study gathered that social protection policies have a direct consequence on the performance of SPP. The National Social Protection Policy, 2011 provides the framework for executing SPP. Other policies focusing on the well being of the aged are in existence but are not operational for example National Policy on Ageing. Such policies should be operationalized so as to create an enabling environment for the execution of SPP thereby boosting its performance.

The Government ought to ensure that the National Policy for Older Persons is active so as to guarantee effective management of the entire programmes for the aged; suitable capacity building programs should be designed for all organizations dealing with elderly persons issues; programs that advocate and create awareness to the public on the needs and constitutional rights of the aged should be implemented and issues to do with getting old should be incorporated in the nationwide progression planning and budgetary processes. In addition, the Government ought to employ more human resources in Kisumu County to ensure successful enactment of SPP interventions so as to ultimately boost the performance of the Program. In Kisumu East, Kisumu Central, Nyakach and Muhoroni sub-counties there are understaffing challenges thus the DGSDOs is overwhelmed. From time to time one DGSDO is charged with overseeing two sub counties devoid of sufficient employees.

The cash transfer or payouts have a considerable control on the performance of SPP. These cash transfer have emancipated the recipients from poverty and social exclusion. Nevertheless, there are frequent late cash disbursements to the recipients yet this is the money they are depending on for their survival. The cash payment ought to be timely and frequently so as to help the aged as this is their sole source of livelihood. The study concluded that increment of the bimonthly cash payout is vital due to the high standards of living and to make SPP universal so that all aged persons past the age of gainful employment are eligible to join it. Currently in Kenya, the social protection program is being piloted in selected counties and not all old persons are entitled to be part of it.

5.1. Recommendations of the Study

Social protection is a valuable venture. Additional funds should be allocated to the Old Persons Cash Transfer Program to enable it be universal and comprise of all aged persons as well as those with a pension program. Presently, the program has been piloted in selected counties in Kenya. If social protection interventions are successfully implemented it will lead to the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1, 2, 3, & 10 i.e. no poverty, Zero hunger, Good health and well being for people plus Reduced inequalities correspondingly.

The commendation is grounded on the information garnered from the research that SPP has had a commendable social and financial effect on the livelihood of the aged. A notable transformation has been witnessed in the lives of the aged persons after joining SPP. The research established that the aged persons utilized the monies disbursed to them to set up businesses,

The study found out that the aged persons use the money they receive to set up small scale businesses, obtain fundamental medical care, to name but a few. By and large, the welfare of the aged has been boosted.

The study advocates for the raising of the amounts paid out to the recipients and to enlarge the capacity of the program to enable all old persons in Kenya join the program. The Government should raise the Kshs 2000 that is paid out to the aged persons bi monthly since this is a drop in the ocean given the high cost of living. This cash should also be paid out in time.

Furthermore, it's important that policies be put in place which strives to lessen paucity and susceptibility as well as asset accumulation, better edification and countryside progression strategies. The old persons in Kenya are among the highly vulnerable, poor and defenseless people owing to joblessness that keeps them out of pension schemes. Even though the Government has endeavored to lessen vulnerability and poverty margins of the aged, there is still a lot to be done and it should put in more effort.

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