

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT REPORT

For

Good Practices, Learning Demands and Challenges for Civil Society Organizations and Trade Unions to Actively and Effectively Participate in Social Protection and Public Finance Management Processes in Uganda

December 13th, 2020

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Abbreviations

CDD	:	Community Driven Development
CSBAG	:	Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group
CSOs	:	Civil Society Organisations
DLG	:	District Local Government
EC	:	European Commission
ESP	:	Expanding Social Protection
FY	:	Financial Year
GCSPF	:	Global Coalition on Social Protection Floors
HAI	:	HelpAge International
ILO	:	International Labour Organisations
KLIP	:	Karamoja Livelihoods Integrated Programme
MGLSD	:	Ministry of Gender Labour Social Development
NDP	:	National Development Plan
NSSF	:	National Social Security Fund
NUSAF	:	Northern Uganda Social Action Fund
OVC	:	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PFM	:	Public Finance Management
SAGE	:	Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment
SP	:	Social Protection
TUs	:	Trade Unions
UDN	:	Uganda Debt Network
URAA	:	Uganda Reached the Aged Association
USPP	:	Uganda Social Protection Platform
UWONET	:	Uganda Women's Network
UYONET	:	Uganda Youth Network

Executive Summary

This is a capacity assessment report for Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and Trade Unions (TUs) on Social Protection (SP) and Public Financial Management (PFM) Processes. The purpose of the assessment was to generate information on good practices and experiences, as well as key challenges and roadblocks, of CSOs and TUs actively and effectively engaging in, and influencing, social protection and public finance management processes in Uganda. The assessment was commissioned by HelpAge International Uganda and was conducted in October - November 2020. Data for the assessment was collected through review of relevant documents, key informant interviews, sharing and obtaining feedback on draft assessment report from key project stakeholders. A total of 12 (6Male; 6Females) people from 7 CSOs and 2 TUs with a focus on social protection participated in the assessment. The major findings from the capacity assessment are indicated hereunder:

Experience of CSOs and TU's in SP and PFM processes

The major experience of CSOs in influencing SP and PFM processes are in the area of planning and budgeting as well as policy formulation. CSOs participate and advocate for inclusion of some SP issues for vulnerable groups in district local government plans and budgets, National Development Plans and in national social protection related policies. The major experience of TUs are in the area of advocacy for protection of workers' rights, adoption of minimum wage for workers, proper management of workers savings (social security) in National Social Security Fund (NSSF) and mid-term access of workers savings in NSSF by vulnerable workers.

Lessons Learnt and Good Practices

The concept of SP appears new and it is not clear to many people including those in government, trade unions and CSOs both at district and national level.

Obtaining desired results from policy engagements with government takes a long time. This requires some patience, consistency and perseverance of CSOs and TUs actions. Successful engagement in policy processes also requires good timing of the government policy processes.

It is good practice for CSOs and TUs to have contacts and to target the real people (decision-makers) who take decisions, formulate and approve government's plans and budgets.

Government's contribution to SP programmes is now higher than that of development partners. But its contribution is still insufficient to cover all the social protection needs in the country.

Challenges and roadblocks of CSOs and TUs influence of SP and PFM Processes

There is limited CSOs and TUs understanding of various components of SP and PFM processes. The understanding of SP among CSOs and TUs is still limited to cash transfers to older persons, pensions for retired civil servants and workers savings in NSSF. CSOs and TUs are yet to understand other forms of SP such as school feeding programmes, maternity benefits, child care benefits, micro-insurance schemes, skills and public works among others. The understanding of PFM processes by CSOs and TUs is also still limited to participating in planning and budgeting processes. There is still limited understanding and actions by CSOs and TUs on PFM processes such as budget tracking/monitoring use of SP funds, domestic revenue mobilisation and allocation to SP and linkages of government borrowing (loan) and social protection. This is due to limited exposure, sensitisation and training of CSOs and TUs actors on SP and PFM processes.

The capacity of CSOs and TUs to influence government's plans and budgets on SP is still constrained by limited understanding of various components of SP, too much focus on direct service delivery to vulnerable people, a focus on quick and tangible results, lack of funds to support participation in planning and budgeting processes and inability to access contacts and to meet real people with actual power to make decisions in government institutions.

There is limited capacity of CSOs and TUs in tracking public expenditure and value for money allocated to SP issues. The few CSOs that are involved in tracking public expenditures indirectly

do this under the umbrella of Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (CSBAG). Yet SP is not a priority area for budget advocacy by the CSBAG. TUs are not involved at all in tracking public expenditure on SP issues. This is due to limited training of CSOs and TUs staff or members on budget tracking or monitoring and due to lack of funds to support their budget tracking.

There is also limited capacity of CSOs and TUs in evidence generation, analysis, packaging and usage when influencing SP and PFM processes. While international and national level CSOs and TUs have better trained staff and experience in evidence generation and usage, this capacity is not directed towards evidence generation for SP interventions. Besides many CSOs and TUs lack funds and trained technical personnel to support evidence generation or research on SP issues.

There is no cohesion by CSOs with TUs in their engagement with government on SP and PFM issues. Each actor tends to engage government institutions independently yet they all pursue related SP objectives. While there is a National Social Protection Platform, this Platform is weak. This is because the Platform's activities are driven by the interest of some donors that founded it. It also has weaknesses in its internal leadership whose selection is based on periodic rotation among its members yet these have varying internal leadership capabilities. As such, there is limited participation of key international and national CSOs in Platform activities which has reduced clout and ability of the Platform to continue attracting and bringing together CSO actors to advocate for SP issues in the country.

Some CSO and TUs do not have funds to support their policy advocacy with a focus on SP and PFM processes. Some CSOs and TUs do not have specific budgets for tracking public expenditures, evidence generation and policy advocacy and networking on SP and PFM processes. Some CSOs do not have relevant information on potential donors. Others tend to fundraise independently yet some donors want to fund consortiums or networks.

It is **recommended** that HelpAge International Uganda together with the Project Steering Committee:

1. Initiate and operationalise an informal loose Learning Group that brings together CSOs and TUs actors to learn from each other on various components of SP and PFM processes, resource mobilisation, evidence generation and policy advocacy with government.
2. Use the Learning Group, to facilitate CSOs and TUs to harmonise their SP and PFM priority policy positions, coalesce their collective voice and action on SP issues, and to learn from each other on SP and PFM processes.
3. Document and share simplified materials with information on various forms on SP and PFM processes with CSOs and TUs to help them to know what SP and PFM is and what it's not.
4. Hire a Consultant to train key CSOs and TUs to understand SP and entire process of PFM.
5. Hire a Consultant to mentor and coach selected CSO and TUs in the art and craft of policy engagement.
6. Hire a Consultant to train CSOs and TUs staff and leaders on how to generate credible evidence, packaging of evidence and evidence sharing to influence public decisions at different levels. This support can also include mentoring and coaching of selected CSO and TUs personnel in the art of literature review, development of data collection tools, methodologies for data collection and analysis and report writing.
7. Facilitate selected CSOs and TUs (i.e. the Learning Group members) with some funds (if available) to help them generate and use credible evidence in priority identified SP and PFM issues.

Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

This chapter presents project background and its description; an overview of the concept of social protection and financial management processes; and an overview of the legal, policy development and institutional framework underlying social protection in Uganda

1.1 Project Background and Its Description

The European Commission (EC, DG DevCo) is funding a project that seeks to strengthen national social protection systems through technical support, explorative research and capacity development, focusing on public financial management systems, budgeting and financing of social protection. The project is called: 'Building Synergies between Social Protection and Public Finance Management'. The four-year project will be implemented by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNICEF in eight countries (Angola, Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, Uganda, Senegal, Nepal, Cambodia, and Paraguay) that are interested in strengthening their social protection systems. In addition to the ILO and UNICEF, civil society is also involved in the design, steering and implementation of the project through the Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors (GCSPF). The GCSPF will facilitate this active involvement of social protection-focused on civil society and trade unions in Cambodia, Nepal, Senegal and Uganda. In Uganda, HelpAge International (HAI), which is a member of GCSPF, implements the project.

The project's focus is on supporting governments to strengthen and expand national social protection system through systems strengthening activities towards effective, evidence-based and inclusive financial and budgeting processes. The role of the GCSPF is to strengthen national civil society organizations (CSOs) and platforms, expand capacities and structures to enable civil society and trade unions (TUs) to engage in meaningful dialogues with key social protection stakeholders and governments on social protection. It also intends to strengthen the capacity of these actors in design and financing, as well as in monitoring and social accountability, and amplify the voices and concerns of communities and beneficiaries.

1.2 Overview of the Concept of Social Protection and Public Finance Management

Social Protection (SP): There are different interpretations of social protection by different people and institutions. The World Bank defined social protection and labour systems in terms of policies and programs that help individuals and societies to manage risk and volatility and to protect them from poverty and destitution— through instruments that improve resilience for the vulnerable (insurance against impacts of different shocks), the opportunity for all (promoting human capital and access to productive work) and equity of the poor (protecting against dire poverty and loss of human capital)¹. The Uganda Social Protection Policy 2015 defined social protection as public and private interventions aimed at addressing risks and vulnerabilities that expose individuals to income insecurity and social deprivation, leading to undignified lives. A coalition of CSOs in Uganda also defined social protection to mean “all public and private initiatives that provide income or consumption transfers to the poor, protect the vulnerable against livelihood risks, and enhance the social status and rights of the marginalized; with the overall objective of reducing the economic and social vulnerability of poor, vulnerable and marginalized groups”².

The core SP programmes include **social insurance** (old-age pensions, disability, unemployment, maternity, health and informal savings pooling); **social assistance** (cash transfers [conditional, public works, unconditional], In-kind transfers [school feeding, fertilizer, seeds], fee waivers, tax

¹The World Bank, April 2016, Overview of Social Protection. Available on Internet on, <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/539091464367881686/SPLCC-2016-Joint-Session-DISI-Rawlings-SP-Overview.pdf> (Accessed on 10/11/2020).

² Civil Society Input into PEAP Revision and the Development of a Five Year National Development Plan (2008-2012). Social Protection for Uganda's most Vulnerable and Chronically Poor: Issues, Challenges and Options. Civil Society Issue Paper on Social Protection, January, 2008.

incentives, subsidies, and social services); and active **labour market programmes** including labour market regulations.

The World Bank further indicated that SP programmes should be provided over the entire lifecycle of a human being right from pregnancy to old age. During pregnancy and early childhood SP programmes can include nutrition, Early Childhood Development (ECD), cash transfers linked to pre-school/health, orphans – vulnerable child programs, child allowances, maternity allowances). During the childhood stage, SP programmes can include cash transfers for (girls’) education, child allowance and school feeding. At the youth stage, SP programmes can include youth employment programs, skills, public works and micro-insurance schemes. The working-age can include SP programmes such as employment services, entrepreneurship, skills, cash & in-kind transfers, public works, unemployment, disability insurance; and old age can include SP programmes such as productive ageing, social pensions, old-age pensions, and disability insurance³.

Public Finance Management (PFM) Processes: PFM refers to the set of laws, rules, systems and processes used by governments to mobilise revenue, allocate public funds, and undertake public spending, account for funds and audit results. PFM is a cycle that involves policy design, budget formulation, budget approval, budget execution, accounting and external audit⁴. Traditionally, PFM was concerned with how governments manage the budget in its established phases: formulation, approval, and execution. Today, PFM processes also focus on all aspects of managing public resources, including resource mobilization, debt management and risks to public finances. PFM is now seen as a set of systems aimed at producing information, processes, and rules that can help support fiscal policymaking as well as provide instruments for its implementation. The objective of PFM is to maintain a sustainable fiscal position, the effective allocation of resources, and the efficient delivery of public goods and services⁵. An effective PFM focuses on aggregate financial management (fiscal sustainability, resource mobilisation and allocation); operational management (performance, value for money and strategic financial planning and management); governance (transparency and accountability); and fiduciary risk management (controls, compliance and oversight)⁶.

1.3 Overview of the National Policy and Development Context of Social Protection

Legal and Policy Framework: The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda 1995 provides for SP. The Constitution mandates the government under the National Objectives and Directives Principles of State Policy No VII to make reasonable provision for the welfare and maintenance of the aged. It also mandates the government in Objective No XIV (b) to ensure that all Ugandans enjoy rights and opportunities and access to education, health services, clean and safe water, work, decent shelter, adequate clothing, food security and pension and retirement benefits. In 2015, Uganda adopted a National Social Protection Policy. The mission of this Policy is to provide comprehensive social protection services to address risks and vulnerabilities. The Policy objectives are to increase access to social security; enhance care, protection and support for vulnerable people; and to strengthen the institutional framework for social protection service delivery.

The National Social Protection Policy 2015 provides various forms of social protection interventions that exist in Uganda. These include the Public Service Pensions Scheme (PSPS), the National Social Security Fund (NSSF); voluntary retirement benefits schemes; workers compensation scheme (for workers who suffer injuries or contract occupational diseases in the

³The World Bank, April 2016, Overview of Social Protection. Available on Internet on, <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/539091464367881686/SPLCC-2016-Joint-Session-DISI-Rawlings-SP-Overview.pdf> (Accessed on 10/11/2020).

⁴ Lawson Andrew, 2015, Public Finance Management (PFM) Available on Internet, <https://gsdrc.org/professional-dev/public-financial-management/> Accessed on July 13, 2020.

⁵ International Monetary Fund (IMF), 2013, Public Financial Management and Its Emerging Architecture. Available on Internet on https://www.elibrary.imf.org/staticfiles/misc/pdf/pfmea_chap12_excerpt.pdf (Accessed on 11/11/2020).

⁶ ACCA Global, 2013, An introduction to public finance management, available on Internet on www.accaglobal.com/~/media/accaglobal/members_network_panel_2013 (Accessed on 11/11/2020).

course of their employment) and health insurance schemes currently managed by private commercial health providers. The Policy further indicates that other forms of SP are embedded in various government programmes such as Orphans and other Vulnerable Children (OVC) Programme, Community-Based Rehabilitation Programme for persons with disabilities, School Feeding Programme, Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE); Public Works Scheme (embedded in Northern Uganda Action Fund [NUSAF], Karamoja Livelihoods Integrated Programme [KLIP] and Community Driven Development [CDD] programmes); Social Care Support Services (resettlement of abandoned and street children, care and protection of children in conflict with the law, Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) and older persons, care and support to gender-based violence victims/ survivors, community-based rehabilitation for PWDs, community-based care and support for older persons) and informal and traditional social protection system. The Policy indicated that these SP initiatives are limited in scope, coverage and are not well coordinated.

The National Social Protection Policy recognise and specify the roles of Civil Society and Faith-Based Organisations as to advocate for social protection policies and legislations; mobilize resources and advocate for increased funding for social protection programmes; participate in planning, implementation and monitoring of social protection programmes; monitor the operationalization of international instruments on social protection; mobilize and sensitize the population on social protection, and develop and implement social protection programmes.

Development Programmes for Social Protection: SP is one of the priority areas under human capital development programme outlined in the NDP III (2020/21-24/25). The National Development Plan (NDP) III mandates the government to expand scope and coverage of care, support and social protection services of the most vulnerable groups. The government is also implementing the Expanding Social Protection (ESP) programme under the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD). The purpose of ESP programme is to put in place a national social protection system in line with the National Social Protection Policy that benefits the poorest as a core element of Uganda's national policy, planning and budgeting processes. The ESP programme first piloted the Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE) before it rolled out in the whole country⁷.

Institutional Arrangements for Social Protection: There is an institutional framework for coordination and implementation of the ESP programme at the MGLSD. The MGLSD has established the ESP's Programme Management Unit (PMU) as the coordination centre for the rollout of the National Social Protection Policy, but also to manage the rollout of the Senior Citizens Grants. Besides, the National Social Protection Policy mandates the government to establish the Committee of Cabinet on Social Protection whose mandate shall be to provide oversight and policy. The Policy also mandates the MGLSD to establish and provide the secretariat for a Multi-sectoral Technical Committee comprising Permanent Secretaries from various Ministries and a representation from National Planning Authority, Uganda Bureau of Statistics, Uganda Registration Services Bureau, Uganda Retirement Benefits Regulatory Authority, Uganda Immigration and Citizenship Board.

1.4 Purpose of Capacity Assessment of CSOs and Trade Unions

The objectives for capacity assessment of CSO Platforms and Trade Unions were:

1. In a participatory manner, collect and analyze good practices and experiences, as well as key challenges and roadblocks, of civil society organizations and trade unions actively and effectively engaging in, and influencing, social protection and public finance management processes in Uganda.

⁷ Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development, Expanding Social Protection, Available on Internet on <https://mglsd.go.ug/esp/> accessed on 10/11/2020

2. From this analysis, develop a range of recommendations on what concrete actions can be taken so that civil society organizations and trade unions can collectively, more actively and effectively engage in, and influence, social protection and public finance management processes in Uganda.
3. Identify for Support, interested and relevant civil society organizations and trade unions working on social protection in Uganda (or those interested in increasing their engagement) to identify key capacity gaps (both with their organizations and the wider sector) that hinder them from actively and effectively engaging in social protection and public finance management processes.
4. On the basis of this assessment, and in a participatory manner working with interested and relevant civil society organizations and trade unions, develop a learning and capacity development agenda with key areas and issues that civil society organizations and trade unions would like to be supported on in order to more actively and effectively engage in social protection and public finance management processes in Uganda.

1.5 Structure of the Assessment Report

The capacity assessment report has been presented in four chapters. Chapter one presents project background and description, overview of the concept of SP and PFM processes, and overview of the legal, policy development and institutional framework for social protection in Uganda. Chapter two presents the methodology and approach followed while conducting the capacity assessment. Chapter three provides key findings from the capacity assessment of CSOs and Trade Unions. The last chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations from capacity assessment that will inform development of capacity development agenda for CSOs and Trade Unions.

Chapter 2: Methodology and Approach

This section of the report provides a methodology and approach used to carry out the assessment.

2.1 Design of the Capacity Assessment

A mixed-method design that utilises both action research and organisational capacity assessment methodologies was used to carry out a capacity assessment of CSOs and TUs. The choice for action research design is premised on its ability to study a given situation and provides answers to specific problems to enable decision-making. It also provides for collaborative, participatory, self-evaluative, in-depth exploration and flexibility in data collection⁸. Some elements of organisational capacity assessment approach were adopted because it allowed targeted organisations to reflect on their internal and external capacity strengths, capacity gaps, challenges in their operating environments and to identify priority learning needs. Both participatory and qualitative methodologies (key informant interviews and stakeholders workshops) were used to generate data for the assessment.

2.2 Data Sources

The assessment utilised data from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data sources included offices and leaders of CSOs platforms and Trade Unions spread out within the greater Kampala metropolitan area. The secondary data sources included websites of various ministries, departments and agencies of government, CSOs and trade unions with information focusing on social protection and PFM.

2.3 Sample Size and Sampling Procedures

A total of 12 (6Male; 6Female) people from 7 CSOs and 2 TUs participated in the assessment. These organisations were purposively selected based on their role, knowledge, experience and interest to engage in social protection and PFM processes.

2.4 Methods of Data Collection

Qualitative and participatory methods stated below were used to collect data for the assessment.

- **Key informant interviews:** This method used unstructured interview guides to generate data from key informants such as leaders and staff of CSOs and TUs. While adhering to standard operating procedures (SoPs) for prevention of COVID 19, some key informant interviews were conducted face-to-face, online interviews using Skype and others through written responses using email correspondences.
- **Review of documents.** The secondary data for the assessment was obtained from a review of key documents such as the third National Development Plan 2020/21-2024/25, National Social Protection Policy, various documents on Expanding Social Protection Programme and the national budget, as well as some CSOs, reports on social protection.
- **Review and validation of draft assessment report.** The draft capacity assessment report was shared with key project stakeholders for review and comments. The stakeholders comments made on the draft report were incorporated and also used to improve the final capacity assessment report.

2.5 Data analysis

Data collected was qualitatively analysed using content analysis. This approach involved reducing, summarising and grouping data with similar responses together under relevant themes and sub-themes. The analysis was done by making comparisons and contrasts of data generated from different respondents and those from the literature review. The stakeholders' workshop further provided an opportunity for analysis of data collected independently from key informants and to build consensus on priority capacity gaps, challenges, learning needs and priority capacity development agenda for targeted CSOs and TUs.

⁸ Ahuja Ram (2001), *Research Methods*. New Dehli: Rawat Publications

2.6 Quality Control

Some measures were instituted in the process of design, data collection and report writing to ensure delivery of high-quality assessment report. The draft inception report was reviewed and validated by supervising officers at HelpAge International. The errors identified at the inception report level were rectified by the Consultant before proceeding with data collection. The draft data collection instruments were pre-tested and errors detected were used to fine-tune them to enhance their quality. All respondents were provided with information and objectives of the assessment before they decided to participate in the assessment. This helped them to make an informed and voluntary consent before they decided to participate in the assessment. The draft assessment report was reviewed and validated during the stakeholders' workshop before the final report was finalised. The errors identified in the draft assessment report were rectified before the final assessment report was submitted to HelpAge International. The respondents' data was used in the assessment report confidentially without revealing their identity.

2.7 Limitations

The findings of this capacity assessment should be generalised to only CSO platforms/forums and Trade Unions with a focus on SP and PFM issues based at national level or the greater Kampala metropolitan area. The assessment did not generate data from individual CSO organisations with a focus on SP and PFM issues and those based at sub-national levels. The assessment did not capture the perspective of the funding agencies and government institutions involved in support and delivery of SP programmes in Uganda.

Chapter 3: Key Findings from the Capacity Assessment

This chapter presents key findings from the capacity assessment of CSOs and Trade Unions

3.1 Experiences, Lessons Learnt and Good Practices of CSOs and TUs in SP and PFM

3.1.1 Major Experiences of CSOs and TUs in SP and PFM Processes

The capacity assessment examined major experiences of CSOs and TUs in SP and PFM processes. The assessment findings showed that there are varied experiences of CSOs and TUs in SP and PFM processes. The major CSOs experiences in SP and PFM processes are in the area of promotion of participation of vulnerable groups (older grandmothers, older persons, vulnerable youth, women and persons with disabilities) in planning and budgeting processes in the district local governments (DLG). CSOs participate in the DLG's planning and budgeting processes aimed at highlighting their plight and influencing adoption of some SP issues (pensions, water, health, orphanage etc.) in the district's plans and budget. This form of CSOs participation is also aimed at monitoring progress and gaps in the implementation of the agreed social protection issues in the DLG's plans and budgets. The identified gaps are used by CSOs to further engage DLGs on SP and PFM issues as respondents' comments further illustrate below.

We are undertaking social audits in the districts of Buikwe, Busia, Mukono, Kanungu, Rukungiri and Jinja. We use the district planning and budgeting processes as an entry point. In each district, we have 10 grandmothers' advocates. These participate in the district local government planning and budgeting meetings. Every year, we hold a planning meeting where we talk to the district officials on issues affecting the grandmothers. The district officials use these meetings to pick out some issues and include them in their plans. We also monitor the implementation of the district plans. The grandmothers' advocates have a form which they use to tick on things which they think they have benefited from the implementation of the district plans. At the end of each year, they convene another meeting attended by the district officials where they tell them what they have benefited and what is still missing (CSO).

We do district consultations on priorities of the youth in the district plans and budgets. We have a Youth Manifesto which we use to advocate for job creation, youth participation and health issues affecting the youth. We engage the government to include priorities of the youth in the budget and to put more funding in education. ... In Apac, Bushenyi and Pallisa districts we worked with the district youth councillors to monitor the district plans and budgets and use this information to advocate for more budgetary allocations to the youth. We ensured that the youth occupied key positions in the committees of the District Councils where real decisions are made. At the national level, we participate in CSBAG budget advocacy activities where we present alternative proposals, some of which are taken on board by the government (CSO).

I wouldn't say that we work directly on social protection. The core function of the network is to advocacy on women's rights. We participate in advocacy for minimum wages for workers and mid-term access of workers funds in NSSF but we don't do it directly and we are not the lead agency on these issues. But we support them. Our advocacy is really broad. Sometimes it focuses on influencing budgetary allocations in the health and water sectors (CSO).

We are implementing two social protection projects. One is a 4-year project being implemented in Teso and Acholi sub-regions with financial support from Trocaire. It focuses on tracking money allocated by district local governments to prevent gender-based violence interventions. We are implementing another project with financial support from UN Women. This project focuses on tracking the budget of district local government to assess the funds allocated for support Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights and how these funds have been used (CSO).

At the national level, there are few CSOs (HelpAge International Uganda, Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Social Protection and Uganda Platform for Social Protection) that engages government on various SP and PFM processes. Some of these CSOs participate and advocate for formulation and implementation of better social protection policies and programmes such as National Policy for Older Persons, Social Protection Policy and management of the SAGE programme coordinated by the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development. They also participate and engage the National Planning Authority (NPA) to include priority action to address social protection issues affecting vulnerable people. They do this during the formulation of the National Development Plans (NDP). They further engage Parliament of Uganda to increase budgetary

allocation to social protection and rollout the SAGE programme to all districts of Uganda. Some CSOs also participate and engage government in budget advocacy processes under the umbrella of CSBAG to ensure that the national budget is inclusive and address the plight of vulnerable groups as respondents' comments below further illustrate.

We have been putting Parliament on pressure to provide and increase counter-funding to SAGE programme and to roll out SAGE programme from 15 districts to 40 districts, and then later to all districts. We have also been engaging government to adopt the national social protection policy which broadens the scope of social protection beyond the SAGE programme. ... Right now we are carrying out a study on the impact of social protection Bill which is still before Parliament (CSO).

We have been working with the Ministry of Gender during the formulation of the older persons' policy and social protection policy. We are also trying to assess how the Ministry is implementing the national social protection policy and the policy for older persons. Sometimes you can go to the district and the DCDO tells that they have never seen a copy of the social protection policy (CSO).

The trade unions have accumulated experience in advocating for social security and workers' rights especially those working in the formal sector. They have been advocating the government to adopt a minimum wage for workers to reduce their exploitation by their employers. They have also been advocating for improvement in the condition for workers, improvement in the management of the pension funds for workers, improvement in the management of NSSF and mid-term access of workers' savings in NSSF. This is further illustrated by a respondent's comment below.

We have had several meetings with NSSF and the Ministry of Gender. We presented our issues to the Ministry on the mid-term access to NSSF by the vulnerable workers. By the way, it wasn't only about the mid-term access, there were other issues we wanted to be adopted by the Ministry. We have trade union representatives on NSSF's Board but their inclusion on the Board has never been put in writing. We wanted the Ministry to include this into the NSSF bill before parliament. We also wanted NSSF to introduce new social protection products which can benefit our members. We also wanted UBRAA which oversees the pension sector to go away from the workers' money because its day to day management is eating into the workers' savings i.e. 8 billion shillings per year. We also demanded that NSSF should be managed fully but the Ministry of Gender and not that of Finance (Trade Union).

3.1.2 Lessons Learned and Good Practices

The capacity assessment examined major lessons learnt and good practices of CSOs and TUs engagement in SP and PFM processes. These are stated hereunder:

Social protection appears new and not clear to many people including those in government, trade unions and CSOs both at district and national level. There is limited understanding of the various components of SP and PFM processes by CSOs and TUs.

Obtaining desired results from policy and budget advocacy takes a long time. This requires some patience, consistence and perseverance of CSOs actions before realisation of expected results.

Successful engagement in any government policy processes also requires good timing of the government planning and budgeting cycles. This provides an opportunity for CSOs to make their input when it is still early and to get to know what the government can and cannot take on board.

There is a need to initiate and maintain good partnerships and close working relationships with key decision-makers in relevant government institutions. This helps to reduce suspicions and enables the government to trust and open-up to CSOs and TUs of what is workable and not workable.

It is critical to have contacts (telephone and email) and to target the real people (decision-makers) who take decisions, formulate and approve government's plans and budgets. This ensures that the CSOs message and demands reach the relevant officials who make things happen.

It is also critical to obtain good background understanding and information on relevant policy and legal frameworks, personality and interests of the actual decision-makers before participating in

actual policy engagements with government. This helps in tailoring CSO and TUs engagement within existing legal-policy frameworks and interest/needs of policy-makers.

Successful changes in SP and PFM processes require the use of evidence that is generated using credible methodologies. This helps in grounding CSOs/TUs demands on well-researched findings and facts on the ground. This enhances the confidence and acceptability of policy demands presented before decision-makers.

CSOs need to be aware and acknowledge that some policy-makers have a considerable amount of knowledge on the issues being raised. Without such hindsight, this offends and causes policymakers not to cooperate, and in some instances make it difficult for the advocates to gain any ground within the respective sector.

Effecting meaningful changes in SP and PFM processes requires CSOs and TUs to work together with one voice, coordinate their actions, leverage their scarce resources and learn from each other.

CSOs and TUs should not only focus on identification of gaps in SP and PFM processes but also focus on providing suggestions which decision-makers in government can use to address such gaps.

Some CSOs and TUs have lean technical staff. Others do not have any specific person responsible for SP and who is specially trained in SP issues. Yet, effecting changes in PFM processes and SP requires having well trained in-house technical expertise (i.e. people who know all components of SP and the entire process of PFM) before engaging in PFM and SP.

The realisation of better results in CSOs and TUs engagement with PFM processes and SP require donors to provide consistent and long-term support to partner CSOs and TUs. It is because partner CSOs and TUs require time to understand SP and PFM concepts, lobby internal management to support such interventions, mobilise and create awareness of the local stakeholders, and generation of evidence among others.

3.1.3 Other Lessons Learned

Some vulnerable older persons (65+ to 80 years) are excluded from the implementation of the SAGE programme. Yet, some of these older persons are also vulnerable due to disability and others have many grandchildren under their care.

The government's contribution to social protection programmes is now higher than that contributed by development partners. This has reduced the dependence on development partners (DFID and IrishAid) who were contributing the biggest chunk of funds to support the SAGE programme. But the government's contribution is still insufficient to cover the social protection budget and needs in the country.

There is no social protection mechanism in the country that covers people who work in the informal sector. The current social security system in the country only provides mechanisms for SP of people in the formal sector. Yet, over 65% of working-age work in the informal sector.

Some people retired but have never got their social security funds. Other people receive their pensions from the government on an irregular basis. It takes longer for one to access his/her social security benefits.

The NSSF bill, minimum wage bill, and liberalisation of the pension sector have remained incomplete for a long time due to limited political will supportive of social protection.

Major policy decisions on social protection are mostly taken in the run-up to national elections.

Sometimes the government agrees to a policy position and even commits, through the national budget, to finance the policy position but never gets to fulfil the funding obligations. Commitment to a policy position does not necessarily lead to the financing of programs that emanate from that policy position.

3.2 Challenges and Roadblocks of CSOs and TUs to Influence SP and PFM Processes

3.2.1 Knowledge and Skills on SP and Public Finance Management Processes

The capacity assessment examined whether CSOs and TUs are knowledgeable and skilled on issues of SP and PFM processes. The assessment findings showed that there are some CSOs and TUs with a good understanding of some aspects of SP (e.g. pensions, NSSF and cash grants for older persons) and PFM processes (e.g. government planning and budgeting cycles).

But there is no harmonised understanding among CSOs and TUs about the various forms of SP and PFM processes. The majority of CSOs and TUs have limited knowledge and skills on various components of SP and PFM processes. Some CSOs perceive SAGE programme as the only form of SP because they have never been exposed or sensitised to understand other forms of SP. Other CSOs and TUs understand SP to mean pensions for civil servants and workers money saved and managed by NSSF. There are some CSOs who still think that SAGE money disbursed to older persons will make them lazy. Such CSOs have even de-campaigned inclusion of SAGE in the national budget. This was attributed to limited awareness and training of CSOs and TUs on different forms of social protection issues that go beyond the SAGE programme. Some CSOs are experienced only in one pillar or component of SP such as older persons, children, women etc. but lacks knowledge in other pillars of SP. It is also because some CSOs and TUs implement different social protection interventions. Some CSOs do not directly implement any social protection project which could have allowed them to learn more about social protection.

There is also limited learning among CSOs and TUs through information and experience sharing. The CSOs and TUs have never come together to share their knowledge and experiences on SP and PFM. Some CSOs and TUs tend to engage the government independently. They do not work together as a team yet all target the same Parliament, Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development and the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development.

Similarly, the level of understanding of PFM processes is still low among CSOs and trade unions. Some CSOs and TUs understand PFM processes in terms of only participating in the planning and budgeting processes of government. They are yet to learn other aspects of PFM processes such as the need to engage in tracking budgetary expenditure or monitoring of budget allocated to SP, analyses of processes of government revenue mobilisation and allocation to various sectors, loans and debt management issues and their implication on SP, and budget audits (auditor general) processes among others. These challenges are further illustrated by respondents' comments below.

There is a big assumption that CSOs understand public finance management processes and social protection in the same way. But different organisations have a different understanding of social protection and public finance management. Organisations which focuses on older persons understand public finance management in terms of advocating for better pensions for older persons. Those that focus on children will understand public finance management in terms of advocacy for more childcare support. There is no common understanding of public finance management (CSO).

When the government started implementing the SAGE programme, it was misunderstood. Some people thought the government is misusing money meant for roads. They thought that foreign money was making the older people lazy through waiting for handouts (CSO).

The Uganda National NGOs Forum hosted the Uganda Social Protection Platform but they only focused on social security issues in their policy engagement with government. They didn't know much about social care. UYONET only advocate social protection for the youth and not the entire cycle of social protection. We need more knowledge of social protection. Otherwise, some equate social protection to SAGE programme and UN Women equate UWEP as social protection for women. They don't go beyond this (CSO).

We have 21 members and some of their work contribute to social protection but they don't know whether what they are doing is contributing to social protection. Capacity building is needed to raise the consciousness of what they are doing. Even here at the office, my colleagues might not have consciousness of social protection in their work. So, there is a need to build the capacity of member organisations and staff on social protection so that they know whether what we are doing is contributing to social protection (CSO).

The members don't know about those public finance management processes. Unless you have training for them that's when the members will get to know about it. There is a very knowledge gap in public finance management processes (Trade Unions).

We need knowledge of the conceptual framework of social protection. Many young people don't know about social protection. Even our staff need it ... Social protection is relatively a new concept to me. I think what we do contributes indirectly to social protection. We have done work that contributes to social poverty reduction and sustainable economic development. Many Ugandans don't know much about social protection. The government doesn't also promote social protection. Many of us don't know the policy and legislative framework of social protection. That's why there is a gap in social protection. ... The major problem is awareness of social protection and financing of social protection (CSO).

We have participated in the CSBAG activities but their understanding of social protection is still lacking. They think SAGE programme is a lazy way of doing things and one time they suggested that SAGE programme should be scrapped. ... But CSOs capacity on social protection is lacking. Social protection is diverse. It focuses on many things – children, youth, elderly among others. CSO activities are project-based and last for 1, 2, or 3 years. If a CSOs never host a social protection project, they cannot know much about social protection (CSO).

3.2.2 Planning and Budgeting to Influence SP and PFM Processes

The capacity assessment examined whether CSOs and TUs are involved in the formulation of plans and budgets for TUs; and what challenges still limit their effectiveness and influence of government to adopt and prioritise SP in national and local development plans and budgets. The assessment findings revealed that the majority of CSOs and TUs assessed are quite conversant with the government's planning and budgeting processes both at local government and national level. Some CSOs indicated that they actively participate in the planning and budgeting processes of DLGs, formulation of the development of National Development Plans (NDP), formulation of the national policy of older persons and formulation of national social protection policy among others. Even the trade unions indicated that they used to participate in the formulation of the NDP at the national level as respondents' comments below further illustrate:

We build the capacity of women leaders in leadership and budgeting issues... these women are trained to monitor district budgets to assess whether they respond to the needs of women. We have seen growth in this area and improved confidence of women's influence on the budgets for water, child labour among others at the district level. ... At the national level, we participate in the budgetary activities of the CSBAG (CSO).

The national planning authority used to invite us to participate in the formulation of the national development plan. At the NDP level, we have been able to participate. The national planning authority used to invite us but they reached some point and stopped. We do not know why? We need HelpAge to build our capacity in public finance management (Trade Unions).

However, CSOs and TU's participation and influence in planning and PFM processes is still hindered by the limited understanding of the major components of SP and the entire process of PFM. While some CSOs who have been trained on budget advocacy, such training do not cover the entire processes of PFM. Other CSOs have been trained in budget tracking and advocacy but they cannot translate lesson learnt into practice. Some CSOs actors fear to engage in activities that involve the use of figures and numbers.

Too much focus on the implementation of service delivery SP projects reduces the opportunity of some CSOs to directly engage in planning and budgeting processes of government. Such CSOs want to see quick tangible benefits or changes in the lives of targeted vulnerable groups rather than engage in policy advocacy processes that take long to yield tangible results.

Some CSOs and TUs focus on the implementation of only one aspect of SP such as cash transfer to older persons or social security. This coupled with limited cohesion and networking limits opportunity to be aware of other components of SP. Such CSOs thus, do not highlight other forms of SP in their engagement in planning and budgeting processes with the government.

There is limited CSOs cohesion within CSOs and CSOs with TUs which also hinders their ability to influence the government's planning and budgeting processes. Some CSOs and TUs still participate in government planning and budgeting processes independent of each other.

The project-based approach does not also provide CSOs with better opportunities for effectively influencing SP and PFM process. Some CSOs SP project does not include activities to influence government planning and budgeting processes to be supportive of SP issues affecting targeted vulnerable groups. This is due to restrictions on funding priorities by project donors and limited CSOs engagement with their donors.

The inability of CSOs and TUs to meet the real people or policymakers responsible for making things happen in government and political parties also limit their influence on SP's plans and budgets. Some policymakers have limited understanding of SP and thus do not prioritise it in their engagement with CSOs stakeholders. When invited, such key policymakers just send junior officers to meet the CSOs. This hinders delivery and influence of CSOs to the real people with the power to make the necessary changes. Also, some CSOs and TUs actors do not know and have contacts of actual policymakers responsible for various SP and PFM issues at district and national level. Sometimes CSOs do not know the best-placed person in government institutions to handle certain issues they want to be improved. For instance, sometimes they go to the national level yet some issues are legally handled at local government level. This consumes their time and money.

Limited funding of CSOs and TUs limit their ability to consistently participate in the planning and budgeting processes aimed at improving SP issues. CSOs have small budgets and are unable to support sustained and long-term engagement in policy processes with government institutions. Other CSOs and TUs do not have specially designed projects which directly focus on influencing planning and budgeting processes aimed at improving SP. Where such projects are available/in existence, these provide CSOs with the opportunity to engage in planning and budgeting processes. This situation is even worse in circumstances where the government is unable to directly support the formulation of social protection plans and policies.

Trade Unions and some CSOs lack of skills and information on planning, budget analysis and policy advocacy on SP issues. Like CSOs, TUs actors are not trained on how to undertake comprehensive PFM processes. While TUs have experience in advocating for minimum wage and mid-term access to social security fund for its members from NSSF, they have no experience in undertaking budget policy analysis. This was attributed to lack of training and background information on budget advocacy among key actors in the trade unions. It is also due to lack of funds to support the participation of trade unions actors to participate and undertake budget policy advocacy processes as suggested by respondents' comments below.

The major challenge is the limited understanding of the financial management processes. Understanding of the different aspects of public financial management such as budgeting processes, revenue, debt, work of the auditor general. There are very few CSOs who know much about these issues. Some CSOs don't know the timing of key budgetary processes of government (CSO).

We are only influencing district local governments to allocate funds for social protection. However, at the central government, we have been relying on CSBAG though it has been a hustle with them because they thought social protection is a wastage of time and resources. We lacked expertise in PFM. But the Parliamentary Forum on Social Protection has helped in budget analyses on social protection issues ... Each organisation is working on its own unless there is someone who brings us together. Each CSOs has got its strategy on how they want to engage in social protection and public finance management processes. There is no shared common strategy (CSO).

If we are well mobilised, CSOs can influence the social protection agenda. But at the moment, we are not organised as one entity of older persons. You find grandmothers' consortium raising issues of older persons, then URAA (Uganda Reach the Aged Association) also doing the same. But when CSOs come together ... but the way how CSO work that is structured along specific projects provide few opportunities to bring us together. The Uganda Social Protection Platform had tried to bring us together to understand social protection and coalesce our efforts around issues of social protection (CSO).

The key gatekeepers or policymakers are hard to find i.e. those who will implement the change. For example, in the last 5 years, CSOs working on social protection failed to meet the president. Sometimes, when we want to meet the person-in-charge of policy / budget design but they send you someone else. They say they are busy. For example, last month we wanted to meet the key people in the NRM, FDC, DP political parties but we were not able to meet

the key people such as the Secretary-General. They sent us a junior person-in-charge of older persons in the party. So, we are dealing with people in the lower part of the party structure (CSO).

We have never met the Minister of Finance Planning and Economic Development. We do not know how much money is allocated to social protection; where should the money for social protection come from within the budget in case we asked for the increment of social protection budget (CSO).

There is a challenge of policy implementation. For example, we wanted to develop guidelines for health provision to older persons in health centres. But the Ministry of Health said they have no money to support the development of these guidelines. The Ministry gave us a budget of 20 million shillings which was needed to support the formulation of these guidelines. ... but we couldn't manage to finance formulation of these guidelines due to small budget. These small NGOs have small budgets (CSO).

We are not involved in the government budgetary processes. You find the budgeting cycle has started but labour unions are not involved. Maybe it is because we lack finances to support our involvement in the budgetary processes. ... In terms of resource allocation we are at the receiving end and this affects social protection. We don't get much information on budgeting issues. We are very fine with the representation of workers in Parliament but we do not have representation in the budgetary processes (Trade Union).

3.2.3 Capacity of CSOs and TUs in Tracking Public Expenditures

The capacity assessment further examined whether CSOs and TUs are involved in tracking public expenditures allocated to SP programmes and what challenges limit their capacity in this area. The assessment findings indicated that there are few CSOs involved in tracking/monitoring public expenditures on SP programmes implemented by the government. In comparison, this situation is worse with TUs who indicated that they are not involved at all in the tracking of public expenditure on SP issues. This was attributed to lack of training of CSOs and TUs in tracking public expenditures on SP programmes. Some CSOs and TUs are yet to receive training in tracking/monitoring public expenditure in SP issues. It is also attributed to too much focus by some CSOs on direct provision of SP services to the vulnerable people more than budget tracking and budget advocacy. As such, some CSOs involved in SP do not have any activity that focuses on tracking public expenditure. Such category of CSOs relies on CSBAG and Uganda Social Protection Platform to do this work on their behalf. This is further illustrated below.

As trade unions, we are not involved in tracking public expenditure. This is done at the level of Parliament by the workers' representatives who are involved in parliamentary oversight of public funds in various committees. At the labour union level, we don't have the capacity and we are not aware of public expenditure tracking. We need someone who is well trained on social protection and responsible for social protection (Trade Union).

We have a lot of experiences and so many programmes in social protection but we are poor at public financial management especially tracking public expenditure. We have not invested in it. There is no training in it (CSO).

To the best of my knowledge, as far as social protection financing is concerned, there has been no much effort in tracking public expenditures and demand for accountability aimed at improving effectiveness and efficient management of public resources. The reasons are varied. But very importantly, limited resources are going to social protection, and the efforts have been on convincing government to expand the scope and coverage of social protection, both in terms of programs and financing. The Social Protection Platform for Uganda (SPPU) undertook a brief social accountability project in 2017, which attempted to track public expenditure on social protection or related programs at the local government level. While this intervention was useful to the participating local governments, it was limited in geographical scope and lacked resources for follow up. Therefore, the sustainability of lessons learned could not be guarantee (CSO).

Public expenditure tracking is an issue of capacity and resources. The members of the Grandmother Consortium are doing direct income support programs. That's why they formed the grandmothers' consortium to promote advocacy for social protection. Many CSOs are doing direct services to older persons such as housing and health. Even big CSOs are still providing direct services to older persons. So, they rarely fund or do advocacy activities ... I have not seen any CSO that is involved in the tracking of social protection funds at the district level. I don't see any member of the Grandmothers Consortium who has the capacity of tracking the budget apart from the monitoring incidences in form of social audits. At the national level, the Uganda Social Protection Platform have different members who track the budget such as DRT and CSBAG. We have a lot of engagement with CSBAG. The CSBAG has been pushing for health insurance, HIV/AIDS, SAGE etc. (CSO).

3.2.4 Evidence Generation by CSOs and TUs on Social Protection

The assessment examined whether CSOs and TUs have experience and capacity gaps in the generation and use of evidence to support policy advocacy for SP and PFM processes. The assessment findings showed that there are variations in the capacity of CSOs and TUs in generation and use of evidence. There are some CSOs (especially national and international level CSOs) and TUs that have the capacity in design and generation of the necessary evidence to support their engagements in SP and PFM processes. This is due to the availability of better-trained staff and accumulated experience in evidence generation for various development interventions they undertake. But in this category of CSOs and TUs, some of them do not implement projects with a direct focus on SP and PFM processes. Other CSOs and TUs with a focus on SP have limited capacity in documentation and translation of evidence generated, experiences and lessons learnt from the grass root to support their policy advocacy at district and national level. Also, CSOs and TUs have the capacity in design and to undertake research/assessments but some of them lack funds to support their ability to conduct studies or to generate evidence. There is still limited investment by CSOs and TUs in conducting SP studies in the country. They thus rely on secondary data from government and interventional development agencies - some of which is not up to date as further illustrated in the respondents' comments below.

We don't have funding for research. Our current funding doesn't include funds for research. Right now, we are studying the viability of social protection bill which is before parliament on Uganda but we are using individual funding sources. We need to do a longitudinal study on the impact of SAGE but we don't have the funds for it (CSO).

We have a lot of capacity in evidence generation, especially on health and cash transfer issues. This evidence has been put together in form of a report but these are mostly donor reports. We have not come together to consolidate and share the learning from evidence generated with the government. Many NGOs have researched social protection issues but they have not translated these studies to support policy advocacy. We don't have the knowledge and skills to translate learnings from social protection experiences into policy advocacy (CSO).

I think why our advocacy on social protection has not worked well is because it is not based on figures. For example, we don't have figures to show that this sector is underfunded. ... There is a limitation of data. Apart from government and UNICEF which provide data only for children, there is limited data on social protection. We haven't generated data on social protection and documented it well. For example, we don't know how much money district local governments allocate to social protection. The little data we use is generated by DFID. CSOs haven't invested much in the generation of data for social protection (CSO).

We don't have research projects that focus on social protection because this is not in our core programme areas. We do generate evidence to support advocacy on women's rights (CSO).

CSOs do a lot of work but there are gaps in documentation of what they have done. Some CSOs implement a five-year project but after implementation, they cannot trace any documented information to share with other stakeholders to learn from their experiences (CSO).

When we were advocating for mid-term access, we did a study and prepared a write-up before we engaged in advocacy for changes at NSSF. We have the capacity in-house to design and generate evidence but we don't have funds to support the generation of relevant evidence we can use to support our advocacy for workers' rights (Trade Union).

We have a research desk here but this has not been used to generate research evidence. We use secondary data from government institutions such as UBOS. We need to carry out our research. Sometime back we were in parliament and we were challenged to provide evidence against our demands. We didn't proceed well. We have a challenge of generating our research evidence. While we have our personnel trained on research issues, we don't have funds for conducting research. Our capacity to generate our evidence and turning into policy advocacy messages is still a challenge (Trade Union).

3.2.5 Cohesion of CSOs and TUs involved in Social Protection

The capacity assessment further examined the nature and level of cohesion (collective voice and action, learning) among CSOs and TUs in influencing SP and PFM processes in Uganda. The assessment established that there is weak cohesion among CSOs and TUs involved steering a broad agenda of social protection issues in the country. While there is the Uganda Social Protection

Platform (USPP) expected to bring together all CSOs to undertake collective action on social protection, this is not yet the case. This Platform is still weak in terms of its ability to galvanise, attract and coalesce all key CSOs into the Platform. Unlike the CSBAG whose formation was organic and based on the initiative of local independent CSOs, the Platform was inorganically formed based on the funding by some donor agency. In case this donor funding to the Platform stops, its existence might not continue to be there. Besides, the bigger and fairly well resourced CSOs (ActionAid Uganda, Plan International, CARE International, World Vision and others) some of which were founders of this Platform no longer participate in the Platform activities. Also, the Platform is weakened by change in host organisations and management which is done on a rotational basis among member organisation. While this appears to be fine, change of host organisation is done without due consideration of the interest, leadership commitment and understanding of SP by some of its member organisations.

The above notwithstanding, the assessment findings indicated that there are collaborations between and among some CSOs with a focus on social protection. For instance, the Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Social Protection indicated that they have good working relationships with the Centre for Budget and Policy Advocacy (Think Tank) on budget tracking and analysis on social protection issues. It also has good collaboration with HelpAge International Uganda, Uganda Reach the Aged Association (URAA) and the Uganda National Association of Older Persons of Uganda during its petition to Parliament seeking to rollout SAGE programme in all districts. This collaboration helped in providing the necessary evidence to support policy advocacy in Parliament, increased concerted CSOs effort and voice in Parliament on social protection issues.

However, there is limited learning among CSOs and TUs through regular sharing of information and experiences on SP issues. This is because CSOs and TUs tend to meet only when they have been invited by the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development to discuss social protection issues. There is also limited sharing of reports and information on studies on social protection conducted by CSOs and TUs. This sometimes leads to duplication of activities and wastage of resources.

Also, CSOs and TUs do not work together on social protection issues. There is no common forum or platform that bring them together to discuss, share and harmonise their focus and efforts on social protection. Even within the CSOs and TUs fraternity, some NGOs and CSOs networks work on social protection independent of each other. For example, CSBAG, Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Social Protection, Trade Unions, Women's and Youth Networks work on SP issues independent of each other. This is sometimes due to competition for visibility and fear to lose or render power to other actors among CSOs. Besides, some trade unions are still suspicious of some CSOs whom they claim are at times used by the government to undermine their continued existence. All these undermine cohesion among CSOs and TUs as was further illustrated by respondents' comments below:

We have never had a forum which brings together the NGOs and TUs and facilitate them to engage government with one voice. The motives of NGOs and trade unions are different. Each is working independently of the other. It is a big challenge (Trade Union).

The government used CSOs to dismantle us. We became suspicious of some CSOs. We selected some CSOs which we can work with and those we cannot (Trade Union).

The collaboration is not there between CSOs and TUs. Collaboration within CSOs is there but this is based on individual initiatives of some CSO leaders on the need to leverage resources. We are not coordinated. There is still some kind of competition for resources and power (CSO).

Generally, there is a lack of collective voice. Different groups act differently. Some focus on SAGE, others on disability, youth, women and children. It is only the Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Social Protection which looks at social protection in its entirety. Although Uganda Social Protection Platform has been in existence for a while ... The trade unions have been working alone. NGOs have been working alone. The only body that brings together CSOs is the Uganda Social Protection Platform. In the beginning, the Platform was strong and had some big organisation such as ActionAid, CARE but after some time they became inactive. The founder members no

longer participate in Platform activities. One of the challenges of the Platform was the change of leadership and hosting of the network from DRT to Uganda National NGOs Forum. Unless social protection is at heart and interest of the host organisation, it is not easy to push it forward **(HelpAge)**.

The only time we come together is when the Ministry of Gender has invited us, that's when we get to share and know what we are doing. We don't share reports. We don't know which organisation has done which research. We have not developed a learning agenda for social protection. Yet many NGOs are doing a lot of research work on social protection **(CSO)**.

We have been trying to bring in the Faith-based organisation into the Platform because the Platform was formed to amplify the CSOs voice. But when you see the Platform's members, you don't see the big CSOs such as World Vision. When you invite them, they don't respond. We have had challenges of bringing big CSOs into the Platform. NGOs are working separately such as CSBAG, UDN and USPP **(CSO)**.

3.2.6 Government's Budgetary Allocations to Social Protection

The capacity assessment examined whether the government of Uganda allocates or contributes funds to support SP initiatives from its domestic revenue and whether these budgetary allocations have been increasing or not. The assessment findings showed that overtime government's budgetary allocations to SP has been increasing but not sufficient to support the effective roll out of the SAGE programme and to support other SP initiatives in the country. For instance, during FY 2018/2019, the government allocated Shs 32.88Billions for SAGE in the national budget and this left a funding gap of 7.46Bn. While the Minister of Finance Planning and Economic Development wrote to Parliament promising to table a supplementary budget, this promise was not honoured. Even though the government promised to fund the nation-wide rollout of SAGE programme during the FY 2019/20, it did not fulfil its promises. Government contributions fell short of the total required budget. The assessment findings show that the nation-wide rollout of SAGE required Shs149.00Billion in FY2019/20 but the government provided only Shs62.88Billions and development partners provided Shs50.97Billion. There was a shortfall of Shs36.12 Billion to ensure the effective roll-out of SAGE programme to cover older persons aged 80+ years while maintaining all the current beneficiaries⁹. Also, during the FY2020/2021, the government of Uganda allocated Shs45 billion in the national budget to support the vulnerable population negatively affected by the outbreak of COVID 19, natural disasters such as locust invasion, floods and landslides. This fund will help to rehabilitate adversely affected schools, health units, water points, and other social infrastructure and provide relief for vulnerable households affected. In the same FY2020/21, the government allocated another Shs107 billion to support the roll out of the SAGE nation-wide to persons aged 80 years and above, including the elderly aged 65 years in the piloted 15 districts¹⁰.

While appreciating increased government budgetary allocations, assessment findings indicated that the overall government budgetary allocation to social protection is still small compared to social protection needs and vulnerability in the country. Another SP Report from the MGLSD indicated that while Social security (NSSF and PSPS) spending has risen to 0.9% of GDP due to growing numbers, direct income support spending is static and social care spending is unknown. Direct Income Support spending stands at 0.06% of GDP which is low by international standards. Direct Income Support remains mainly financed by development partners, but the government now funds the majority of the senior citizen grant. Expansion of social security should come from core tax revenues. Spending on social care and support is mainly from development partners but government spending on social care and support is not readily available¹¹. It is because SP appears new and some decision-makers in government do not fully understand its value and various

⁹ The Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Social Protection, Position Paper on Financing National Rollout of SAGE) in the Budget Estimate and Ministerial Policy Statement for FY 2019/20. Available on Internet on <https://upfsp.org/position-papers/> accessed on 11/11/2020.

¹⁰ Kasaija Matia, June 2020, Budget Speech Financial Year 2020/21. Theme: Stimulating the Economy to safeguard Livelihoods, Jobs, Businesses and Industrial Recovery. Available on internet on - <http://statehouse.go.ug/sites/default/files/attachments/press-releases/fy-2020-21-budget-speech.pdf> Accessed on 10/11/2020

¹¹ Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, 2020, Social Protection Review. Final Summary Report. Available on Internet on, <http://socialprotection.go.ug/esp-studies-publications/> Accessed on 11/11/2020

dimensions. This makes it difficult for them to prioritise it as further elaborated by respondents' comments below:

We have rallied the parliament to provide funding which allowed rollout of the SAGE II programme from 15 to 40 districts. ... It also led to an increase in the counter-funding for SAGE programme to 2 billion, then to 9 billion, 18 billion, and to 32 billion. As I speak now, it is 60 billion shillings. The government is contributing more than the development partners. This was due to putting pressure on the government to introduce a policy on social protection and working within the parliament's committee since our board members are part of the social committees of parliament (CSO).

While I do not have figures off the head, I am aware that government spends considerable resources on social protection. For example, the Government's contribution to the Senior Citizens Grant has now exceeded that for Development Partners. Government has two special grants for persons with disabilities – one disbursed at the national level (approx. UGX 5bn in the FY 2020/21) and another disbursed at district level through the local governments. Policy development is part of social protection – and government through the Expanding Social Protection Program would like to review several policies and to ensure they are inclusive of social protection provisions. Examples include the Older Persons Bill 2020, the Persons with Disabilities Act 2020, and the National Policy on Disability among others (CSO).

The funds allocated to social protection is very small due to differences in understanding of social protection. For instance, the government say they are supporting social protection through NAADS yet these are agricultural advisory services (CSO).

The SAGE money has been donor-funded, which is a problem. Of late, I have seen government putting in some money because it is time for voting. There is political will now to support the elderly people because those in the leadership of the government are also elderly (Trade Unions).

3.2.7 Funding of CSOs and TUs Social Protection Initiatives

The assessment also examined whether CSOs and TUs have funding and other vital resources needed to support and sustain their actions on SP and PFM processes. The assessment findings showed that there is inadequate funding for CSOs and TUs involved in SP activities. Some CSOs and TUs do not have any budget line for social protection research initiatives, tracking SP budgets, policy advocacy and for networking with other SP actors. It is because some CSOs and TUs do not deliberately mobilise resources intended to support their engagement in PFM issues. Some do not have relevant information on potential donors for various social protection initiatives. Others have limited innovations for new and attractive fundable ideas on SP. Some CSOs tend to mobilise resources individually yet some funding agencies prefer funding consortiums and networks. Some CSOs budgets only include delivery of direct SP services to vulnerable groups but not that for influencing the PFM processes. Some donors/funding agencies also prefer supporting CSOs involved in the delivery of direct services (health, livelihoods etc.) to vulnerable groups more than budget-related policy advocacy issues. All these challenges make it difficult for CSOs and TUs to participate and deepen their engagement in public financial management processes aimed at improving the delivery of social protection in the country.

We have a lot of ideas on social protection but we do have the funding. We don't have links with the funding agencies on social protection (Trade Unions).

Some CSOs don't have budgets for social protection and have not thought about it. But some have tried to include it in their budgets and got a negative response from their donors. Some don't have money for networking, sharing results and learning from others. Sometime back DFID told us there is money but no CSO applied for it. There is a problem of conceptualisation of new ideas because some CSOs are comfortable in implementation and not on policy engagement (CSO).

The funding is low. I don't see many CSOs funded on social protection issues. We don't have so many donors willing to fund social protection programs (CSO).

Local resource mobilisation is nearly impossible. International resource mobilisation has been the most effective but downward economic trends internationally are leading to dwindling donor funds. The solution is in working through consortia (or networks) that bring multiple skills and capacities together at less cost. They are also becoming increasingly more attractive to donors (CSO).

3.2.8 Inclusion of Social Protection in Strategies of CSO and TUs

The capacity assessment examined the extent of inclusion of SP and PFM in the strategies, objectives and programmes of CSOs and TUs. The assessment findings revealed that development strategies of some CSOs explicitly and implicitly focuses on social protection. For instance, the strategies of the Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Social Protection directly focus on influencing the passage of legislation supportive of SP expansion in Uganda and to champion advocacy on SP. HelpAge International Uganda strategies directly focus on supporting advocacy geared to increased access to incomes, healthcare and legal aid to vulnerable older persons. The Uganda Social Protection Platform also directly focuses on strengthening civil society efforts to increase understanding, voice and demand for social protection in Uganda. The Grandmothers Consortium focuses on advocating for the health and economic rights of grandmothers associated with the burden of caring for orphans and vulnerable children. This direct and targeted strategy enhances CSOs focus, commitment, action, lessons and accumulation of experiences necessary for addressing social protection issues in the country.

However, the development strategies of some CSOs are implicit and do not provide direct focus to social protection. But the interventions of such CSOs aim at reducing the vulnerability of women, youth and children among others. For instance, UWONET's strategies focus on enhancing women's economic justice and empowerment, voice and accountability. UYONET's strategies focus on enhancing meaningful youth participation in democracy and good governance; and mobilisation of human, financial and other resources needed to support youth-related programmes. The implicit inclusion of social protection in some CSO strategies may limit their commitment, networking and tracking on progress made towards advancing social protection agendas.

3.2.9 CSOs and TUs Collaboration with Media on Social Protection

The assessment examined whether there is collaboration by CSOs/TUs with media houses in reporting and engaging the public and policy makers on SP and PFM issues. The assessment revealed that there is a good collaboration of CSO and TUs actors with both the print and electronic media houses. There is good reporting of social protection issues carried out by the government and CSOs in the national daily newspapers and also on various national FM radio and television stations. This was attributed to the training of media personnel from five selected media houses by CSOs on social protection issues. This contributed to increased understanding and reporting of social protection in the media. Besides, there are some individual CSOs which allocate budgets specifically for media engagements. This also provides them with the opportunity to create public awareness on social protection through the media, seek the support of policy-makers and the general public in the delivery of various social protection. However, the media actors are yet to be trained on reporting on PFM processes concerning SP. Besides, only five media houses were trained. Other media houses that are not trained still do not understand SP. There is also no structured way of reporting on SP in the media as respondents remarks below further illustrate.

The challenge with CSOs is that their resources are influenced by the nature of their donor funding. Three years ago, we had a lot of media engagement because DFID had put a lot of resources to support our engagement with the media. But few media houses were trained. Others are not aware of social protection. That's why they don't talk about social protection in a structured way. We have a four-year programme in which we are awarding media houses with the best mention of issues affecting the grandmothers. Some funding agencies, however, don't allow the inclusion of media activities in the project budgets for CSOs (CSO).

We had a team from the media who were trained on social protection but not on public finance management processes. We have people in five media houses who can write passionately on social protection issues (CSO).

Chapter 4: Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

The purpose of this assessment was to generate information on good practices and experiences, as well as key challenges and roadblocks, of CSOs and TUs actively and effectively engaging in, and influencing, social protection and public finance management processes in Uganda.

CSOs have major experiences in participation and influence of SP and PFM processes in the areas of national and district plans and budgets (including NDP); engaging Parliament to allocate more funds to SP initiatives; advocating for the rollout of the SAGE programme to all districts of Uganda; advocacy for inclusion of all vulnerable older persons to benefit from the SAGE programme, and engaging the MGLSD during the formulation of the national social protection policy and the national policy for older persons. The Trade Unions have experience in advocating for the rights and better conditions of workers, adoption of a law on minimum wage, and reforming the NSSF including mid-term access of NSSF funds by vulnerable workers.

However, CSOs and TUs still have inadequate knowledge and skills on various forms of SP and PFM processes. Some CSOs and TUs are aware of some forms of SP such as social security (pensions and NSSF funds) and cash transfer to vulnerable older persons. But they are not aware of other forms of SP such as skills strengthening for the youth, public works, employment services, health insurance, child care, and maternity support among many other forms of SP. Similarly, CSOs and TUs are familiar with participation in planning and budgeting processes of government. But they rarely engage in tracking or monitoring of public expenditure and value for money allocated by the government to SP programmes. They also rarely make analyses of government revenue mobilisation and allocation and loans borrowed (debt) by government and their implication on SP.

Also, CSOs and TUs have limited capacity in evidence generation, packaging and usage in influencing SP and PFM processes. Some CSOs and TUs have the technical capacity in evidence generation but they lack funds to support them in evidence generation. Others lack the technical capacity to design and generate evidence and/or turn around evidence generated to support their policy advocacy with decision-makers due to limited training.

There is limited cohesion among CSOs and TUs involved in SP and PFM processes. CSOs and TUs still work independently of the others. This is due to the absence of a common platform or space that brings these two actors to share, learn from each and to undertake joint collective advocacy and voice on SP and PFM issues. Even within CSOs with a focus on SP issues, their cohesion is limited. Yet there are many CSOs involved SP issues including focusing on children, youth, women and disability among others.

There is limited funding for CSOs involved in influencing SP and PFM processes. Engaging in SP and PFM processes require funds to support evidence generations, networking and dialogue meetings with decision-makers. But some CSOs do not have any budget line for influencing SP and PFM especially those involved in service delivery issues.

There is good CSOs collaboration with the media on reporting SP. This was due to the training of some media houses on SP. But reporting of issues in the media is not done in a structured manner to enable it influence SP and PFM processes. Some media houses are yet to be trained on both SP and PFM processes.

4.2 Recommendations

It is recommended that HelpAge International together with Steering Committee members to:

1. Initiate and operationalise an informal loose Learning Group that brings together CSOs and TUs actors to learn through sharing knowledge and experiences on various components of SP and PFM processes, evidence generation and policy advocacy with government.
2. Facilitate the CSO and TUs in the Learning Group to harmonise their priority SP's policy positions, coalesce their collective voice and action on identified and priority SP issues, and to learn from each other on SP and PFM processes.
3. Document and share simplified written materials with information on various forms on SP and PFM processes with CSOs and TUs. This will help them to know what SP and PFM is and what it's not.
4. Hire a Consultant to train CSOs and TUs to understand the entire process of PFM in line with SP. This training can focus on budget analyses, monitoring/tracking public investments in SP and how these impact on citizens, relationships and impact of government loans (debt) and SP, domestic revenue mobilisation and its impact on SP and other various dimensions of PFM processes.
5. Hire a Consultant to mentor and coach key CSO and TUs personnel in the art and craft of policy engagement.
6. Hire a Consultant to train CSOs and TUs staff and leaders on how to generate credible evidence, packaging of evidence and evidence sharing geared to influencing public decisions at different levels. This Consultant can also be tasked to mentor and coach Learning Group members on literature review, development of data collection tools, methodologies of data collection and analysis and report writing.
7. Facilitate selected CSOs and TUs (i.e. the Learning Group members) with funds (if available) to help them generate and use credible evidence in priority areas of SP and PFM processes.
8. Encourage members of the Learning Group to form issue-based consortiums (coalitions) and use this space to seek funding requests to support their engagement in SP and PFM processes from potential funding agencies.
9. Support training of more media houses especially those that have never been trained on SP and PFM processes. Guide the media houses on priority areas that need reporting on SP and PFM issues. Support the trained media personnel to form a Media SP's network as an avenue for sharing, learning and advocacy on SP issues.

Appendix 1: Copy of the Data Collection Tools



Tool for Key
Informants.docx

Appendix II: Copy of the Terms of Reference



Terms of Reference
for Undertaking a C