Title: Exploration of the needs, problems and experiences of older persons in Uganda: Implications for policy and decision makers

Author: Annet Nankwanga- (PhD Candidate, University of the Western Cape)
Promoter: Professor - J Phillips

Abstract:
Uganda is one of the developing countries in Sub-Saharan Africa facing increasing numbers of ageing population. However older persons in Uganda are living in an marginalized situation. Even though there are government policies that acknowledge their presence, still these policies have not been effective in the lives of older persons because so many developmental programs in Uganda still exclude them. The purpose of the study was to examine the challenges, experiences and needs of older people as well as the policies in place targeting to benefit the elderly and propose measures and strategies that may effectively be used to support the lives of older persons in both rural and urban communities in Uganda. The study population included older persons of age 60 and above who were able to listen and answer questions asked, policy makers and service providers such as administrators and government officials. Purposive random sampling was used to select 165 older persons and 50 key informants. In-depth interviews (individual & group), questionnaire, observations and reviewing of secondary materials were used in data collection. The analysis of the data combined both qualitative and quantitative methods, whereby the interview and discussion group's data were analysed qualitatively by use of content analysis whereas data from the questionnaire was analysed quantitatively. Qualitative analysis involved sorting, coding, setting patterns and checking for emerging patterns against the data whereas quantitative analysis involved the use of SPSS program. The results reveal that older persons were faced with a lot of challenges. Among the challenges are issues of health, HIV/AIDS, social, economic, food insecurity, nutritional, and housing problems. The older persons recommended a specific policy to be put in place to address their needs and also improvement in participation in public decision making so that they can also live a life of dignity that is without discrimination.

Key words: Elderly, Vulnerable, policy, disempowerment, Uganda