

Pension Watch

Briefings on social protection in older age



Briefing no. 19

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Voice and accountability in the Zanzibar Universal Pension Scheme

Evidence from older citizen monitors in Zanzibar

Voice and accountability are central principles of a rights-based approach to social protection. This brief summarises data from surveys carried out by older citizen monitors with recipients of the Zanzibar Universal Pension Scheme, and group discussions between older citizen monitors and government officials. The surveys and discussions focused on implementation and accountability issues in the scheme. They highlighted areas for improvement, both in local-level programme implementation and in social protection policy design.

Key messages

- The simple eligibility criteria and universal design of the Zanzibar Universal Pension Scheme (ZUPS) promote transparency and accountability.
- Older citizen monitors and older persons' forums play an active role in raising older people's awareness of ZUPS eligibility criteria, payment processes, and the complaints and appeals mechanism.
- Fully implementing the complaints and appeals mechanism would provide a number of different channels for older people to make complaints, including complaints about sensitive issues such as financial abuse.

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Social protection: key to sustainable development

Social protection is now widely recognised as playing a critical role in addressing poverty and inequality and supporting sustainable development. This is acknowledged in a number of international and regional frameworks, including the Sustainable Development Goals.¹ It is also evidenced by the dramatic increase in the number of countries working to expand their social protection schemes over the last decade.²

Voice and accountability are central principles of a rights-based approach to social protection.³ Voice is about participating in decisions that affect our lives, expressing an opinion and having that opinion heard, accessing information, and meeting and debating with others. Accountability refers to the process of holding “individuals, agencies and organisations responsible for executing their powers according to a certain standard”.⁴ Accountability relates not only to monitoring of standards, but also to access to justice and remedies.

Why voice and accountability are important for social protection

There are at least three main reasons why voice and accountability are important for social protection. At a programme level, strengthening accountability in social protection is important for ensuring programmes function effectively. This includes reducing error, fraud and corruption; ensuring that social protection recipients receive the right amount of cash regularly, reliably and accessibly; and improving policy design.

Strengthening accountability can also contribute to broader efforts to build trust in the state and strengthen state-society relations for example, by providing channels for recipients and broader society to voice their concerns and participate in policy and programme development.

Accountability also has an intrinsic value: having a voice on issues that affect our lives is central to our dignity and self-worth and is fundamental to rights-based social protection.⁵

1. United Nations, Sustainable Development Goals, Goal 1 End poverty in all its forms everywhere, Goal 1 targets, www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/poverty (5 February 2018)

2. International Labour Organization, *World Social Protection Report 2017-19: Universal social protection to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals*, Geneva, International Labour Office, 2017

3. International Labour Organization, R202 – Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202) www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:R202 (5 February 2018)

4. McGee R and Gaventa J, *Synthesis report: Review of Impact and Effectiveness of Transparency and Accountability Initiatives*, Institute of Development Studies, 2010

5. Sepulveda M and Nyst C, *The Human Rights Approach to Social Protection*, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, 2012

Citizen-generated data

HelpAge International supports older citizen monitors (trained volunteers, usually members of older people's associations) to collect data about the social protection schemes available to older people in their countries. This evidence is used by older people to advocate with local officials for improvements in implementation of social protection schemes at local level. It is also used at national level to advocate for long-term change in social protection policy design and operations.

This brief summarises quantitative data from surveys which older citizen monitors carried out with recipients of the Zanzibar Universal Pension Scheme (ZUPS), and qualitative data from group discussions between older people and government officials involved in delivering the programme. The surveys were carried out in the homes of 322 older people across eight shehias (smallest division of local authority in Zanzibar) on Unguja and Pemba Islands in October 2016 and December 2017. Respondents answered questions about targeting and registration, delivery and payments, and accountability mechanisms in the ZUPS. Discussions between older people and government officials took place during the regular older persons forums (monthly meetings for older people and their families held at shehia level).

The data from the surveys and discussions is not intended to be representative of recipients of the ZUPS as a whole. However, it provides a snapshot of challenges that are relevant for future policy design and operations of social protection in Zanzibar. More information on older citizen monitoring and how it is conducted in Zanzibar can be found on the last page of this brief.



Kate Hoyt/HelpAge International

Social pensions in Zanzibar

The Zanzibar Universal Pension Scheme (ZUPS), launched by the Government of Zanzibar in April 2016, is the first of its kind in East Africa. It is a non-contributory, universal scheme for all people aged 70 years and above, and is fully funded by the government. It is administered by the Social Protection Unit of the Ministry responsible for older people.

The scheme was introduced primarily in response to weakening traditional support systems for older people. A decline in subsistence farming has resulted in many older people receiving inadequate support from family members. Many are unable to work or can only earn a very small income. The majority of older people do not have any other source of income, such as an earnings-related pension.⁶

Before the introduction of the ZUPS, Zanzibar had a system of poor relief for “destitute” older people. These were typically older people who were not only poor, but also in poor health, and who had no surviving children. The combination of conducive economic, social and political conditions, as well as this foundation of public responsibility, were important factors in the introduction of the ZUPS.⁷ 27,668 people aged 70 years and above currently receive a pension from the ZUPS.

Since the launch of the ZUPS, the Department of Elderly and Social Welfare has focused on improving its implementation including beginning to develop a management information system and exploring options for electronic payments. Discussions are also underway regarding a legal framework for the ZUPS which would help protect the long-term future of the scheme.

Targeting and registration

The ZUPS has simple eligibility criteria. Any person can apply for the pension who is 70 years of age or above, and is a Zanzibar resident or has lived in Zanzibar continuously for more than 10 years since the age of 18.⁸

Older citizen-generated data found that older people’s understanding of the eligibility criteria had evolved since the scheme was launched. In the first survey in October 2016, only 63 per cent of respondents said they knew why people had been selected to receive the ZUPS. By December 2017, this figure had reached 100 per cent (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Responses to the question, “Do you know why people are chosen to receive the ZUPS?”



The data shows that, even for a scheme with simple eligibility criteria, there may be some confusion among potential recipients in the early stages. The level of awareness about eligibility criteria is now very high, in contrast with other social protection schemes in the region, especially those using a poverty-targeted approach. For example, older citizen monitoring in Mozambique revealed that only 56 per cent of respondents knew why they had been selected for the Basic Social Subsidy Programme.⁹ Similarly, in Kenya, only 54 per cent of respondents said they knew why they had been selected for the Older Persons Cash Transfer.¹⁰

6. Seekings J, *The introduction of old age pensions in Zanzibar*, CSSR working paper no. 393, December 2016

7. Seekings J

8. Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar, Ministry of Empowerment, Social Welfare, Youth, Women and Children, Department of Social Welfare, *Zanzibar Universal Pension Scheme (ZUPS), The Standard Operating Procedures Manual*, December 2015

9. Livingstone A, Almeida F and Zimba A, *Pension Watch briefing no.17 Voz e responsabilização no Programa Subsídio Social Básico Evidências das pessoas idosas monitoras em Moçambique*, 2018, HelpAge International

10. Livingstone A, Maina E and Kamau G, *Pension Watch briefing no.16, Voice and accountability in the Older Persons Cash Transfer: Evidence from older citizen monitors in Kenya*, London, HelpAge International, 2018

Older people’s perceptions of the fairness of the targeting criteria have also changed. In October 2016, 77 per cent of respondents said they thought the way that people were selected for the ZUPS was fair. By December 2017, this figure had reached 100 per cent (Figure 2).

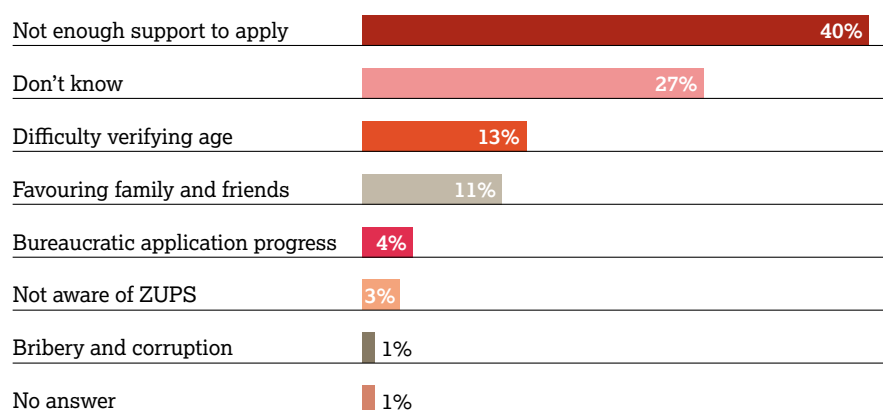
Figure 2: Responses to the question, “Do you think the way people are selected for the ZUPS is fair?”



Respondents to the survey in October 2016 who said they did not think the selection process was fair gave several reasons why. The majority gave reasons related to the registration process. Forty per cent said that not enough support was available to people wanting to apply. Thirteen per cent said they had difficulty verifying their age and therefore their eligibility for the scheme. A further 11 per cent claimed that family and friends of the ZUPS officials were being favoured for the scheme (Figure 3).

During group discussions, older citizen monitors said that in the early days of the ZUPS, there was some confusion between the ZUPS and the previous system of poor relief for “destitute” older people. This scheme did not have a particularly transparent selection process.¹¹

Figure 3: Reasons why respondents did not think the selection process was fair (October 2016)



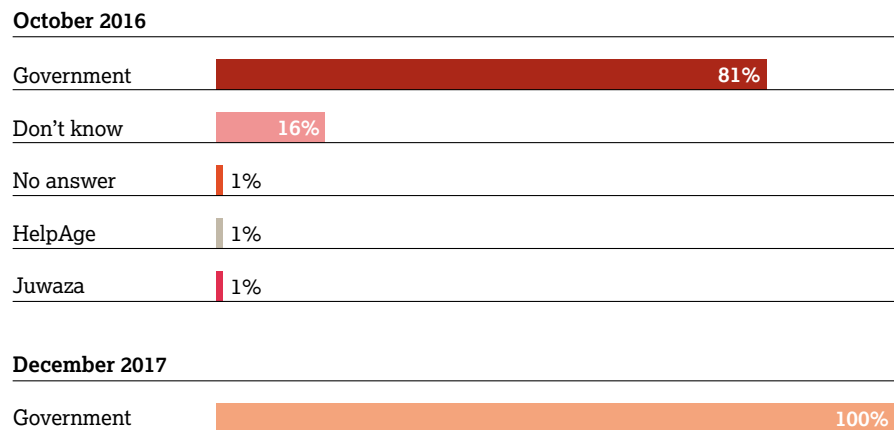
11. This scheme still exists but is now only available to “destitute” older people who are not yet old enough to be eligible for the ZUPS. They receive 5,000 Tsh (US\$2.22) per month.



Kate Holt/HelpAge International

The proportion of older people who said they knew that the ZUPS was government funded also increased between the two survey dates. In October 2016, 81 per cent of survey respondents said they knew that the ZUPS was a government-funded programme. Sixteen per cent said they did not know where the funding came from. One per cent said they thought it was from either HelpAge International or Juwaza (a Zanzibar civil society organisation).¹² By December 2017, all respondents said they knew that the ZUPS was a government-funded programme (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Respondents’ knowledge about where the ZUPS comes from



The notable improvement in respondents’ awareness of the selection criteria for the ZUPS and their knowledge of its funding source could be due to a number of factors. First, the ZUPS is a politically important scheme and has benefited from wide radio and television coverage. The inauguration of the scheme by the President also helped to raise its visibility in the broader population.

Secondly, the importance given to the ZUPS has raised the profile of older people’s issues in government ministries. This has led to district officials and *shehas* (heads of shehias) being given a mandate to ensure that all older people in their area are registered and the scheme is running smoothly, to limit the political risk that could stem from a poorly administered scheme.

Thirdly, older citizen monitors not only collect data on the implementation of the ZUPS, but also inform older people about the ZUPS and other government programmes and services available to them. This includes providing advice on how to register for the ZUPS and supporting older people to submit complaints and appeals.

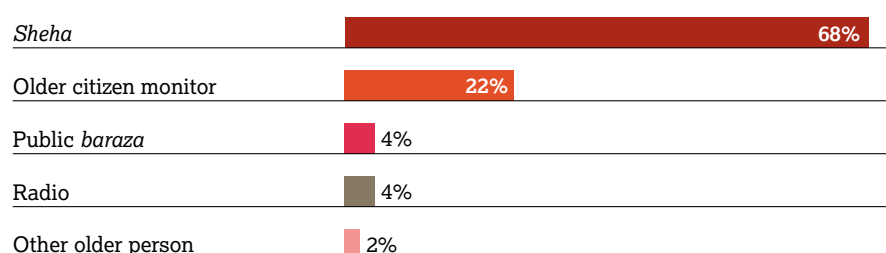
12. Juwaza is short for “Jumuia ya wazee Zanzibar” which translates as “an organisation for the older people of Zanzibar”

Finally, the simple eligibility criteria and widespread take-up of the scheme have helped to raise awareness of it, as accurate information spreads by word of mouth.

Respondents described several ways in which they had first learnt about the ZUPS. The majority (68 per cent) said they first learnt about the scheme from the *sheha*. Twenty-two per cent said they had learnt about it from an older citizen monitor, and 4 per cent by attending a public *baraza* (meeting) (Figure 5).

The data suggests that, while radio and television might have been important for raising broader public awareness about the scheme, face-to-face communication is particularly important for older people. One participant in a discussion group said that both the *sheha* and the older citizen monitor had visited her at home to tell her about the scheme. They had brought registration forms with them and helped her to complete them.

Figure 5: Different ways in which respondents said they first learned about the ZUPS (October 2016)



The proportion of survey respondents who were receiving the ZUPS also increased notably between October 2016 and December 2017. In October 2016, 81 per cent of respondents said they were in receipt of the ZUPS. By December 2017, this figure had increased to 99 per cent (Figure 6).

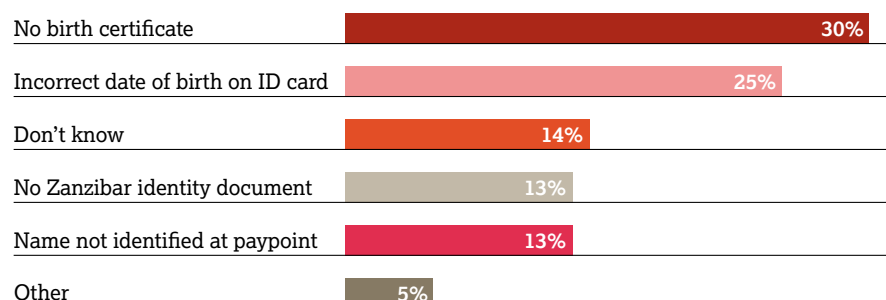
Figure 6: Proportion of respondents who said they received the ZUPS



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Respondents who were not in receipt of the ZUPS gave the main reason as lack of documentation to prove they were old enough to be eligible. Thirty per cent said they did not have a birth certificate, and 25 per cent said the date of birth on their identity card was incorrect. Thirteen per cent said they did not have a Zanzibar identity document. A further 13 per cent said their name was not on the list at the paypoint (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Reasons respondents gave for not receiving the ZUPS (October 2016)



Lack of a birth certificate or other document to verify a person's age is a common problem in implementing social pension schemes in low- and middle-income countries. Older people are less likely than younger generations to have a legally recognised document proving their age and identity. In many countries, the current generation of older people was born before civil registration systems were introduced.¹³ In light of this problem, the Zanzibar Social Protection Unit has been flexible in allowing older people with no identity documents or who disagree with the birthdate on their national identity document to use alternative methods of proving their eligibility such as reference to historical or local events and the knowledge of families with long-term residency.

During group discussions, older citizen monitors said that if a person's name was not on the list of those eligible to receive the ZUPS, it was usually because of a misunderstanding about the payment cycle. For example, if someone registers for the scheme on a Monday, and the next payment is scheduled for Thursday of the same week, they will not be able to collect their payment that Thursday. This is because it takes time for an application to be verified, and for a person's name to be entered into the register and appear on the list of those eligible. The person would have to wait until the next payment date to receive their first payment. This kind of misunderstanding was straightforward for *shehas* and older citizen monitors to explain to older people.

13. McPherson A, *Pension Watch briefing no. 6, Challenges and opportunities for age verification in low and middle income countries*, London, HelpAge International, 2011

Delivery and payment

Those registered for the ZUPS receive a monthly payment of 20,000 Tsh (US\$8.95). Currently, all payments are made manually in cash at paypoints on the same date each month. Paypoints are usually set up in a village hall or other common area used by the community.

At the paypoint, the District Social Welfare Officer checks each person's name against a list of those registered, and inspects their identification document. A cashier from the Ministry responsible for older people hands over the cash. The recipient is required to sign or fingerprint a receipt for the cash. The whole payment process is overseen by two security officers.

Older people do not have to attend the paypoint in person. They can nominate a representative to collect the payment on their behalf. The representative must provide identification documents, and the older person and their representative must both sign a power of attorney letter that includes photos of both of them. Then the representative can be formally enrolled on the ZUPS.

In the October 2016 survey, 89 per cent of respondents said they had been informed in advance of the payment date. By December 2017, this figure had reached 99 per cent (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Proportion of respondents who said they had been informed in advance of the payment date



During group discussions, older people said that, although older citizen monitors and *shehas* played a role in ensuring that they knew the correct payment date, older people also tended to remind each other of the payment date. They said they found it helpful that the payment date was always the same. One participant commented, “The payment date has never changed. Even when the former president died, the payment still went ahead.” Keeping payment dates simple is important for social pension schemes, as people’s memory may decline in older age. For example, a recent study found that 39 per cent of Zanzibaris aged 70 years and above said they had some difficulty in remembering, and 9 per cent said they had a lot of difficulty.¹⁴

Physical accessibility of paypoints is a very important design consideration in social pension schemes, as the risk of disability and the proportion of people with specific communication needs are higher in older age. The same study found that half of Zanzibaris aged 70 years and above reported having a severe disability and 27 per cent reported having a mild disability. Just over one third (34 per cent) reported having a lot of difficulty walking or climbing steps. Nearly half the respondents (48 per cent) had some difficulty seeing, and 28 per cent had difficulty hearing.¹⁵

14. Galvani F and Knox-Vydmanov C, *Zanzibar universal social pension: baseline survey*, London, HelpAge International, 2017

15. Galvani F and Knox-Vydmanov C

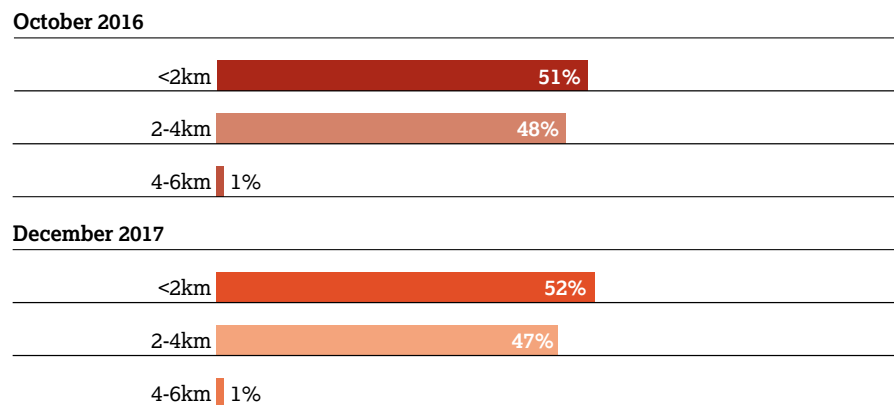


Kate Holt/HelpAge International

Data collected by older citizen monitors in October 2016 showed that just over half the respondents (51 per cent) said they travelled less than 2 kilometres to reach the paypoint. Just under half (48 per cent) said they travelled 2-4 kilometres (Figure 9).

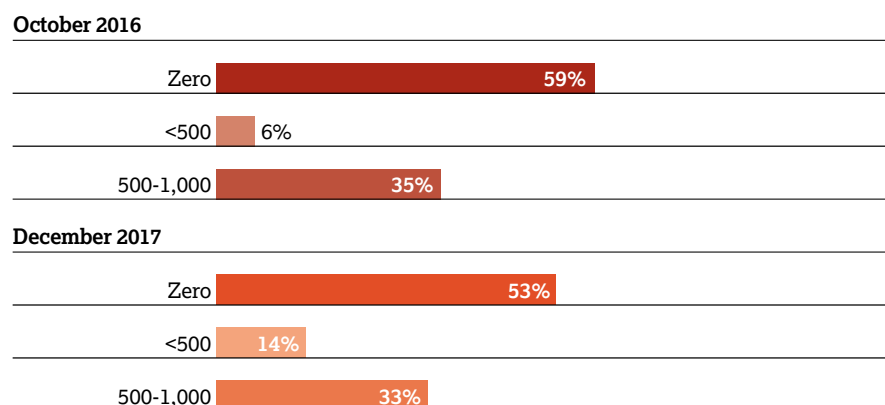
Since the launch of the ZUPS in April 2016, the Government has increased the number of paypoints from 47 to 68 in various parts of Zanzibar. Older people in two of the shehias surveyed by older citizen monitors said they had requested ZUPS officials to establish more paypoints. However, ZUPS officials were unable to respond to their requests, having already prioritised locations for additional paypoints. They promised to respond progressively to requests for paypoints in more areas. Because of this, there was very little change in distances travelled between October 2016 and December 2017.

Figure 9: Distance in kilometres respondents travelled to reach the paypoint



Some older people said they had to pay for transport, such as a dala-dala (shared mini bus), to reach the paypoint. In October 2016, 41 per cent of survey respondents said they paid for transport to reach the paypoint. Thirty-five per cent said they spent 500-1,000 Tsh (US\$0.22-0.44). Six per cent said they spent less than 500 Tsh (US\$0.22), and 59 per cent said they did not spend any money to reach the paypoint. By December 2017, the percentage of older people who paid 500-1,000 Tsh (US\$0.22-0.44) for transport to reach the paypoint had fallen to 33 per cent. However, overall, a larger proportion of older people (47 per cent) reported spending money to reach the paypoint in December 2017 (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Amount of money (Tsh) respondents spent on transport to reach the paypoint



Without further research, it is impossible to be certain why the percentage of older people spending money to reach the paypoint had increased. One possible reason is that December is in the rainy season, and so more older people chose to pay for transport.

The distance to the paypoint and the cost of transport are likely to be significant issues for ZUPS recipients, particularly those with mobility problems. However, overall, the ZUPS fares better on delivery than other social pension schemes where older citizen monitors have been collecting data. For example, only 1 per cent of ZUPS recipients reported travelling 4-6 kilometres to reach the paypoint, compared with 29 per cent of Senior Citizens Grant recipients in Uganda. In Zanzibar, no ZUPS recipients said they travelled more than 6 kilometres. In Uganda, 8 per cent of Senior Citizens Grant recipients said they travelled 7 kilometres or more.¹⁶

The relatively small size of Zanzibar makes it much easier to administer the pension than in Uganda, which covers vast areas. Nevertheless, the Zanzibar Social Protection Unit is currently exploring alternatives to manual cash payments.

16. Livingstone A, Kemigisha E and Mugisha J, *Pension Watch briefing no.18, Voice and accountability in the Senior Citizens Grant: Evidence from older citizen monitors in Uganda*, London, HelpAge International, 2018

Accountability mechanisms

The standard operating procedures manual for ZUPS describes the process for handling complaints and appeals. It states that older people or any other person, must be able to report any dissatisfaction, for example with the quality of service they have received or because they have not received their full payment.

According to the manual, those eligible for the ZUPS who wish to make a complaint are required to fill out a complaints and appeals form at the *sheha's* office and submit it to the Director of Social Welfare. They can do this either in person or via the *sheha*, who will refer the complaint to the district-level office if necessary. In reality, the complaints and appeals mechanism is not fully operational, and complaints are not being officially recorded. This makes the current system somewhat informal.

The operations manual also refers to a role for “older people’s structures” in the complaints and appeals mechanism to “create awareness on the right to appeal and support those who want to send their complaints and appeals to make the process easier for beneficiaries who are unable to do it by themselves.”¹⁷ These “older people’s structures” are *shehia*-level community groups known as older persons’ forums. These were initially established and supported by Juwaza and HelpAge International, based on a model used in mainland Tanzania and other countries in Africa.

The term “older persons’ forum” is often used interchangeably by civil society and government officials to refer to both the group itself and to the monthly meeting that brings together older people in the *shehia*. Each older persons’ forum is overseen by an elected committee of older people. Monthly meetings are used not only to inform members about government programmes, including the ZUPS, but also to provide advice about health conditions, and support members to develop small businesses, save money or apply for small loans.

Older persons’ forums, with support from Juwaza, were instrumental in creating the demand for a pension that helped bring about the ZUPS. After the ZUPS had been approved, these forums played an important role in mobilising older people for registration. They have continued to influence improvements in the scheme through monitoring delivery of payments, advocating for improvements and supporting individual older people to raise complaints.

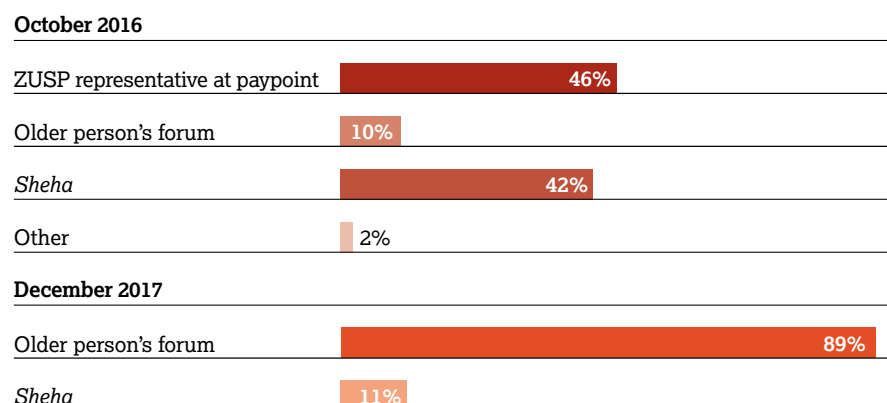
Older citizen monitors not only collect data, but also provide information and support to housebound older people and others who may not be able to attend the monthly meetings. For example, monitoring and advocacy by older persons’ forums and older citizen monitors contributed to an increase in the number of paypoints from the original 47 in April 2016 to 68 by December 2017.



17. Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar, Ministry of Empowerment, Social Welfare, Youth, Women and Children, Department of Social Welfare

In the surveys, older citizen monitors asked older people if they knew where to get help if they had a problem with their payment. The responses changed dramatically between the two survey dates. In October 2016, only 10 per cent of respondents named the older persons' forum as a source of help if they needed it. By December 2017, the proportion had jumped to 89 per cent. In October 2016, 42 per cent of respondents said they would ask the *sheha*, but the proportion had dropped to only 11 per cent by December 2017. In October 2016, the majority of respondents (46 per cent) said they would ask a ZUPS representative at the paypoint. By December 2017, none of them said they would ask a ZUPS representative (Figure 11).

Figure 11: Channels that respondents said they could use to get help if they had a problem with the ZUPS



This dramatic change in responses shows that older persons' forums and older citizen monitors are increasingly providing support to older people if they have any problems with the ZUPS. Group discussions revealed that older people felt more comfortable about raising complaints at monthly meetings of their older persons' forum, or directly with older citizen monitors. They said they preferred to use older citizen monitors partly because they were more accessible. The older citizen monitors could visit them at home and had more time to listen to their concerns. They said this was preferable to meeting a ZUPS representative at the paypoint who could only see them on the payday and was busy dealing with payments, or seeing the *sheha* who had little time for them because of other responsibilities.

Participants in group discussions also said they preferred to talk with other older people as they feared being labelled stubborn or ungrateful if they made a complaint. For some older people, such fears were partly due to the fact that they still considered the ZUPS to be a government favour rather than a right, even though older persons' forums had informed them that it was an entitlement.

However, in social protection schemes it is good practice for recipients to have access to more than one channel for assistance or complaints. The data shown in Figure 11 for December 2017 suggests that nearly all respondents would go to the older persons' forum if they had a problem with the ZUPS. Although this question was presented as a multiple choice, only 8 per cent of respondents named both the older persons' forum and the *sheha*.

These responses could be due partly to the official complaints and appeals process not yet being fully operational, and other channels than the older persons' forum not yet being well publicised. Nevertheless, the responses highlight a significant gap in the ZUPS accountability mechanism. Problems faced by older people may vary from a simple lack of knowledge about payment processes to an appeal against being declared ineligible for the ZUPS. An older citizen monitor or older persons' forum may be able to deal with the first example, but may only be able to deal with the second example in a limited way, such as helping the older person to contact a government official. In any case, the older citizen monitors and older persons' forums should not be a substitute for a proper complaints and appeals mechanism.

Conclusions and recommendations

The introduction of the ZUPS in April 2016 demonstrates a major commitment by the Government of Zanzibar to provide social protection to older people. The simple eligibility criteria and near-universal design of the scheme supports programme transparency and promotes accountability. This is particularly apparent when comparing the results of the ZUPS with results of poverty-targeted social protection schemes in other African countries. In Zanzibar, all older people knew why they had been selected for the ZUPS and they all knew it was funded by the government. In Kenya, only 54 per cent of respondents said they knew why they had been selected for the Older Persons Cash Transfer, targeted at “poor and vulnerable older people”, and only 41 per cent said they knew it was a government-funded programme.¹⁸

When older people understand why they have been selected for a scheme, and are familiar with procedures such as payment dates and amounts, it is easier for them to hold government officials to account. However, despite the significant progress made in implementing the ZUPS, the programme still faces a number of implementation challenges. Further strengthening the voice and accountability aspects of the scheme will help to address these.

Fully implement the complaints and appeals mechanism

Although the system for complaints and appeals has not yet been fully operationalised in the ZUPS, the data collected by older citizen monitors suggests that many concerns that older people had in the early stages of the scheme have been dealt with. For example, nearly all the older people in the survey areas are now registered for the ZUPS. Older citizen monitors and older persons’ forums have been able to respond to complaints related to misinformation about the payment cycle and the process for nominating a representative.

However, going forward, it is important to develop a properly systematised complaints and appeals mechanism. Systematically recording complaints and appeals, and monitoring the type and number of complaints, will support the Social Protection Unit to improve design and implementation of the ZUPS. A more systematic procedure will also allow further analysis of complaints, for example, how far they vary according to factors such as location, age group, disability or gender, and to provide support to certain districts or shehias if needed.

Fully implementing the complaints and appeals mechanism will require a number of different channels to be developed for older people to raise their concerns and track the progress of their case. Having a choice of channels will help to make the complaints and appeals procedure accessible to all ZUPS recipients, such as those with mobility issues or special communication needs, or who have limited time to lodge a complaint because, for example, of work or childcare responsibilities. Older people should be made aware that they can use another channel if the first channel they have used is unresponsive, or if they are worried about possible reprisals. The system should include a confidential channel that older people can use if they want to make a complaint about a sensitive issue such as financial abuse.

It is important to fully implement the complaints and appeals mechanism before introducing any major changes to the way the ZUPS is distributed. For example, introducing electronic payments could create new opportunities for theft by family members, friends or payment agents, making it essential for the complaints and appeals system to be fully operational.

18. Livingstone A, Maina E and Kamau G

Increase the coverage of older persons' forums and older citizen monitors

This briefing has highlighted the important role that older persons' forums and older citizen monitors have played in the eight shehias in which data has been collected, by supporting registration, raising awareness of the ZUPS and improving delivery. Going forward, a key challenge is to establish older persons' forums and older citizen monitors in all the areas where the ZUPS is operational.

The older persons' forums and older citizen monitoring structures were initially set up and supported by a local civil society organisation, Juwaza, with support from HelpAge International. In a small number of areas, they have been supported intensively for the past three years, with funding from the UK Department for International Development and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. In 2017 the Government of Zanzibar agreed to allow their district-level social welfare officers and *shehas* to learn how to set up older persons' structures in more areas. As a result, most parts of Zanzibar are now covered by older persons' structures, though the new ones are lighter in terms of their skills, knowledge and capacity than the original few. There are still some areas of Zanzibar that do not yet have any older persons' structures.

Providing more resources to scale up this approach is clearly necessary. Government support for older persons' structures may be more sustainable in the longer term than project funding, which is often geographically limited and time bound. However, there is an important question about who the older persons' forum committee members and older citizen monitors are accountable to. Increased government support would mean that older persons' forums and older citizen monitors would be accountable to the government, rather than to civil society organisations such as Juwaza. This raises the question of how independent a voice they would have. If they are to be accountable to older people, then systems for oversight must be put in place for this approach to succeed on a larger scale.

A law for older people is currently being drafted in Zanzibar. This may create an opportunity to provide more clarity about the role of older persons' structures and how independent they are of the government. An explicit link must be made to the role of older persons' structures in government programmes, including the ZUPS, in the national strategy and action plan that will support the roll-out of the older persons' law. Particular areas for clarification are how older citizen monitors and committee members of older persons' forums can be held to account as intermediaries between older people and the government. For example, the action plan could specify how older people can make a complaint about an older persons' forum committee member or older citizen monitor, and whether committee members can be dismissed in the case of misconduct. Strengthening processes for holding older persons' forums and older citizen monitors to account is particularly important if their role is to be scaled up across Zanzibar.


HelpAge International is a global network of organisations promoting the right of all older people to lead dignified, healthy and secure lives.


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Front page photo by Kate Holt/HelpAge
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Design by TRUE www.truedesign.co.uk

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ISBN 978-1-910743-35-5

DataKind

This briefing was produced with the financial assistance of the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of HelpAge International and do not necessarily reflect the views of BMZ.

Financed by



Federal Ministry
for Economic Cooperation
and Development

Further information about older citizen monitoring

Older citizen monitoring has been a core feature of HelpAge's voice and accountability work since 2002. To date it has involved more than 3,000 older people's associations in 27 countries. Older citizen monitors regularly collect evidence and advocate on issues ranging from health services and social protection, to the inclusion of older people in local planning and budgeting. In Zanzibar, older citizen monitors have been monitoring access to health services since 2014. Older citizen monitors started monitoring implementation of the ZUPS after it was launched in April 2016. Five sets of older citizen monitoring data were collected between October 2016 and December 2017. The full set of data can be explored on www.pension-watch.net

For more information on HelpAge's work on voice and accountability in social protection, including older citizen monitoring data from other countries, visit www.pension-watch.net For more information on HelpAge's voice and accountability work, refer to our report, *Older citizen monitoring: Achievements and learning*, which can be downloaded from www.helpage.org.

Find out more:

www.pension-watch.net

Acknowledgements

HelpAge International would like to thank the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development for their financial support; JUWAZA for supporting the older citizen monitoring data collection process; Kelvin Tay and Jeremy Osborn of DataKind for pro bono support with analysis and visuals; Tableau for Desktop licensing; and Charles Knox-Vydmanov and Flavia Galvani for comments and proof-reading. Finally, a special thank you to all the older people who gave their feedback to older citizen monitors, and to the older citizen monitors themselves.