

Global Review of Advocacy on Social Protection: Reviewing our Theory of Change

March 2014



Executive Summary

HelpAge International (HelpAge) has been seriously engaged on social protection issues for over a decade. Its effort to extend the number of older people accessing a basic pension is widely regarded as a significant success. This internal review aims to inform HelpAge's future direction on social pensions by drawing together lessons from experience at the national level and by reflecting on the current organisational strategy.

In sum, the review finds that the HelpAge's organisational theory of change on social protection is consistent with evidence at the national level. Case studies of HelpAge International's work in five countries illustrate varied but clear channels of influence on the introduction and expansion of social pensions. The shift of focus to the national level that was introduced by the global strategy in 2008 has contributed to major successes.

Going forward, the review recommends a clear set of objectives which balance an ambitious rights-based goal at the global level with sufficient flexibility to accommodate specific policy options at national level. Technical support to government needs to be located within the broader advocacy framework, while attention to issues of accountability and the quality of social protection, such as that provided by older citizens monitoring groups, should be deepened and linked more clearly with wider advocacy processes.

More emphasis could be made on documenting the theories of change that underpin national-level work and on recording their evolution for learning. Given the considerable advocacy experience within HelpAge, opportunities for sharing learning between countries and partners could be better exploited. Finally, the indicators used to track progress on social protection could be reviewed in order to provide a clearer reflection of the level of contribution by HelpAge's work and its associated value for money.

HelpAge's theory of change at organisational and national levels

Data from HelpAge's Social Pensions Database shows that social pensions are now a widespread and increasingly popular approach, even in low income countries. Globally, over half of current social pensions have been introduced since 1990, and over 30 since the year 2000. The primary rationale for HelpAge's engagement in social pensions has been linked to their impact on poverty reduction for older people and their households. However, a number of studies now point to evidence which associates social pensions with wider development outcomes – including children's school attendance and height-for-age, household food consumption, fertility-rates, investment in production, and the growth of rural economies. The recognition of social pensions as a valuable policy tool to improve well-being, both for older people and across generations, appears to be growing.

HelpAge's 2008 global strategy on social pensions re-affirmed the central role of social pensions and made the case for a continued focus on the idea of a universal pension. It also acknowledged the importance of the development of social protection policies based on specific country contexts, and the need for increased work at the national level. The strategy argued for HelpAge to be 'recognised as a leading source of expertise and advice' on social pensions, through effective advocacy and technical support at the national level, coupled with influence of the international community on the wider role of social pensions. The strategy was underpinned by cross-cutting themes of evidence-gathering and dissemination, capacity-building on social protection, and efforts to build internal co-ordination and expertise.

Social protection work by HelpAge at the national level has been driven by a combination of factors, including the 2008 global strategy, increased donor interest, and an indication that vulnerable older people are often less able to benefit from community-based projects.

Policy asks at the national level have been largely consistent with the global objective of ensuring that older people exercise their right to income security. Specific objectives have varied according to different country contexts. Ways of working include advocacy by national partners, advice and support to government and capacity-building of stakeholders – all consistent with the 2008 global strategy. The gathering and dissemination of evidence has played an important role.

Case studies of HelpAge's social protection work in five countries – Ethiopia, Kyrgyzstan, Peru, Philippines and Tanzania, show engagement with both advocacy and technical stakeholders. Partner-led processes have tended to have a heavier focus on advocacy, whereas those led by HelpAge have been more focused on the provision of technical support.

In Peru and the Philippines, work with advocacy stakeholders has been at the core of the theory of change, with technical work providing a supporting function. In contrast, work in Ethiopia and Kyrgyzstan has been more focused at the technical level, to support pension delivery. In Tanzania, there was a shift from engagement at the technical level to work with advocacy stakeholders, particularly the Tanzanian parliament.

Building evidence through research and mapping have been important – particularly during the early stages of work in Kyrgyzstan, Tanzania and the Philippines. These processes, together with HelpAge's course in social transfers in Chang Mai and the Economic Policy Research Institute (EPRI) course in Mombasa have helped to build the capacity of a range of stakeholders on social protection.

HelpAge's contribution to change

The introduction or extension of a social pension scheme can rarely be attributed to a single intervention. In each of the five case studies, a range of organisations were involved in supporting change, and specific decisions were often political in nature. However, each of the case studies documented by the review shows clear channels of influence and a 'causal story' that outlines HelpAge's contribution.

HelpAge's corporate reporting mechanism provides an annual account of the scope and value of pension provision in the countries in which it works. During the period 2007/8 to 2012/13, HelpAge national offices recorded an additional annual value of pension provision of over \$4,000 million to over 25 million people. For those countries where HelpAge is reported to have had a major influence, the value is almost US\$ 1,246 million, reaching almost 9 million people.

The latter set of figures can be compared with data from HelpAge's internal accounts to provide an estimate of the value for money in terms of the return on investment in HelpAge programming. According to this method, HelpAge's work to influence and support social pension provision delivered US\$46 of impact annually for every US\$1 invested between 2007/8 and 2012/13. This does not include future benefits.

The case studies suggest that advocacy and political influencing work has been critical in those countries which have shown major changes in pension policy. In contrast, programmes with a more technical focus appear to align with the achievement of more modest objectives. The strategic choice is likely to reflect the degree of policy space and scope for influencing in different contexts.

Building a debate amongst a broad range of actors appears to be preferable to highly targeted advocacy campaigns. The case studies demonstrate that the links established with media, opinion leaders, key NGO partners and networks, as well as political and technical government players have been key to initiating debates on social protection in old age that can eventually lead to policy change.

Technical support to government has also played an important role, with benefits that often extend beyond immediate technical objectives. The feasibility study in Tanzania for example, also served to build capacity for national staff and partners. Technical work should be seen as part of the wider strategy of policy change rather than as a separate area of activity.

Case studies show that national-level partners and affiliates have tended to be the face of advocacy activities while HelpAge has led on technical inputs, retaining the role of an expert sharing global experience. Meanwhile, work by older citizens monitoring (OCM) groups has provided engagement with wider issues such as the timeliness of payments. Indeed, strong advocacy on social protection at the national level often been built on the foundation of this type of accountability work. The fact that multiple strands of work (networking, campaigning, accountability and OCM work, technical support to government, sharing and capacity-building) all contribute to change suggests requires a strong vision of the overall programme and a need to balance a varied set of funding streams.

The case studies of HelpAge's social protection work suggest that the strategic shift to national-level work in 2008 was successful. In some contexts the advocacy focus has not been solely on social pensions, but on wider pension systems and forms of social assistance. Similarly, advocacy and technical work in these various contexts suggests that a simple division between 'universal' and 'means-tested' options is not always satisfactory. There is a need to develop a language which more accurately describes the options available to meet the global aim of income security in old age, and to identify more clearly at the national level how shorter-term policy asks fit within this longer-term vision.

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Introduction

HelpAge International has been seriously engaged with the issue of social protection, with a specific focus on the extension of social pensions, for over a decade. Since the development of a Social Pensions Strategy in 2008 this has involved an intensive focus on action at the national level; focusing on the extension of social pensions and improvement where they already exist.

Social protection is perceived, both internally and externally, to be an area where HelpAge has had significant success in terms of increased numbers of people accessing a basic pension in old age. Yet up to now there has been limited systematic analysis of how this work has been carried out, and what the key features of success have been. In response to this, in late 2012, it was decided to undertake a Global Review of Advocacy on Social Protection (GRASP).

The primary purpose of the review is to contribute to internal strategic planning on social protection by reviewing the nature of our approach, which strategies seem to work, and how this might influence where we put our focus in the future. In addition to the internal focus, the review is also seen to have value externally, for example, through reporting for HelpAge's Programme Partnership Agreement with DFID.

Specifically, the review seeks to address the following questions, which form the basis of the structure of the report.

1. **Why does HelpAge work on social pensions?** Is our focus on social pensions still relevant to the changing external context? What new evidence is there about the impacts of social pensions?
2. **What is our organisational theory of change on social protection?** What is our core strategic approach to work around social pensions? How coherent and consistent is this across the organisation? How does it differ according to context?
3. **Did we affect change?** What progress has been made in countries where we have worked on social protection? What was HelpAge's contribution to this change? Is our work good value for money?
4. **What lessons can we draw on 'good practice?'** What are the key ingredients to success? Where might we put more focus to further our work in the future?

The **methodology** for the review included a number of components:

In order to inform the first question (why we work on social pensions), a desk review was undertaken to map existing evidence on the impacts of social pensions. This involved a review of resources in HelpAge's Knowledge Centre on social pensions hosted at www.pension-watch.net. Examples of impact were collated into an Excel database according to categories such as country and area of impact (eg. health, poverty, wellbeing etc). This was then organised into a literature review (available separately) that forms the basis of part 2. This evidence was supplemented with analysis by HelpAge's Social Protection Policy Advisers on the wider policy context relating to social protection and pensions.

For the remaining three questions, the core piece of analysis was the documentation of five case studies of countries where HelpAge has supported substantial work on social protection over the last five years. This process was guided by a group including staff from HelpAge's Policy, Influencing and Learning team, the Operations team, and members of staff working on social protection at national and regional level. This group formulated an initial set of interview questions that were reviewed by an external HelpAge contact with experience in this field. Questions related to the nature of theories of change and policy

changes at a national level, the nature of stakeholders and key activities undertaken, funding and value for money. Countries were chosen in order to capture a range of contexts, and to ensure geographical diversity.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted between February and April 2013 by HelpAge's Social Protection Administrator. These were transcribed and a preliminary analysis was undertaken to compare and contrast responses to the interview questions. This evidence formed the basis of an activity of joint reflection amongst the social protection team which drew out key conclusions and messages for this report. This analysis was teamed with a reflection on HelpAge's 2008 Social Pensions Strategy that was used as a reference point for HelpAge's organisational theory of change. The report is supplemented with results from HelpAge's global indicators collated by the Operations team for the purpose of internal and donor reporting that go beyond the five countries included here.

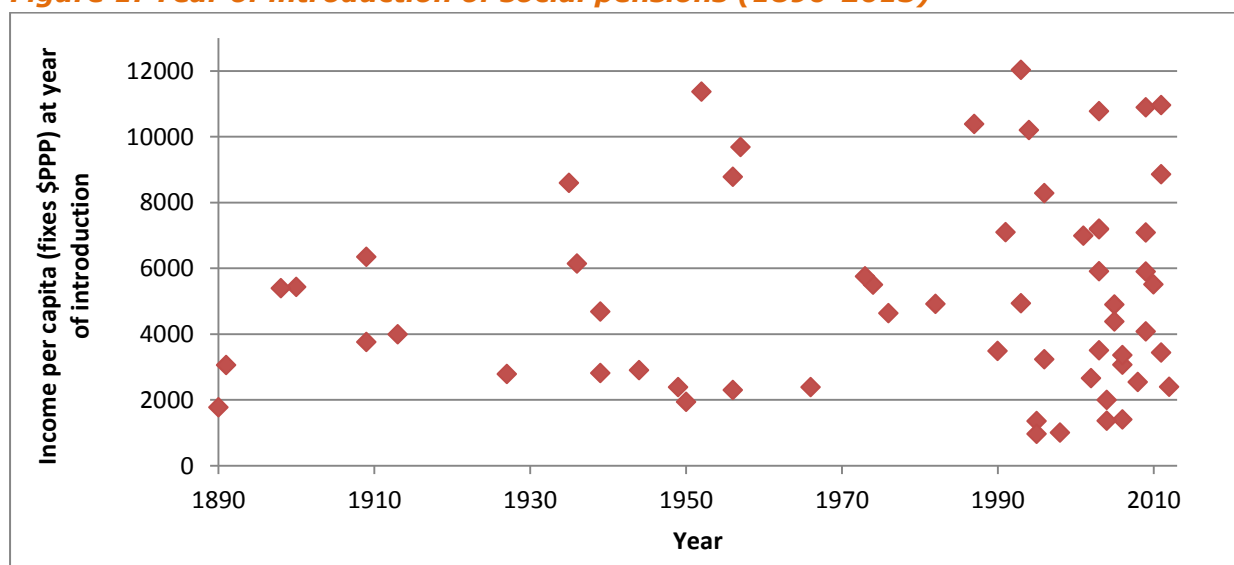
The fact that the review was undertaken internally is a potential limitation, in that it may reflect the perceptions of those connected with implementation of the programme. Nevertheless, the purpose of the review from the outset was seen to be that of open and critical reflection, and an effort was made to tie the analysis to the responses of interviews. The review was also shared with and reviewed by other members of HelpAge's international social protection group before finalisation.

Why does HelpAge work on social pensions?

HelpAge’s work on social protection is based on the assumption that pensions have a major impact, not only on the well-being of older people, but on a wider set of development outcomes. At the time of the development of HelpAge’s 2008 Social Pensions Strategy there was already a substantial body of evidence to demonstrate this. The last six years have seen the evidence of the impacts of social pensions grow substantially alongside HelpAge’s knowledge and overview of this information. One of the most important developments since 2010 has been the continued development and expansion of our Pension Watch site which hosts a range of resources including a database of all social pensions in the world and a knowledge centre holding close to 700 resources on social pensions.

One of the most important findings of the Social Pensions Database has been to show that social pensions are both widespread, and an increasingly popular approach. In 2010 our database had minimal information on approximately 70 schemes, but today it has comprehensive data on over 100 schemes globally, including sources for all of the data. While part of the growth in numbers of social pensions has been due to discovery of existing schemes, it has also reflected the growth in the number of countries introducing social pensions, even in the last few years. As part of collaboration with the World Bank, HelpAge has used data in Pension Watch to provide a timeline of the introduction of social pensions since the very first one was put in place in 1890 in Iceland. Figure 1 plots the date of introduction of schemes against the GDP per capita (\$PPP) at the time of introduction. The striking trend is that, while social pensions have a long history, they have only become prominent in the last two decades. Over half of the social pensions in existence have been implemented since 1990, and over 30 since the year 2000. Equally striking is the fact that the income per capita of countries introducing social pensions is low, sometimes even lower than the threshold for low income countries that sits at around 2,000 \$PPP.¹

Figure 1: Year of introduction of social pensions (1890-2013)



Source: HelpAge International (2012), Social Pensions Database

The increasing prevalence of social pensions has resulted in more interest in their impact. The following quotes, taken from documents available in the Pension Watch Knowledge Centre, provide highlights of some of the more recent findings (a full literature review is available in a separate document).

¹ Classification of low, middle, high income countries (etc.) does not use PPP\$ so the thresholds are not directly comparable.

The impact on income and poverty-levels

"The social pension in South Africa reduces the country's overall poverty gap by 21 per cent, and by 54 per cent for households with older people. The pension virtually eliminates the poverty gap for households with only older members—a reduction of 98 per cent."

Samson M and Kaniki, S, "Social pensions as developmental social security for Africa", in Hailu D and Veras Soares F (eds), *Cash Transfers: Lessons from Africa and Latin America*, IPC, 2008

"Pensions in Kiribati and Samoa reduce the poverty gap in beneficiary households by 19 and 21 per cent respectively, and the national poverty gap by 5 per cent in Kiribati and 9 per cent in Samoa."

AusAID, *Poverty, Vulnerability and Social Protection in the Pacific: the Role of Social Transfers*, AusAID, 2012

"The poverty rate of households receiving the Renta Dignidad is 14 percentage points lower than the control group (households where the eldest member is just below the age of eligibility)"

Mendizabal J and Escobar F, *Redistribution of wealth and old age social protection in Bolivia*, HelpAge International, London, 2013

The impact on wellbeing and empowerment

"Age eligibility for the pension results in older women being 12 to 16 percentage points more likely to be the primary decision-maker in their household for both day to day and large, unusual purchases"

Ambler K, *Bargaining with Grandma: the Impact of the South African Pension on Household Decision Making*, University of Michigan, 2011, p.7

"Older people who received a pension were significantly less anxious about the future, they were less often stressed, they felt less lonely and they had less difficulties with sleeping. At the same time they felt more confident and were more self-assured about how they were coping."

Hoffman S et al. *Salt, soap and shoes for school: evaluation report*, HelpAge International, London, 2008, p.x

"Older people beneficiaries indicated that receiving the pension has changed the behavior of family members towards them."

HelpAge International, *The universal social pension in Nepal: An assessment of its impact on older people in Tanahun District*, HelpAge International, London, 2009, p.6

The impact on wider human development outcomes

"Male pension eligibility [in South Africa] is associated with an approximately 35 per cent decline in hours worked per week and a rise in school attendance to almost 100 per cent. These findings imply that because of male pension eligibility 23,000 children are attending school who would otherwise not and over 180 million fewer hours were worked by children in 1999."

Edmonds E, *Does illiquidity alter child labour and schooling decisions? Evidence from household responses to anticipated cash transfers in South Africa*, New York, NBER, 2008

"We find, with or without controls for the number of members aged fifty-five and above, that a pensioner is associated with roughly a five centimetre increase in a child's height for age, controlling for sex, household size, the number of members aged zero to seventeen, and a complete set of quarter-since-birth indicator variables to capture the effect of age on height."

Case A, "Does Money Protect Health Status? Evidence from South African Pensions", in Wise D, *Perspectives on the Economics of Ageing*, Chicago, University of Chicago press, 2008

"Results indicate that having a high-coverage pension system in Sub-Saharan Africa is associated with a reduction of the fertility rate in the range of 0.5 to 1.5 children per woman, depending on model specification. The result is surprisingly robust, and holds over time as well as cross-country wise. It should still be interpreted cautiously, given data limitations and the quite small number of countries with high-coverage pensions that drive the result."

Holmqvist G, *Fertility impact of social transfers in Sub-Saharan Africa - what about pensions?* Manchester, BWPI Working Paper 119, 2010

"As a poverty reduction tool old-age pensions are very effective, and not only to decrease destitution among the elderly. The moral economy of the family is such that it transfers resources between its generations very efficiently, and therefore old-age pensions do not only support the elderly but can also allow the poor to invest scarce resources in children rather than grandparents."

Valenzuela J, *Families, welfare institutions and economic development: Chile and Sweden in comparative perspective*, Notre Dame, Kellogg Institute, 2011

"The ILO point out that providing social pensions in Latin America has... provided much needed liquidity to households (allowing them to shift from subsistence to surplus agriculture, invest in rural production and increase consumption and provide credit for pensioners)."

Stewart F and Yermo J, *Pensions in Africa*, OECD Working Papers on Insurance and Private Pensions, No 30, Paris, OECD publishing, 2009

Endorsement of social pensions

The increasing visibility of social pensions and greater evidence of their impact has led to more endorsement from international organisations as a positive approach for supporting old age security and wider human development. Some of these endorsements include:

"Social pensions do not just boost psychological well-being; often, they may provide the difference between dignity and degradation in old age"

ADB, *Social Protection for Older Persons: social pensions in Asia*, Philippines, ABD, 2012

"Non-contributory social pensions, universal or at most very lightly targeted, are possible for many African countries; such programmes should be the priority interventions to build a platform for more comprehensive approaches."

Giovannett G, *Social Protection for Inclusive Development. A New Perspective in EU Cooperation with Africa*, European University Institute, Florence 2010

"The affordability of universal pensions is a political question. Evidence shows that, where there is political will, even low-income developing countries can afford these programmes."

Carmona M. *Report of the independent expert on the question of human rights and extreme poverty*, New York, UN, 2010

"Social pensions are an increasingly popular response to the coverage gap for the elderly... For older workers who do not have enough time to accumulate pensions in contributory programs, this non-contributory social pensions approach is the only option available"

World Bank, *Social Protection and Labor Strategy 2012-22*, Washington, World Bank, 2012

What is HelpAge's organisational theory of change on social protection?

A theory of change is a tool to support coherence in strategic approach and project development and to support effective monitoring, evaluation and cross-organisational learning (See Box 1). HelpAge uses theories of change for internal planning processes and for communicating our work with strategic partners, including DFID through the PPA and with Sida at the international and Africa regional level. This section elaborates on HelpAge's work on social protection by describing our theory of change at the global level, and how this relates to theories of change in the five countries reviewed.

Box 1: Theories of change

While there is no universal definition of what a theory of change is, there is some agreement on what can be considered the main elements of this. A general consensus seems to be that a theory of change aims to make explicit the assumptions behind a particular strategy or approach.

This review focuses on what can be considered three main components or assumptions of a theory of change: (i) the objective of what we want to change, (ii) a contextual analysis (such as analysis of the distribution of power e.g. of stakeholders and drivers of change) and (iii) a set of 'change hypotheses' based on this analysis.

A feature of a theory of change is that it should be dynamic, allowing for processes of testing and adaptation along the way. For example, the hypothesis that investing in political activism will create favourable policy change would need to be revised if government is unreceptive or critical of such approaches.

HelpAge's theory of change at a global level

The most important reference point for HelpAge's theory of change was our Social Pensions Strategy, developed in 2008. While the timeframe for the strategy was originally 2008-2011, a review of the strategy at the International Staff Meeting (ISM) and Social Protection Group meeting in 2010 confirmed that the strategy was still fit for purpose in guiding our work beyond 2011 (see Box 2). It also strongly influenced HelpAge's organisational strategy 2010-15.

Box 2: Outcomes of the International Staff Meeting (ISM) and Social Protection Group (SPG) meetings in 2010

These two meetings took place in April and July 2010. It was originally intended that they would be combined but social protection staff were unable to arrive for the April meeting due to the volcanic ash cloud.

Discussion in both meetings was wide-ranging, but core conclusions included:

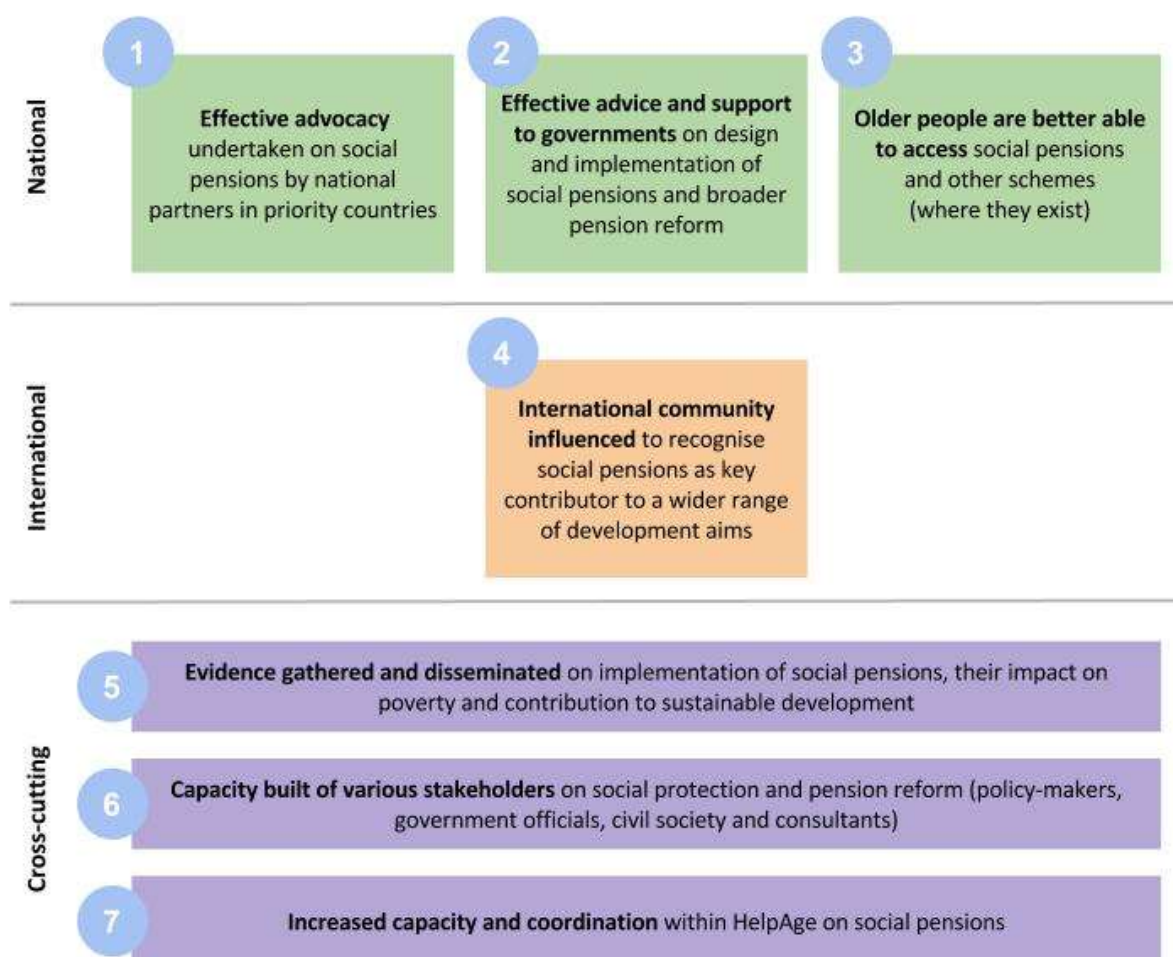
- An affirmation of the organisational commitment and continued energy for work on social pensions. This included recognition of the huge strides being made towards becoming an expert organisation on social pensions (and wider social protection) with a solid body of work across all regions. The focus of our pensions work was seen to be at the national level.
- Recognition of the varied ways of working at national level but that the 2008 strategy provided a useful “menu” of approaches. HelpAge was seen to be skilful at adapting to different contexts.
- The SPG meeting resulted in a “How we work” diagram and tool that was used later for mapping of stakeholders and approaches at national level.
- The ISM resulted in clear calls to build internal capacity on social protection beyond the core team, and the need to fine tune the roles and responsibilities of staff working at national and regional levels as well as globally.
- There was a recognition of the need for innovative ways to finance this work

The Social Pensions Strategy is articulated within a wider **organisational objective** to ensure that older people can exercise their right to social security. Within this broader objective there had already been a strong emphasis on the more **specific objective** of the introduction and extension of social pensions, particularly universal pensions. While recognising they were not the only form of social protection that benefited older people, the 2008 strategy reaffirmed that social pensions were the most effective means of providing social security. It also made the case for a continued focus on universal pensions, while identifying that the specific design of a social pension will be dependent on the country context. These objectives for our social protection work were echoed in the design and subsequent implementation of HelpAge’s Strategy 2010-15 and a variety of other strategic documents. It also continues to serve the organisational agenda to help older people claim their rights, challenge discrimination and overcome poverty, so that they can lead dignified, secure, active and healthy lives.

The 2008 strategy did not include a systematic **contextual analysis**; nevertheless, informal analysis of this nature informed two important strategic shifts in our social protection work. The first was that in order to influence the introduction and extension of social pensions, far **more focus needed to be put on working at the national level**. Prior to this, HelpAge’s social protection work had primarily focused on international and regional policy dialogue, research collaboration with development think-tanks and academics (largely in the global north) and some limited national partner advocacy in projects and programmes in a selection of countries. The second shift was that in order to support this work HelpAge needed to become “recognised as a leading source of expertise and advice” on social pensions, which would entail greater technical skills and capacity within the organisation. This was based on the implicit assumption that international evidence alone was insufficient to engage governments in dialogue regarding the feasibility of social pensions in their context.

The **change hypothesis** of our theory of change on social protection can be derived from the seven outcomes outlined in the strategy. The strategy effectively stated that achievement of our core objectives would only be achieved through the achievement of this set of outcomes. These are presented in Figure 2 according to the level at which they are undertaken: national, international or cross-cutting.

Figure 2: Seven outcomes of Social Pensions Strategy 2008-11



Theories of change at a national level

What drove a sharper focus on social protection?

While many of the five countries had done some work on social protection prior to 2007/8, in all cases there has been a marked increase in focus in the last five years or so. The interviews revealed **four main drivers** of this shift in focus:

1. Acting on experience and learning from historic programme work
2. Greater interest in social protection from other stakeholders at a country level
3. Organisational strategic decisions within HelpAge
4. Increased availability of funding for the work

The mix of drivers unsurprisingly varied from country to country. **Lessons from historic programmatic work** were described as key in Ethiopia and the Philippines. In the Philippines, a background to the growing interest of COSE in social protection was recognition that some of the poorest and most vulnerable older people were unable to

access the community-based programmes that formed a core of its work. Similarly, a history of implementing social accountability programmes in Ethiopia had exposed HelpAge to the weaknesses of public service provision at the grassroots level, and the need for greater government responsibility. In Latin America, work at both regional and country levels had revealed the weak state of social protection in Peru relative to neighbouring countries.

The second key driver of our work in Ethiopia was **growing external interest in social protection**, influenced by the 2008 African Union Social Policy Framework, which led to HelpAge being invited to be part of a newly established Social Protection Platform. While less clearly stated in other countries, the growing interest in social protection over the last five years or so – particularly amongst governments and international organisations – has been a key contributor to the increasing opportunities to work on social protection at a national level.

The **sharper organisational focus on social protection** (linked to the 2008 Social Pensions Strategy) had a clear influence on Tanzania, where a 3-day workshop in 2008 led by the Director of Policy and Communications was the starting point for the strategy. Wider organisational interest also influenced the Philippines where active participation in preparations for the 2007 HelpAge conference “Social cash transfers for Asia,” was seen to be the starting point of an advocacy campaign for a social pension. In Kyrgyzstan and Ethiopia, leadership of Country/Regional Directors was a key factor in prioritising social protection which, in turn, can be seen to stem from the organisational priority.

Financial and human resources were a prerequisite for work on social protection in all countries, but **increased funding sources** were seen as particularly instrumental in Peru. While social protection had been seen as an area of interest for the country work for many years, it was only with a major project funded by the EU in Peru, and regional funding from DFID PPA and IFKO that a strategic focus was possible.

What was the objective of our work?

The ultimate objective of social protection work in all countries was consistent with that of the global theory of change, but specific, shorter-term objectives were much more varied and contested. In all of the interview countries, the ultimate policy asks can be seen to have been consistent with the organisational objective of ensuring older people exercise their right to income security in old age. Nevertheless, there was significant variety on the specific policy objectives in different country contexts. Table 1 demonstrates this.

Table 1: Policy objectives of social protection work

Country	Policy objective
Tanzania	Universal pension
Peru	Universal pension, for over 65s, but not covering older people already receiving other pensions
Philippines	Social pension, means-tested to poorest 20% of older people over 60
Kyrgyzstan	Continuation of social allowances (social pension) and removal of discrepancies within the social fund (contributory system)
Ethiopia	Approval of Social Protection Policy (with older people included) – interest in social pension but flexibility to variety of approaches

The policy ask in Tanzania was most strictly in line with the global strategic priority outlined in the 2008 Social Pensions Strategy, with Peru coming a close second (a pension entitlement to people with no other pension). The objective in the Philippines was consistent with a focus on social pensions, but advocated for means-testing.

Kyrgyzstan and Ethiopia are more complex cases. In Kyrgyzstan, working in a context with close to universal coverage and a large contributory system (a legacy from the Soviet Union) the policy objectives on the social pension was balanced with contributory pensions for individuals with shorter work histories. In Ethiopia, while there was a focus on older people being integrated within a new social protection policy there was not a specific position on social pensions, although they featured as an option in many of the debates.

The decision on the specific policy objective was often an area of much discussion and debate. In the Philippines, HelpAge International (East Asia office) encouraged COSE to focus on a universal pension, but COSE's analysis of the context in the Philippines led to the conclusion that this was unrealistic in the near future. The opposite took place in Peru where local partners opted for advocacy towards a universal pension, while the HelpAge regional office suggested a means-tested pension may be a more realistic objective. In both cases, the judgement of national-level partners was the one that eventually determined the policy objective. Kyrgyzstan and Ethiopia both felt unease with the institutional focus on universal or even social pensions. In Kyrgyzstan, the proposal for a universal social pension was seen not to be sensitive to a context where the precedent for high contributory coverage was so strong. The Ethiopia team felt that the proposal for a social pension – which was emphasised by the London office – was not something that was affordable in Ethiopia in the near future. The decision to focus on a universal pension in Tanzania was generally agreed upon by all parties, although there have been discussions about how far to compromise with government on age of eligibility and benefit levels.

What were our change hypotheses?

While not documented here, all countries showed a set of "change hypotheses" that were coherent with the relevant hypotheses outlined in the organisational theory of change on social protection (see Figure 2 above). Social protection advocacy at a national level broadly focused on outcomes 1 (advocacy by national partners), 2 (advice and support to government) and 7 (capacity building of various stakeholders). In some contexts outcome 3 (improving access to existing pensions) made a contribution, while 6 (evidence gathered and disseminated) can be seen to be a cross-cutting area that contributed to various activities.

The importance of different areas of work, and the broader hypothesis, varied significantly from country to country. A key contextual factor related to who actually led the work at a national level, which can be seen along a spectrum with two extremes. At one end of the scale, in Peru and the Philippines national-level advocacy was strongly led by national partners with support from HelpAge regional offices, and a national office for a period of time in Peru. Of the two countries, the Philippines can be seen to be the most autonomous, where the strategy was developed from the country level, with minimal distance support. In Peru – while partners were the key drivers – HelpAge played a much greater role in elaborating the strategy. In Ethiopia, Kyrgyzstan and Tanzania, the advocacy thinking was very much that of HelpAge international, with partners being brought in to varying degrees.

Beyond who actually led the work, the balance of priority put on different stakeholders (and mix of activities) also varied significantly. In line with the first two outcomes relating

to national-level work (partner-led advocacy and technical support to government), the kind of stakeholders engaged with can be divided into two broad groups. First are **advocacy stakeholders** ie. those who can be seen as a channel to influence policy decisions. This includes political actors (eg. members of parliament) who can directly impact on policy decisions, as well as civil society and the media that can in turn influence them. The second group are **technical stakeholders** ie. those with less political influence but more say on the decisions around design and implementation of programmes and policies.

The division (which is presented in

Table 2) is inevitably crude with significant overlap between functions, but provides a useful tool to understand what was seen as the predominant channel for influencing policy decisions: advocacy or technical players.

Table 2: Advocacy and technical stakeholders

Advocacy stakeholders	Technical stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political representatives at local and national levels • National and local civil society organisations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associations and confederations of older people (national and community level) • Other civil society groups including women’s groups or non-niche civil society institutions • Individual citizens including older people themselves • Media (print, radio and TV at local and national levels) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government officials • Representatives of state or quasi-state institutions • Committees • Technical specialists to government (eg lawyers) Non-state: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperating partners/donors • International NGOs • UN agencies, the World Bank • Independent development consultants • Research institutions.

In **Peru** and the **Philippines**, work with advocacy stakeholders was at the core of the theory of change. Strategy development in Peru concretely identified that social pensions were strongly opposed by technical stakeholders in government, so saw political influencing as the key route to policy change – including strengthening the voice of older people and work with the Peruvian parliament. This work was strongly supported by technical work. In the Peruvian case this focused on the engagement at a national and regional-level. At a national level it focused on engaging technical players in the development of a Bill on a social pension. At the regional-level work involved inclusion of Peruvian government representatives in South-South exchanges (such as that with UNASUR) that exposed them to the development of social pensions in other countries in the region. The national-level development of the bill brought together a wide network of actors from civil society to UN agencies to build legitimacy for the proposal. It also benefited from two Peruvians attending a micro-simulation course in Bolivia which gave them the skills to develop scenarios for the Bill. The approach in the Philippines was similar, with some distinctions. The voice of older people was stronger at the outset of the programme and the advocacy component (with strong engagement with parliament) was

more concentrated on political actors. The technical aspect was less prominent in the Philippines, although it did benefit from HelpAge regional activities (including a 2011 workshop) and COSE continued to link with the key implementing Ministry.

In **Tanzania**, the work initially focused on technical support, particularly through the development of a feasibility study in 2010. While some technical pieces have continued, the change hypothesis has increasingly focused on advocacy stakeholders, particularly the Tanzanian parliament. Approaches to advocacy have included supporting lobbying by older people's associations at the local level and working with the media and academia to influence parliamentarians. Relative to other countries, the media have been a particularly important stakeholder in Tanzania.

In contrast, work in **Ethiopia** and **Kyrgyzstan** was much more focused on technical stakeholders. In Kyrgyzstan, the engagement of the Social Protection Advisor in technical support to the Ministry of Social Protection and input into the formal constitutional reform process were seen as the core channels of policy influence. The same advisor also supported wider activities including Age Demands Action, but this does not appear to have been considered as predominant to the social protection work as in some other countries. In Ethiopia, the core focus was input into the Social Protection Platform, which mainly consisted of government and international organisations (donors, UN etc) although more recently there have been sensitisation meetings with parliamentarians in relation to the passing of the Social Protection Policy.

The trends within the five countries indicate, perhaps unsurprisingly, that partner-led processes tend to have a heavier focus on advocacy, whereas those led by HelpAge itself are more focused on technical support. This reflects a trend throughout our work in a number of other countries where HelpAge attempts to position itself as the technical partner, and partners position themselves as those pushing an advocacy agenda. Nevertheless, there is some important nuance to this picture. In particular, the case of Tanzania shows how a technical engagement by HelpAge can adapt into one with a much stronger advocacy focus.

In many countries advocacy and technical work was complemented **by work linked to access to social protection** (Outcome 3). In Kyrgyzstan, work was done through older people's courts at village level to support access to social protection. Following the introduction of the social pension in the Philippines, COSE began to monitor the implementation of the programme, particularly the effectiveness of poverty targeting. On the technical side, following the introduction of the Pension 65 in Peru a series of training activities were undertaken with local administrations to support delivery of the pension. In Ethiopia, the interest in social protection was described as stemming from work around access to and inclusion in other services, particularly income generating programmes.

Building evidence was seen as a key part of work in all countries, and efforts were usually made to gather evidence at an early stage of work. Research and mapping in the early stages of work were central in Kyrgyzstan, Tanzania and the Philippines. For Peru, regional-level technical activities (eg. a micro-simulation course including Peruvian non-state technical stakeholders) made an important contribution to development of a Bill on social pensions, which built the knowledge of a range of stakeholders. In Ethiopia, distance technical inputs from London were fed into the work of the Social Protection Platform. Similarly, all countries took opportunities to **build the capacity of a range of stakeholders on social protection**. In all country case studies, HelpAge/partner staff and often other stakeholders attended the Social Transfers Course (either in Chiang Mai or Mombasa). There were also numerous examples of other trainings on social protection at a country and regional level, such as the micro-simulation course held in Bolivia in 2009.

Did we affect change?

What progress has been made on our objective?

HelpAge collects annual data on changes to social pension provision in the countries where it works, as part of its internal global impact reporting.

Table 3 shows the changes in social pension provision as reported by HelpAge national offices during the period 2007/8 to 2012/13. Changes to pension schemes in the table below are recorded as either 'expansions, increases in amount, or announcement'.

Taken together, the additional annual value of pension provision observed by HelpAge national offices over this period is over \$4,000 million, to over 25 million people. Given that these payments are made annually, the actual size of the cash transfer is many times greater.

HelpAge's annual reporting process attempts to estimate the level of influence HelpAge had on the changes through a simple scoring process. A score of 1 describes a major influence of HelpAge and our partners, a score of 2 means some influence and a score of 3 suggests a little influence. The total annual value of changes to pension schemes implemented or expanded where HelpAge is reported to have had a major influence is almost US\$ 1,246 million, reaching almost 9 million people.

Table 3: Changes in social pension provision, 2007 to 2013

Country	Date	Type of change to pension provision	Number of people affected by the change	US\$ per person per year	Total annual value (US\$) in millions	HAI influence 1 = major 2 = some 3 = little
Bangladesh	Jan 08	Expansion	0.300	43.2	13.0	2
	Jan 08	Increase in amount	1.700	5.16	8.8	2
	Jan 09	Expansion	0.250	53	13.3	2
	Jan 09	Increase in amount	2.000	9.84	19.7	2
	Apr 07	Increase in amount	0.004	150	0.6	3
Bolivia	Feb 08	Expansion	0.195	344	67.1	2
	Feb 08	Increase in amount	0.493	86	42.4	2
Colombia	Apr 10	Announcement only	1.000		-	2
Dominica	Apr 08	Expansion	0.000	674	0.2	3
	Apr 08	Increase in amount	0.002	225	0.5	3
Ecuador	Apr 10	Expansion	0.150	420	63.0	2
	Apr 09	Announcement only	0.691	420	290.2	2
	Mar 12	Expansion	0.350	630	220.5	3
	Mar 13	Expansion	0.088	630	55.4	3
Fuji	Mar 13	Announcement only		216	-	3
Ghana	Jan 10	New scheme	0.007	90	0.7	3
Grenada	Apr 10	Increase in amount	0.003	222	0.7	2
Jamaica	Mar 12	Expansion	0.002	115	0.2	1
Kenya	Oct 09	New scheme	0.030	250	7.5	1
	Jun 11	Announcement only	1.800	263	473.4	2
	Mar 12	Expansion	0.003	250	0.8	3

	Mar 12	Increase in amount	0.033	250	8.3	3
Kyrgyzstan	Jan 10	Increase in amount	0.002	133	0.3	1
	Mar 12	Expansion	0.250	78	19.5	2
	Mar 13	Expansion	0.021	120	2.5	2
	Mar 13	Increase in amount	0.250	42	10.5	2
Nepal	Sep 08	Expansion	0.147	78	11.5	2
	Sep 08	Increase in amount	0.211	39	8.2	2
Paraguay	Apr 10	Expansion	0.025	840	21.0	2
	Mar 12	Expansion	0.025	1200	30.0	3
	Mar 13	Expansion	0.033	1200	39.6	3
Peru	Dec 10	New scheme	0.005	432	2.2	2
	Dec 10	Announcement	1.300	432	561.6	1
	Mar 12	Expansion	0.078	750	58.5	2
	Mar 13	Expansion	0.176	750	132.0	2
Philippines	Feb 10	Announcement only	1.200	140	168.0	1
	Apr 10	New scheme	0.145	120	17.4	1
	Mar 12	Expansion	0.035	120	4.2	2
	Mar 13	Expansion	0.005	120	0.6	2
Rwanda	Apr 10	Announcement only	0.328	108	35.4	2
St Vincent	Apr 10	Increase in amount	0.004	204	0.8	3
Tajikistan	Apr 10	Increase in amount	0.300	60	18.0	3
Tanzania	Mar 12	Announcement only	2.000		-	1
Thailand	Apr 09	Expansion	5.600	180	1,008.0	1
	Mar 12	Expansion	1.200	360	432.0	2
Vietnam	Apr 07	Expansion	0.500	80	40.0	1
	Apr 07	Increase in amount	0.100	32	3.2	1
	Apr 10	Expansion	0.700	100	70.0	1
	Apr 10	Increase in amount	0.600	36	21.6	1
	Mar 10	Increase in amount	0.600	30	18.0	1
	Mar 12	Expansion	0.300	100	30.0	1
	Mar 13	Expansion	0.300	100	30.0	1
Total			25.60		4,085	

The data on 'score 1' changes (where HelpAge reports a major influence) can be compared with HelpAge's spend on social protection work to obtain a measure of 'value for money'. For this calculation, we exclude 'announcements', and include only recorded additions and expansions to existing schemes and the implementation of new schemes.

Data on HelpAge's annual spend on social protection work is available from 2007/8. Table 4 below shows the total costs (in terms of HelpAge spend) on social protection between 2007/8 and 2012/13. It compares this with the value of new, increased and/or expanded pension schemes introduced over the same period, where HelpAge reports a major influence. According to these figures, HelpAge has delivered US\$46 of impact annually for every US\$1 investment between 2007/8 and 2012/13.

Table 4: Value for Money

HelpAge Investment in Social Protection Work (2007/8 to 2012-13)		Annual value of new, increased and/or expanded pension schemes where HelpAge reports a major influence (2007/8 to 2012/13)
Total spend on Social Protection work 2007/8 to 2012/13	US\$ 27m	New schemes implemented US\$ 25m
		Expanded coverage US\$ 1178m
		Increased pensions US\$ 43m
		Total US\$ 1246m
Value for Money Assessment: 1246/27= 46.15		

Notes on methodology:

1. Only 'score 1' changes are included in the VFM calculation.
2. Reported government announcements are excluded – only the implementation of new schemes, and extension or additions to existing schemes are included.
3. The expansion of the pension scheme in Thailand to 5.6 million additional people in 2009-10 accounts for a major proportion of the change.
4. The calculation records the number of people potentially reaching the scheme in the year of implementation. The number receiving pensions annually will change over time depending on national population structures.
5. Total spend is recorded in GBP and has been converted to US\$ for the purposes of the VFM calculation at a rate of GBP 1 = US\$ 1.5.
6. Total spend is aggregated from HelpAge annual accounts over the period FY 2007/8 to 2012/13. For FY 2007/8 to 2009/10 this includes spending on all social protection activities (including shelter, water provision etc). From 2010/11 to 2012/13 this includes spend only on pensions and benefits work and their related costs.

What was HelpAge's contribution to change?

Although this scoring goes some way to separate out the different levels of influence, the scoring is done by HelpAge regional and country offices and remains relatively subjective. Narrative is usually given on key activities related to these changes, but they rarely describe whether the policy change was directly influenced by our work. In order to explore questions of attribution in greater depth, interviewees for the five country case studies were asked about how social protection work affected policy change. In general, interviewees were cautious of giving the impression that we were the only drivers of change. In most countries, a wider range of organisations had been involved in influencing policy changes, while the specific decisions relating to policy changes were often political in nature.

That said, all of the case studies provided examples of the clear channels to influence.

Table 5 presents the key policy changes achieved in each country and the 'causal story' showing HelpAge's contribution to the change. These descriptions by no means show all of

the ways in which our work influenced policy decisions; in many cases eventual decisions are based on many years of influencing key policy makers that cannot simply be attributed to one action. However, they do help to demonstrate that HelpAge’s work was clearly linked to the decision making processes around social protection policy.

Table 5: Influence of HelpAge and our partners on policy change in the five focus countries

Country	Positive change in pension coverage or amount, or policy	Summary of ‘causal story’ outlining HelpAge’s role and contribution to the change
Philippines	A social pension targeted at poor older people over the age of 77, within the framework of the Senior Citizen’s Act 2010 (which legislates for a lower age of 60+)	COSE worked with partners to draft a social pension’s bill that was eventually part of the Expanded Senior Citizens Act (2010) that led to the introduction of the social pension.
Kyrgyzstan	National Strategy on Social Protection (2011) stated that no one should receive less than the basic pension. Inclusion of security in “old age” in the new 2010 constitution	HelpAge participated in the inter-ministerial technical working group drafting the strategy and presented data on discrepancies within the current system. Direct influence through working with a lawyer involved in developing the new constitution.
Tanzania	Clear commitments from government (including the Prime Minister) to implement a universal pension and demonstrable support within parliament. Concrete processes in place to move towards implementation (albeit with government stalling).	HelpAge has been one of the main drivers of advocacy for a universal pension in Tanzania. The feasibility study HelpAge co-authored in 2010 remains a core reference in discussions by media and government. There is a demonstrable path showing influence of HelpAge-supported lobbying of parliamentarians at local and national level, and the strong endorsement of the proposal for a universal pension
Ethiopia	A social pension was included in the draft social protection policy.	HelpAge was important advocate (along with UNICEF) on the National Social Protection Platform (main government and development partners). Presence of HelpAge in donor retreat was key in securing inclusion of the social pension.
Peru	New social pension (Pension 65) introduced in 2011 reaching 176,000 recipients by March 2013	HelpAge and national partners have undertaken broad advocacy work which clearly engaged government. The major evidence of influence was that the announcement of Pension 65 was made at a pre-election meeting of the presidential candidate (Ollanta

Drawing on these examples, HelpAge’s reporting on social protection impacts would benefit from a clearer criteria on ranking of the influence in different countries. This would help us better disaggregate between instances where we really seem to have had a major impact and those with a much smaller role. An illustrative structure for this could be:

- Score “1”: **Demonstrable link between HelpAge’s work and policy change**

Achieving this score would mean giving evidence for the clear link between our activities and the decisions made by government (similar to the right hand column of

Table 5). It would not mean showing clear attribution (ie “the change happened (solely) because of us”) but that we were strongly engaged with decision making.

Examples of evidence could include: HelpAge studies cited by decision makers, participation in formal legal processes (eg. new legislation, constitutions), clear evidence of a major role in initiating the debate on social pensions in a country. This would need to be provided through the annual reporting processes.

- Score “2”: **Major programme of work on social protection, with link to key stakeholders, but no link to a specific decision**

This could include a case where HelpAge has undertaken trainings and advocacy over the years influencing key stakeholders, but that we have no link to a specific policy decision. It would be important to have some description of how our work is engaging with audiences relevant to the decision making.

Evidence of the nature of our programme of work from annual planning/reporting would likely be sufficient in this case.

- Score “3”: **Work on social protection but no link to key stakeholders or to a key policy decision**

This would be a case where some work on social protection had taken place but it was not clearly linked to either decisions or the stakeholders involved.

Annual reporting would be more than sufficient to assess this.

One question that emerges for future discussion is how to measure the softer impacts we have on social protection policy making. The case studies show clear examples of where HelpAge has been able to influence our corporate outcome indicators relating to coverage and adequacy of social pensions. Relying on these figures alone to measure success does however have its limitations. In a country like Kyrgyzstan, the fact the pension system is already virtually universal means that the potential scope of impact in these terms is lower than a country with very low coverage. In a country like Tanzania a universal pension has become a central theme of discussion within parliament and the media, with existing government commitments, yet the impact in terms of corporate indicators (more older people getting better pensions) is zero. There is scope for therefore formulating a set of indicators to measure HelpAge’s work that measure the softer impacts of our work that can be seen to be the building blocks of policy change. Ideas for indicators include:

- Concrete government commitments to the extension of social protection in old age (political statements, election manifestos, policy documents)

- Examples of increased public debate on social protection in old age (parliamentary minutes, mention of social pensions in the media, papers by researchers, think tanks or development partners)
- Increased capacity of civil society to advocate (quality advocacy materials and developed advocacy strategies)
- Increased capacity of government (evaluations from trainings, technical processes stemming from increased capacity)

What lessons can we draw on “good practice”?

The major attributable impacts of HelpAge’s work on social protection policy indicate that the strategic shift to national-level work in 2008 was effective. The five case studies show that the main channels of influence to policy change have been with national-level decision makers and it is an understanding of these context and sustained efforts that have led to results. This is not to say that activity at the international level has not contributed to the process. The development of the African Union Social Policy Framework was a clear driver for greater recognition of social protection in Ethiopia, and regional activities (such as inter-government exchanges and training programmes) have contributed to national debates. Nevertheless, even in these cases it appears that national-level engagement is key for localising these processes and making them strategically relevant to country-level discussion.

Objectives

It is difficult to evaluate whether or not the ultimate decisions around policy objectives were the correct ones in each case. In all cases it is possible to argue that an alternative approach could have gained more or less traction than that chosen. There are, however, some important lessons for future work. The first is that the division of “universal” versus “means-tested” pensions is not always satisfactory to present the policy options available for ensuring income security in old age. The proposals in Peru and Kyrgyzstan demonstrate this point; in both cases the focus of discussion was on what are called “pensions tested”² social pensions that – while not universal – guarantee all older people receive an income. This finding echoes thinking that has already begun around how to create a more consistent language to describe our core policy ask, eg. in the development of the concept of a “citizen’s pension”.³ A second lesson is that there is need for greater internal clarity about how different immediate policy objectives fit into the ultimate goal of guaranteed income security for older people. Some policy asks such as narrowly targeted social pensions, or catch-all cash transfers that include older people arguably fall far short of this objective and it is not always clear how these asks (which may be the only feasible option in the short term) fit within a longer-term vision of income security for older people in a given context.

What we do

Advocacy and political influencing stands out as critical in countries where we have seen major shifts in policy change. Political actors, especially members of parliament, were seen as a priority in Peru and the Philippines where the work of HelpAge and our partners directly led some of HelpAge’s biggest policy gains. The same can be said for Tanzania which appears to be on the brink of a universal pension being introduced, with a key signal of this being the clear support for the proposal within parliament. In Ethiopia and Kyrgyzstan, the greater focus on technical actors seems to align with the fact that the objectives were more modest in scale (number of older people affected) and

² Pensions testing relates to where individuals with access to other pension income (eg. from a contributory pension) are not eligible for a social pension, or where the benefit level of the social pension is reduced.

³ HelpAge International, Social protection floors and pension systems: The role of a “citizen’s pension”, London, HelpAge International, 2012 and HelpAge International, Achieving income security in old age: Taking stock and pushing the boundaries, London, HelpAge International, 2012

perhaps less likely to gain political attention. This is not to say that the approach in Kyrgyzstan and Ethiopia was less strategic, and instead it may reflect the policy space and scope for influencing. In Ethiopia, activities perceived to be advocacy are strictly prohibited. In Kyrgyzstan, the near universal coverage of the existing scheme means there was less opportunity for “big wins” in terms of coverage, and greater need to focus on more detailed design considerations. It is also worth noting that countries such as Peru and the Philippines – with a long history of political activism – provide opportunities for advocacy that are not possible in many other contexts.

On the question of how to do political influencing, one clear trend was that building a debate amongst a broad range of actors is preferable to highly targeted advocacy campaigns. While HelpAge’s affiliates and partners tend to be the drivers of advocacy work, effective advocacy is not about working alone. Respondents mentioned a range of stakeholders that it was important to build networks with, including media, opinion leaders, key NGO partners and networks, as well as political and technical government players. One respondent summarised that effective advocacy is not simply about targeting specific players, but working with a broad range of stakeholders to help initiate a debate on social protection in old age, that can eventually lead to policy change. The significant networking needed to establish such work is of importance for the question of capacity and resourcing referenced below.

In relation to channels for influence, a key consideration for all countries was how to deal with opponents, resulting in a variety of strategies. Opponents can range from Government officials, individuals in CSOs and international organisations. Opposition can arise in direct engagement with individual stakeholders or is present in dominant discourses around the nature of social protection that is acceptable (e.g through contributory insurance mechanisms or safety nets for the poor as a target group). Opposition is particularly problematic when it is found within government, technical advisors to government or within stakeholders involved in policy processes. Interestingly, all countries mentioned the World Bank as an organisation that commonly opposed HelpAge’s policy positions. Opposition can have the benefit of helping to clarify the development of appropriate strategies and work to engage or navigate. In Kyrgyzstan, for example, clauses on social pensions in draft legislation were the subject of near continual debate, with some stakeholders lobbying for its removal from the bill. In this case, on-going engagement with the process has been necessary to prevent this from happening. Meanwhile no stringent opposition to universal pension have been encountered in Ethiopia, yet the dominant discourses suggest that contributory pensions and cash transfers to the poorest older people are a priority approach for social protection in older age rather than universal pensions, despite their inclusion within the national policy.

Identifying opposition, stumbling blocks and the next steps for engagement is a forward-thinking and reoccurring process. This may be because an organisation or institution has undergone change, for example due to staff turnover within a key role. It may also be due to a change in the national context. For example, in Tanzania, following the approval of a social pension by Parliament, a process was undertaken to identify potential opposition or stumbling blocks to its implementation and the approach to advocacy was adapted accordingly.

The increased focus on technical support to government has been key to achieving impact in all countries. Technical support and advice to government can be seen to contribute to the theory of change through a variety of channels. Most obvious has been the direct influencing of technical players within government, but there have also been more subtle routes. Development of technical pieces, such as the feasibility study in

Tanzania, have often acted as a process of building the capacity of national staff and partners in the area of social protection, as well as a process in which stakeholder mapping (essential for a theory of change) has crystallised. Technical pieces have also provided the background evidence for simpler policy messages adopted by partners in their advocacy and lobbying efforts.

A key lesson for future strategy is to recognise that technical work is not a separate area of activity, but should be located within a wider advocacy strategy.

Its links to capacity building and strategy development show that technical work should not be seen as a stand-alone activity solely for technical stakeholders, but as an integral part of a more integrated strategy. Meanwhile, one potentially misleading statement in the 2008 Social Pensions Strategy was to suggest that building our technical capacity would allow us to become a “counterpoint to other international agencies – such as the World Bank – that are driven by very different ideologies to HAI”. While HelpAge aims for its technical work to be as credible and as high quality (if not more) than these other organisations, it’s important to emphasise that the role of HelpAge is quite different. The scale of our technical work will never be as great as technical players such as development banks. More importantly though, this review shows that HelpAge’s real added value at a country level is our ability to locate technical support as part of a longer-term advocacy process that goes beyond technical partners.

One important consideration is how we balance the “picking and choosing” of technical opportunities with an effort to demonstrate our technical outputs are balanced and unbiased.

One way that we appear to have dealt with this in our programming is through the division of labour on technical and advocacy activities between HelpAge and our partners. In general, the interviews show that national-level partners and affiliates have tended to be the face of advocacy activities, while HelpAge has led on technical inputs, retaining the role of an expert sharing global experience.

The description of Outcome 3 (access to existing social pensions) underplays what is a potentially bigger area relating to social accountability.

First of all, where HelpAge does engage in existing social protection programmes the work often goes far beyond looking at questions of access. Work through Older Citizens Monitoring groups may look at wider issues including timeliness of payments and other administrative issues. Secondly, this work often goes beyond solely ensuring the proper implementation of (and access to) existing systems, but also aims to provide evidence for wider advocacy. In the Philippines, for example, older people’s groups monitored targeting of the social pension both for engagement at a community level, but also to raise the issue at a national policy level. Thirdly, on an even broader level, strong advocacy around social protection at a national level has often built on a longer-term foundation of accountability work that may not even relate directly to social protection. In Tanzania and the Philippines, the capacity of older people built over many years to engage local government around a wider set of issues such as access to healthcare and local budgeting provided a foundation for national advocacy campaigns. This final point demonstrates that accountability mechanisms can play an important role in strengthening social protection advocacy, even where there is no existing social pension or cash transfer to engage with.

Management and resource development

The need to consolidate different strands of work demands a strong vision of the overall programme, and the leadership of senior management. The fact that social protection work cuts across advocacy with partners (strongly linked both to network building and campaign work), technical support and accountability activities shows that it cannot be seen as a project that sits with one individual in a country programme. The task could be articulated less as how a country programme can do more work on social protection, but rather how a country programme can be orientated to ensure that it drives towards the achievement of policy change on social protection. This is – of course – not to say that increased capacity and a greater portfolio of activities will not be part of the picture. The GRASP review reflects the examples from a range of other HelpAge country programmes that successful advocacy on social protection depends on leadership from senior level within national and regional offices.

The need to consolidate these strands of work also demonstrates the importance of balancing a varied set of funding streams to support social protection. From the case studies (and experience of HelpAge’s work as a whole), four different areas of work with potentially distinct funding needs emerge.

- **General policy engagement and networking with key stakeholders.** This is less likely to have specific project funding, there is therefore a need to fund this from cash envelope and allocate time for staff to commit time to this.
- **Campaigning, lobbying and advocacy.** Funding sources include advocacy components of larger projects and specific funding for activities such as ADA. This work also links on activities to strengthen organisations and networks of older people.
- **Accountability mechanisms** (eg. OCM, OPA, socio-legal centres, older people’s forums, etc). This is probably the area at a national level with most potential to be funded in a classic project framework covering a number of years. There is potential to build previous two sets of activities on top of this.
- **Technical support to government.** Sources include global funding by donors such as BMZ, bidding for pieces of technical work (research, study tours), securing specific funding for pieces in country. It is worth noting that technical work is generally “bitty” comprising of one off pieces rather than an ongoing programme. There is also scope for funding through larger programmes (eg. AFFORD and Sida).

One area highlighted by a number of interviewees was the scope for improved sharing of national-level experiences between country offices and partners. A number of respondents cited the 2010 Social Protection Group meeting as an important opportunity to understand the approaches being used to social protection advocacy in other countries. It was suggested that another meeting of this nature as well as inter-country exchanges would be of benefit to strengthening advocacy at a national level.

Conclusions and recommendations

Two broad conclusions can be drawn from the analysis of our theory of change on social protection as part of the Global Review of Advocacy on Social Protection. First, the organisational theory of change on social protection articulated in the 2008 Social Pensions Strategy can be seen to have been consistent with theories of change at the national level. Secondly, the broad shift of focus of our social protection work to the national level has led directly to major successes in the extension of social protection, which deliver on our corporate indicators.

That said, the closer review of theories of change and factors of success in our social protection work suggest that our global Social Pensions Strategy could do with some adapting in line with various lessons of the process. Core lessons that should be considered in the development of a new strategy are:

- The strategy would benefit from a clearer set of objectives that balance an, ambitious and rights-based global objective with flexibility on specific policy options at national level according to contextual factors.
- It should be emphasised that influencing social protection policy is something that needs to be considered an outcome of a wider country programme, rather than a self-contained stream of work.
- In general, the strategy could be aligned more clearly with a theory of change approach.
- The 7 outcomes should be updated in terms of the specific language and the linkages and complementarity between them. Specific lessons include:
 - Technical support to government should be seen within the context of broader programmes of advocacy and policy influencing on social protection, not as a standalone activity.
 - There should be expansion of Outcome 3 beyond questions of access, to a broader view of accountability or the quality of social protection programmes. At the same time, an emphasis should be put on the link between this work and wider advocacy processes.
- While not definitive, this process points to concrete ways in which we can improve learning and capacity internally:
 - At a country level, more emphasis could be put on documenting the initial development and evolution of theories of change.
 - Considering the significant advocacy experience within HelpAge, opportunities should be sought for sharing of this learning between countries and partners.
- In the meantime, HelpAge would benefit from a more refined set of indicators for measuring and reporting our social protection impact (and associated value for money).

Annex: Country case studies

Case study 1: Ethiopia

Before 2009 social accountability programming was the vehicle for most of our work promoting income security in older age which had developed since around 2003/04. At this time it was not part of HelpAge's organisational strategy on social protection, however it laid the groundwork for later social protection policy and programme work. More specifically, the social accountability work included tackling old age discrimination and ensuring older people's inclusion in income generating programmes through age-sensitive approaches, as well as broadly advocating for the participation of older people in policy and programmes (especially at the local level) and accountability of government on a range of issues relating to older people. This positioned us to engage in welfare policy reform based on long standing engagement with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA) as well as experience of the limitations of public service provision at grassroots level.

Social protection became a key thematic focus in 2009 as part of strategic engagement in national policy debates. HelpAge was invited to participate on the National Social Protection Platform that was established to revise the Developmental Social Welfare Policy (1997) issued by the Prime Minister. HelpAge was one of two INGOs on the platform alongside development partners, donors and Government.

Between 2009 and 2010 the strategic emphasis of HelpAge's engagement in the platform was to shift the discourse of the social welfare policy from one that emphasised community-level responsibility and self-help approaches with limited or no budget support from government (understood to be 'developmentalist' in its approach), to one that emphasised governmental responsibility. HelpAge saw this as an opportunity, working in collaboration with other platform members, to influence the government bodies to take greater responsibility to take care of older people and other vulnerable groups. This represented a shift from project-level implementation and sub-national policy engagement to more technical national level policy influencing for the wider Ethiopia country programme. This was reflected in the prioritisation of this engagement by the Country Director who attended the weekly meetings alongside an experienced Programme Officer who had been working on social accountability programmes as well as small cash transfers in our Sponsor a Grandparent project. Stemming from the social accountability work, it was seen as a key opportunity to influence policy to ensure older people's income security.

At this time there were also changes in the external environment. There was no awareness of social protection as a development issue amongst government stakeholders, including within the co-chairing Ministries of Agriculture and MoLSA. However, the recent agreement of the African Union's Social Policy Framework and articulation of a 'minimum package' of social protection influenced the discourse on development. Before this very few policy discussions referred to social protection⁴. In addition, increasingly international experience was being shared. Against this backdrop, HelpAge, in collaboration with other platform members, focused on influencing the government to develop a new Social Protection Policy rather than revising the Social Welfare Policy. The overarching objective was to shift the entire policy discourse of the welfare regime in Ethiopia towards greater statutory responsibility. Initially the government insisted on a revision of the existing

⁴ HelpAge also played a key role in this as we were commissioned by the AU to facilitate the regional dialogue meetings that lead to the development of the Social Policy Framework.

policy and opposed the development of any new policies. However, through promoting dialogue and debate on the concept of social protection, its role in poverty reduction and welfare between different government actors collectively the non-state actors on the platform were able to open space for a new policy on Social Protection.

This took more than one year to achieve. Social protection and the situation in old age and older people's issues were increasingly integrated into trainings, workshops and events that HelpAge held within projects (including infrastructure projects). There was a lot of discussion about necessary events for dialogue over the relevance of social protection to this agenda. Study visits and trainings were also arranged for other officials to build exposure to social protection. HelpAge specifically supported the Director of Planning and Programme and Reform Implementation Directorate of MOLSA to attend the Social Cash Transfers course in Mombasa who returned extremely energised about the social protection agenda. This in particular was a turning point for the platform and gleaned buy in for the need for a social protection policy. Given the dominant paradigm and resistance of government, to a certain extent HelpAge was surprised by this shift in thinking after the course, however it can be interpreted as part something that took place against the backdrop of increasing prominence of social protection in the external environment by a range of actors in regional and international discussions.

In light of this trajectory, the focus on social protection in Ethiopia came organically as part of prioritising national policy engagement. However, the Country Director recognised and re-emphasised the importance of social protection as a key policy area of particular relevance to older people. In light of this, no specific strategy was developed on social protection. Initial steps were taken to develop a strategy in 2010 with support from the Regional Manager for Social Protection (based in Nairobi). However this was not completed. Continuity was lost in relation to the development of an explicit strategy or plan with staff changes at the regional level. However, broadly it was understood to involve two interlinking approaches; capacity building of government stakeholders and evidence gathering for policy influencing. Despite not articulating an explicit strategy HelpAge began to put greater emphasis on government engagement, capacity building and participation in technical forums at the national and sub-national level. Technical engagement with government was carried out through the platform, and through supporting policy development processes, for example through consortium partnership in a pilot programme. In addition, regional projects to support technical engagement provided opportunities to complement national level engagements. For example HelpAge facilitated an Africa – Latin America South – South learning event funded by BMZ, which gave key officials exposure to regional and international conceptual and implementation debates.

In terms of content of the policy HelpAge wanted to see the inclusion of older people. The main objective of the office in Ethiopia is to ensure income security of older people. There was some distance support from London through two technical inputs to feed into platform policy drafting process. However, there were some doubts about the feasibility of a social pension within the Ethiopia office who felt that inputs from London applied pressure to call for a social pension without considering the national context. The Ethiopia office was therefore more flexible in terms of how income security in old age could be achieved in the policy through alternative social protection instruments.

Throughout 2009/10 capacity was built within the HelpAge office and participation in regular platform meetings and participating in inter-agency events with government on social protection. The platform participation in itself was intensive with active participation from diverse array of members representing highly varied interests and agendas. For

example, this included working in task teams to take forward writing of different policy sections and then review (which involved distance technical support from London). In 2010, the Programme Officer also attended the Social Transfers Course in Chiang Mai and also gave internal briefings to colleagues. Participation of the Country Director alongside the Programme Officer was key to create management space for this engagement which included three to four hour meetings weekly. Activity funding has been relatively small and was from a London-based budget.

A strong alliance was formed with UNICEF through participation on the national social protection platform. In 2011, UNICEF were interested to start a pilot cash transfer in one region to build the evidence base to inform policy debate at the national level. There were also political motivations and the regional government is particularly influential and could help to support a positive political economy around social protection. HelpAge contributed to a cash transfer pilot in one region of Ethiopia using CPE funding from London. This has had an impact on the discourse around social protection as demand for expansion of the programme to other regions has been high. The programme will be expanded to 2 other regions in 2013/2014.

The draft social protection policy will be presented to the Council of Ministers for approval soon. If it is approved it will be submitted to parliament. HelpAge recently conducted a sensitisation workshop on social protection and the issues of older people for parliamentarian, which followed up on a meeting of the Platform with parliamentarians in 2010. Meanwhile, as part of the platform HelpAge is supporting the drafting of a social protection strategy to guide implementation. The Social Protection Policy caters for social protection in old age in a number of areas, and in particular to expand pension coverage universally. It calls for a social pension for destitute older people (currently the age of eligibility is being debated 70 or 65). The other one is expanding the contributory pension beyond civil servants and to legislate for private pensions. There is also health insurance, expansion of health insurance components which concerns older people as well.

Despite the prevailing concerns around financing of social pension in the Ethiopian context, there was no opposition to the inclusion of a social pension in the policy. A turning point was a donor retreat which HelpAge was invited to where there was no opposition to the inclusion of a social pension within the draft policy. All stakeholders generally agree with the necessity of a social pension however there is more debate on the breadth and depth in terms of coverage and adequacy. UNICEF in particular were supportive of a social pension as they saw the secondary benefits for children given the caring role of many older people. The presence of HelpAge in that meeting was important for our own strategic engagement, but also to ensure that the social pension was not overlooked. It was noted that the absence of a disability focused organisation could have contributed to the absence of a mechanism catering for people living with disability.

Given the unplanned and unfunded nature of the development of HelpAge's policy engagement on social protection the support and prioritisation of senior management (in particular the country director) has been essential. This has come in terms of priority setting related to engagements at the national level and support with follow up engagements and alliance forming. At the regional level, where support was interrupted by changes in HR, this has arguably been weakened. Also technical capacity at London level has not effectively supported engagement, despite some distinct inputs (costing papers, issue briefings); major technical concerns on the relative feasibility of different approaches to social protection in old age remain. From London and the regional office funding support has been more significant to engagements when requested (IFKO, BMZ, CPE and SIDA).

Case study 2: Kyrgyzstan

HelpAge has been working on social protection as a focal issue in Kyrgyzstan since 2010. Although social protection was a part of HelpAge's work before this time, the recruitment of a Social Protection Policy Adviser marked the beginning of the development and implementation of concerted policy influencing strategy. Nevertheless, the work of HelpAge before 2010 related to social protection issues and was an important basis for the decision to recruit policy capacity in this area. The nature of previous work focused on project evaluations and lesson learning as well as some light touch evidence gathering into proposals regarding benefit levels. The regional director at the time had recognised the role of social protection as the key policy area for older people in the region. Whilst the office was equipped with international evidence as well as the human rights based position of the organisation for social security, it was difficult to engage at the policy level without a contextual understanding of the system.

The new Social Protection Adviser prioritised systematic analysis of the existing policy situation and developed positions on the basis of findings and to begin to engage relevant stakeholders that emerged. The first task was to analyse the entire social protection system, both contributory and non-contributory elements, and to understand the potential age-based discrimination within the system. This involved a review of legislation, administrative data from implementing agencies (like the Social Fund) and took into consideration the various external factors that are contextually important for understanding the system; high rates of unemployment, informal economy, migration, food insecurity, natural disasters, political instability etc. The analysis pointed to a number of issues existing in the system as well as highlighting reform proposals that would be to the detriment of current and future populations of older people. On the basis of this research social protection became the focal policy area of HelpAge. Key issues emerged were:

- Adequacy and coverage within the current system for a significant minority of the older population now, but also the older population in the future given changes in labour market trends.
- The system was unfair/inequitable with discrepancies between the benefits received from the contributory and non-contributory old age benefits.
- Proposals to remove the small social allowances⁵ (despite high informality in the workforce and high rates of migration and subsequently reduced savings then threatening income security)

The evidence positioned HelpAge as an expert on social protection, which later resulted in an invitation to participate in the inter-ministerial technical working group tasked with drafting a national strategy on social protection in 2011. In particular it was the data on discrepancies between the contributory and non-contributory benefits that were fed into the new strategy. The objective was to ensure a minimum income for all older people that no-one would fall below, yet at this time there pensioners receiving less than the value of the existing social pension despite having contributed to the social fund. It is now written in the strategy that no-one should receive less than the basic pension. However this created a controversy with opposition from both the ministry of finance, who would not revise its projections analysis on the basis of this standard, as well as from the Social Fund, which was concerned that they would be implicated to meet the shortfall in individual contributions (raise the benefits to the level of the basic pension).

⁵ Social allowances refer to the local name given to social pensions

Consequently, there was much engagement with these stakeholders to hold them to account to what is in the strategy.

Meanwhile, there was constitutional reform taking place in 2010. HelpAge ensured explicit mention of security in 'old age' which was previously overlooked through working with a lawyer involved in developing the new constitution⁶. This was important to reflect human rights standards in national law and close space to undermine the rationale for the social (basic) pension. Consequently, the government is now seeking to increase the pension, not only because of these changes in the constitution but also because the debates around the older people's issues are increasing as a result.

Engagements with ministries in 2010 also supported greater visibility of the issue of old age as HelpAge revealed that older people were absent from most welfare and social policy. A clear example was through the establishment of the Department on development of Social Services for Disabled people and Older people which was implemented in response to consultation with the working group of the ministry of social protection during reforms of the ministry structure in 2011. In addition to the social protection strategy engagements, HelpAge influenced the inclusion of more policy space for older people for example; opening of day-care centres and minimum standards for social services for working with older people which are being implemented now. This involved attending consultations with other Ministries when they launched strategic programming on general development issues – e.g a multi-year health programme developed under the Ministry of Health emphasised health issues amongst younger people and neglected issues related to old age and relevant for an ageing population.

Addressing discrepancies within the system necessitated better coordination between the implementing and governing Government agencies in particular between the Ministry for Social Protection (changed to the Ministry of Social *Development* in February 2012) and the Social Fund. Beyond increasing the visibility of old age and ageing, and highlighting specific weaknesses in the social protection system of older people, broader institutional influencing became important to address systemic barriers that were undermining the advocacy effort. Similarly, better coordination between donors working on social protection was identified as a systemic issue. Subsequently, HelpAge worked to establish cross-government and donor technical cooperation.

The Regional Director and Social Protection Adviser worked closely throughout the development and implementation of the social protection strategy, including developing consensus around engagement strategies and collaborative partnerships. In year one we focused on working with specialists from the respective ministries, both to ensure accurate information gathering and to build a trusting relationship for influencing later on. Some emerged as allies and others were opposed to the consideration of older people's issues. Similarly, some development partners, such as the EU, became natural allies. Others were negotiated through an effort to find common causes. With UNICEF for example, we consistently highlighted the prominence of older generations in the care of children, consequently we are currently working with them on improving access and efficiency of targeting of the social assistance to poor families (2013). Involvement in the associated working group enabled HelpAge to ensure old age and disability were accounted for in the associated standards for identifying disadvantaged children. Meanwhile, other agencies

⁶"All persons in the Kyrgyz Republic shall be equal before the law and the court. No one shall be subject to any type of discrimination, violation of his rights and freedoms on the grounds of origin, sex, race, nationality, language, confession, age, political or religious beliefs, or other conditions or circumstances of a personal or social nature".

were very difficult to convince; particularly the World Bank who are both prominent in their influence on social protection and who are well resourced and technically equipped and support the budgets of social protection, health and education ministries. In particular, the World Bank encourages a focus on children and actively de-emphasises the relevance of older people to the social development of a country.

HelpAge sought a formal working arrangement with the line ministry for social protection where the social protection adviser would work one day a week within the Ministry of Social Protection (since 2011) to help secure our presence in the debate. A trade off was necessary to achieve this direct link to policy and practice within the ministry in that the social protection adviser had to work to broader Ministry agenda – principally writing the minimum social standards for shelters and rehabilitation centres for homeless people. Nevertheless, all the forums and opportunities we could create enabled us to put issues of old age into consideration. In the same year HelpAge’s adviser was involved in writing the minimum social standards for implementation of the social protection strategy.

The technical engagement was complimented by on-going project work which supported engagement with various old age focused networks of civil society. HelpAge works closely with the leader of the national resource centre for older people, which is a key representative of older people in Kyrgyzstan. Also information sharing and engagement at monthly AgeNet network meetings is considered valuable to keep messages and positions consistent. AgeNet international (established in 2005 and including 49 organisations from 9 post-soviet states) is also consulted on outputs written by HelpAge and their knowledge and skills can be harnessed by HelpAge for specific engagements where skills and capacities can be matched (e.g for conferences, trainings and events). In doing so the engagement at the national level is informed by a wider range of stakeholders and technical work with government is based on this broader perspective.

The Age Demands Action campaign on the international day of older people is also important for giving older people a platform to engage directly with government. In particular, this provides a focal point for local level older people’s groups to mobilise around and against which to engage their local administrations. In the background to this advocacy work and the links that are created between technical engagement by HelpAge and collaboration with national civil society organisations and networks there is also work to support access to social protection through the older people’s courts that exist at village level, social workers and older people’s groups (particularly in ‘pilot’ villages). These are platforms to resolve disputes and to refer local cases to the right service provider. The Social Protection Adviser worked closely with project managers that supported older people’s groups and Age Demands Action, for example through preparing accessible briefings for the project managers to use within projects for older people and in media engagements. Meanwhile, the Regional Director took the lead on technical engagements with international cooperating partners in establishing relationships and common areas for working. Support from London was sought at specific times for consultation on specific issues.

The technical credibility that HelpAge has achieved has led to collaboration with academics and universities who are increasingly working on social protection. For example, they approach HelpAge to comment on new pieces of research. As implied above, the technical work on social protection policy has naturally linked to a number of other areas where old age is not taken into account, such as health. A cross cutting issue is data disaggregation and the limitations of existing data sets to evaluate the situation of people in older age. HelpAge and the EU have been working with the national statistics committee to highlight the data gaps for people over the age of 60. In these discussions we also highlight the

issue of gender disaggregation. Furthermore HelpAge's social protection adviser provides assistance to the technical team on social protection issues.

The funding base for the social protection work in Kyrgyzstan (and the wider region) has primarily been staff time. Activity budgets have been relatively small; International Fonds Kwetsbare Ouderen (IFKO) and BMZ. The broad policy engagement by the SP adviser (for example on health and service provision that goes beyond the income security area) reflects the funding opportunities available.

Case study 3: Peru

HelpAge has worked with partners in Peru for more than 20 years since and had long recognised the issue of low coverage of social protection in old age, but it wasn't until 2008 that a focused advocacy campaign for a social pension began. This was strongly influenced by changes to the funding environment. First, in this year HelpAge began a major project funded by the EU which allowed us to set up a country office. While the project had a broader remit than social protection, there was an advocacy component that eventually targeted this thematic area. Second, from this year HelpAge was beginning to take forward a regional-level programme on social protection from both the Latin America Programme Partnership Agreement (from DFID) and a global project from International Fonds Kwetsbare Ouderen (IFKO).

An advocacy plan was developed in 2008 through with two of [HelpAge's Peruvian affiliates](#), IPEMIN and Centro Proceso Social who would go on to lead the work. This was supported by HelpAge's regional Social Protection Advisor based in Bolivia who supported from a distance and through regular visits to the country. Another key partner in the advocacy work would be the national association of older people, ANAMPER and HelpAge's country office in Peru also gave support to activities.

Planning for the advocacy work began with an analysis of the political situation in Peru and identification of where social protection fitted in. This was in line with the regional strategy on social protection which had articulated the need for a focus on influencing the politics of social protection. The analysis recognised that the Peruvian government was in a relatively strong position to finance a social pension, but the current politics was providing a barrier to this.

The specific objective of the advocacy work was a point of debate from the outset. While everyone agreed that an ultimate objective should be universal pension coverage, many in HelpAge felt that strategically a universal pension was an unrealistic goal in the near future. Some even felt that a social pension at all was unrealistic. However, partners in Peru were adamant that the goal should be a universal pension⁷ and this became the main call of the advocacy in Peru. While there were changes to the plan of activities as the programme of work progressed, this objective remained consistent. That said, within discussions with technical players such as ILO and UNFPA, there remained openness to a greater variety of options, with an understanding from national-level partners of the need to negotiate with certain stakeholders.

The planning process involved a mapping of key stakeholders. In line with the aim of influencing the political discourse on old age and social protection, the work aimed to include a broad range of civil society players (eg. CSO networks and the media), but with a particular focus on the Peruvian parliament. Civil servants would be engaged particularly through regional level technical work. The ILO and UNFPA were identified as key international organisations to work with, but it was felt the World Bank would oppose the proposal for a social pension considering its existing support of the Juntos conditional cash transfer.

⁷ It is important to clarify that the ultimate policy ask of the advocacy work was a social pension covering all people with no other pension income, so not strictly universal to all citizens/residents. However, this was understood as "universal" as it would ensure coverage of all older people.

The advocacy in Peru broadly took forward three streams of work:

First, it was seen as important to strengthen the voice of older people in the debate on social protection. An initial step was to support ANAMPER to obtain necessary legal documents and to be officially recognised as a national organisation. This was essential to ensure ANAMPER could be represented in key events (including with government), and so it could look for its own financial support. In the meantime, ten leaders from ANAMPER were identified to be trained on social pensions so that they could engage credibly in debates on the issue with government, international organisations and other key stakeholders.

A second strand of work was with the Peruvian parliament. Building on the training of ten leaders, ANAMPER, IPEMIN and Control Proceso Social worked with organisations including the ILO, UNFPA, the Office of the Ombudsman, the Commission on Social Security of Congress and the Bureau of Coordination to Combat Poverty to put together a legislative bill which called for a social pension for people over 65 who had no other pension income. To sensitise parliamentarians to this act, a series of over 15 public meetings were held in cities across the country. As well as sharing the content of the proposal this was successful in demonstrating the strength of ANAMPER as a representative association of older people.

Third, an important background to the work in Peru was technical support to governments through South-South exchanges and training at a regional level. This included; a series of exchange programmes between governments in the region where they could gain exposure to the pension system of another country (2008), a course on micro-simulation in 2009 in Bolivia and a series of events on social security and ageing in Ecuador, Kenya and Paraguay with the regional body UNASUR (2010). All of these events included Peruvian participants and made important contributions to the advocacy process in Peru. In general terms, the exposure of Peruvian government to social pensions across the region helped to expose the absence of these policies in their own country. This contributed to changing the initial position of the government that it was already doing well in terms of social protection in old age. More specifically, the two Peruvian participants to the micro-simulation course in Bolivia used the knowledge gained on simulating cost and impact of social pensions to contribute to the drafting of the bill on social pensions. This gave much greater technical credibility to the proposal.

The advocacy programme undertaken in Peru has contributed to major policy changes since 2008. In 2010, the President Alan Garcia responded to growing debate on social pensions with the introduction of the "Gratitud" pilot pension programme for people over 75 and living in extreme poverty. This was seen by ANAMPER and others to be a meagre step compared to the call for a universal pension, but nevertheless marked important progress in the recognition of the issue. With a presidential election in mid-2011, the partners in Peru took advantage of this political moment to hold a set of public consultations with political candidates on the proposal for a universal pension. The most significant turning point came in February 2011 when presidential candidate Ollanta Humala announced his proposal for a universal pension to over 65s at one of these consultations with ANAMPER.⁸ The proposal went on to become an election battleground

⁸ The announcement was captured in this video (1m47s) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mWBwBCifolU>, it was also accompanied by a signed commitment.

with other opponents including Keiko Fujimori making alternative (more modest) proposals to extend the Gratitud pension. Humala (who had been trailing in fourth position at the time of the announcement) eventually won the election. Implementation of the "Pension 65" began in late 2011, however, political negotiations following the election led to a watering down of the proposal.

The implementation of Pension 65 was accompanied by a slight reorientation in strategy. On one hand, ANAMPER and the Peruvian partners have continued to pursue a universal pension, highlighting that Humala backtracked on the initial commitment. This has included continued lobbying to parliament on the establishment of a law on social pensions. The Pension 65 is still government by a presidential decree. In the meantime, the existence of the pension has provided new entry points for engagement. Since 2012, ANAMPER and IPEMIN has been supporting the Ministry implementing Pension 65 in training local authorities on ageing issues to support the implementation of the programme. A regional learning workshop on social protection (with a focus on social pensions) was also held in Peru in May 2012, in partnership between HelpAge and the ILO.

It is worth highlighting that the last two years since the election have seen a significant change in the funding environment for HelpAge and partners in country. The EU funded Peru programme, the DFID PPA and the IFKO project have all come to an end. Continued technical engagement with the pension has been supported through a global programme funded by BMZ, while funding from HelpAge Deutschland has sustained some advocacy activities.

For a useful secondary source on Peru see:

http://www.solidar.org/IMG/pdf/decentwork_toolkit_en_short_web.pdf

Case study 4: Philippines

The national-level advocacy on social pensions in the Philippines was initiated and led by HelpAge's affiliate Coalition of Services of the Elderly (COSE). COSE began actively campaigning for a social pension in 2007 and there were seen to be two principle drivers to this work. First, there was an introduction and sensitisation to the idea of a social pension through HelpAge's work at the regional level. COSE had first been exposed to social pensions at a regional meeting in 2002 and in 2007 was actively involved in preparation and participation in the regional conference "[Social cash transfers for Asia](#)" hosted by HelpAge in Bangkok in 2007. Secondly, COSE was increasingly seeing the limitations of its own work. COSE has been organising older people to form older people's organisations (OPO) throughout its entire 20 years of existence. The OPOs are intended to initiate and implement community-based programmes (CBP) to meet the needs of older people. Despite the benefits of these activities COSE increasingly saw that some of the poorest and most vulnerable people were excluded, so needed alternative forms of support. Social pensions were seen as a response to this issue.

There were diverging views about the best goal for the advocacy work in the Philippines. HelpAge International staff felt that a universal pension should be the goal of advocacy, however, on the basis of feedback from national allies and assessment of the country's financial situation COSE felt that a means-tested pension would be a more realistic and achievable starting point. COSE went ahead with the call for a means-tested pension targeted at the poorest older people, a decision which HelpAge respected.

Planning of advocacy and identification of stakeholders was led by COSE at the national level. Key stakeholders for the advocacy work were older people's networks (including the national association, COPAP), the Department of Social Welfare (lead agency on ageing and social protection) as well as media organisations which COSE had a strong history of working with. HelpAge has supported the identification of stakeholders through its regional links, for example, by linking COSE to the Asia Network for Transformative Social Protection of which COSE is now a member.

To guide the work, COSE developed a three year advocacy work plan from 2007-2009.

Between January and June 2007, COSE, in consultation with COPAP and other allies (including within government) **drafted a social pension bill**. Later in the year, COSE identified and approached possible supporters of the bill in the House of Representative (the Lower House of Parliament) and the Senate. Knowing that the bill would be reviewed by the Population and Family Relations Committee in the House of Representative, COSE lobbied individual committee members, liaised with the committee staff, mobilised older people to the committee hearing so they could ask questions and express their views, and matched older persons with their local congress members so they could communicate directly with them.

COSE agreed with the proposal to package the bill with other pending bills on ageing issues because a single/independent bill could be more difficult to get approved. This package is known as The Expanded Senior Citizen Bill which would be a modification of the Expanded Senior Citizen Act of 2003.

Up to 2010 (when the Bill was finally passed) this process was accompanied by intense lobbying in collaboration with both local and national level partners.

The process was supported by a research into social pensions in January 2007, which was supported financially by HelpAge EAPRDC after COSE expressed its interest in working on and deepening its understanding on social pensions. This research highlighted issues such

as the fact that of 6 million people aged 60 and over in the Philippines, just 1.2 million had a pension.

Over the next few years, COSE continued to lobby key stakeholders on the Bill. This came to a head when – following the approval of the Bill by the Population and Family Relations Committee in 2009 – the provision of a social pension was rejected by the Lower House of Representatives. COSE then turned to the Senate, where members asked for greater information on social pensions and to know the views of older people. Building on its strong grassroots networks COSE undertook national consultations with older people on the issue – supported through funding through the regional office (IFKO).

A key component of the advocacy throughout was the use of special occasions such as the International Day of Older Persons to highlight the issue of social pensions for older people. The HelpAge annual Age Demands Action (ADA) Campaign was a key hook for this advocacy, which was also supported by HelpAge funding.

The key moment in the campaign was the passing of the Expanded Senior Citizens Act into law in February 2010. Up to the passing of the Bill, there was significant uncertainty (and changes in direction) from the President as to whether a social pension would be included. COSE, along with COPAP, responded to this uncertainty by mobilising older people to march outside parliament, and directly lobby senators. These actions were seen as key to the eventual passing of the Bill.

The advocacy agenda was supported by ongoing capacity building activities. This included the regional interactions mentioned above, the March 2011 conference on social pensions in Manila, as well as attendance of COSE's Advocacy Officer to the Social Transfers Course in South Africa.

Following the passing of the Bill, COSE has undertaken continuous engagement with the implementation of the social pension (that began payments in March 2011). Principally, this has included monitoring of the social pension (and effectiveness of targeting) in its implementation. In March 2011, HelpAge supported this process by hosting the conference "Social Pensions: Learning from Asian Experience" in Manila to provide a forum for discussion regarding the planning, costing and implementation of a social pension scheme. The event brought in experiences from Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam.

Case study 5: Tanzania

HelpAge has been working in Tanzania for over 15 years. Much of our local level advocacy work and network strengthening sowed the seeds for our current social protection work. Activities have included; research, mainstreaming workshops with civil society and local government, engaging local councils to ensure that they include older people's issues in local council budgeting and planning, and strengthening older peoples associations and partner organisations focused on ageing.

Social protection became a key policy agenda for HelpAge in 2008 after the development of the Social Pensions Strategy approved by the board in the same year and a 3 day workshop by the Director of Policy on a visit to the country programme. This clarified the policy ask for universal pension coverage in Tanzania through a universal pension. At the same time HelpAge was aware that other actors had also raised the profile of social protection as a policy issue with government (in particular the ILO was conducting a Social Protection Expenditure Review) which HelpAge in Tanzania saw as an opportunity for collaboration and an entry point to engage at the national level. HelpAge was already engaged in related government policy processes which provided entry points for the new policy agenda (Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper development Process – MKUKUTA and government poverty research in 2009).

We were able to support the early implementation of a small social pension programme in a remote area of Tanzania implemented by our partner 'Kwa Wazee' (which was initially started in 2004). In 2008 HelpAge partnered with Kwa Wazee on an impact evaluation of the social pension on food security, health and psychosocial indicators of older people and children. The evidence represented credible Tanzanian evidence for national policy engagements.

HelpAge had already established key relationships in government based on previous projects and was participant in key forums focused on the poverty reduction agenda in Tanzania. A key relationship was with the Director of Poverty Eradication and Elimination of Poverty under the Ministry of Finance who wrote to HelpAge in 2009 asking for a study into the feasibility of a scale up of Kwa Wazee social pension to national scale.

HelpAge sought funding to respond to this request and developed a concept note for the study. Despite initial promise in country budget support for the study failed due to difficulty maintaining donor interest between changes in human resources and because of new budget approval processes. These negotiations delayed action on the study. Funding was sourced at the international level. By this time the Ministry of Finance delegated the partnership on the study to the Ministry of Labour Youth and Employment who had a remit for social security in Tanzania. HelpAge sought a tripartite arrangement between the ministries to maintain Ministry of Finance's role in the study but was advised that a MoU with two ministries was not possible. An MoU was developed to guide the research and included responsibilities for intellectual and coordination inputs from both the Ministry and HelpAge. The feasibility study aimed to take a consultative approach to gather evidence for the research in order to answer the question of feasibility of a universal pension in Tanzania but also better understand the political economy for universal pensions and raise awareness of it as a policy option amongst a wide array of stakeholders.

Published in May 2010 with the Ministry and launched in July, the feasibility study provided concrete evidence to build our case and had built awareness at the national level with key stakeholders. The HelpAge network in Tanzania was engaged to mobilise around the findings of the study and popularise it. As it was an electoral year, it was a priority to ensure cross party support of the universal pension through its inclusion in party

manifestos. This involved scoping and strategically identifying politically influential regions and locations for sensitisation and advocacy planning. At the national level the media was trained in ageing issues more generally and a media engagement campaign around the findings of the study was implemented. We worked in strategic zones across the country and invited all key duty bearers, those people who we thought could influence the opinion of the government, including faith leaders, Regional commissioners, MPs, business people and media to sensitisation meetings regarding the findings of the study and the need for social protection in Tanzania. These meetings invited opinion leaders to hold their own dissemination meetings and helped establish a broad constituency of champions for the agenda.

In order to ensure attendance of these opinion leaders there was a process of engaging them through mobilising older people and CSOs to engage political representatives and opinion leaders. In addition to mobilising key opinion formers nationwide in the lead up to the election and national level engagements with cross-party representatives we continued to take forward relationships with key stakeholders consulted through the feasibility study process, for example by seeking invitation to the events of national think-tanks, research institutions and lobby groups (Tanzania Gender Network and REPOA are examples). We collaborated with the Tanzania Knowledge Action Network (TAKNET) to hold an online forum on the feasibility of a universal pension which galvanised a lot of attention and participation from academics.

Older people's associations and the long term programme of work around the representation of older people's voice in local policy and practice provided the platform for much of this policy engagement work.

Political engagement continued after the election. The HelpAge network requested a meeting with MPs in 2011 in Dodoma. In this meeting the Minister of Labour committed to seek the introduction of the universal pension introduction in 2012, and remitted the Social Security Regulatory Authority (SSRA) to conduct a study on modalities for implementation. After the Government committed to the universal pension HelpAge took stock of how to maintain and increase pressure strategically. This took the form of continued community level engagement as well as facilitating a meeting between older people's organisations and MPS within a parliamentary session. During regular annual review meetings we organised for older people to take forward issues to SSRA, Ministries of Labour, Health and Finance. In addition to annual review meetings we used the annual global campaign opportunity 'Age Demands Action' on the international day of older people to highlight the issue each year. In particular these provided great pegs for the media engagement at national and sub-national levels.

HelpAge started to engage with the World Bank in 2011, in particular in relation to a universal pension as a social protection programme option which was potentially politically and technically feasible for the government. The World Bank has opposed the idea until relatively recently; their review of options for Productive Safety Nets in Tanzania dismissed a universal pension. The HelpAge office in with support from the team in London responded to this. The perspective from the HelpAge office is that the poverty impact of a universal pension would be high and that the political economy around social protection at the national level supports a universal pension. Meanwhile, the World Bank's Social Protection and Labour Strategy 2012 – 2022 recognises the role of non-contributory pensions and actively highlights this as a potential option for Africa.

HelpAge International
helps older people claim
their rights, challenge discrimination and
overcome poverty, so
that they can lead dignified, secure,
active and healthy lives.

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