

Commentary on Mozambique's domain ranks in the 2014 Global AgeWatch Index

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Global AgeWatch Index rank

95

out of 96

Mozambique ranks low on the Index overall, at 95. It ranks at 88 in the income security domain, with a higher than average old age poverty rate for its region (19.1%). It ranks at 94 in the health domain, due to below regional and Index averages of life expectancy at 60 and healthy life expectancy at 60.

It performs worst in its region in the capability domain (94), with the lowest regional rate of educational attainment among older people (1%), though it has a near average employment rate for its region (70.4%).

Mozambique's lowest rank is in the enabling environment domain (96), due to low percentage of older people who are satisfied with their safety (31%), civic freedom (60%) and public transport (31%).



Income security

88

17.3 /100

Mozambique does not have a consolidated universal social pension system which means many older people still do not receive a pension. The current social protection system in Mozambique has been organised in three levels: non-contributory basic, compulsory, and complementary social security (Law 4, 2007). The non-contributory transfers targets the poorest households, older people, people living with disabilities, people who are chronically ill, and households with orphans and vulnerable children. However, there are deficiencies in terms of coverage and the amounts of benefits allocated. The government cash subsidy reaches about 378,000 households¹ of which 97% are headed by older people. Out of 1.3 million older people in the country, only 1.5%² is estimated to be receiving contributory pension. There is still hesitation on the side of the government to move towards adopting a universal social pension policy despite studies showing that an increase of the budget to at least 2.17% of the current GDP would go a long way to provide a more effective service both in terms of coverage and amount of subsidy.

According to a study, by the Institute of Social and Economic Studies in Mozambique, which analysed data from the National Household Expenditure Survey (2008/9), 58% of households with older people live below the national poverty line compared to 54% of households without older people. This clearly indicates a strong need for a national social pension system as a significant component of old age income security. The Age Demands Action campaign in Mozambique is calling for the government to implement a social pension system with clear commitment to universal coverage.



Health status

94

18.9/100

Mozambique is ranked 94 in the Health status domain. The prevalence of chronic

¹ Ministry of Women and Social Action June 2014 report

² INSS January-June 2014 Report

diseases and HIV/AIDS is significant among older people. This, coupled with issues of availability of medication and care, is worsening the situation for the country's older population. A study undertaken by HelpAge International in 2009 showed that 40% suffer from non-communicable diseases, while 8% are infected by HIV/AIDS.

Through civil society engagement and pressure, the government is slowly taking into account issues concerning older people. In 2012, the Mozambican Council of Ministers established the National Council for the Elderly, a mechanism for consultation, advice and inter-sectorial coordination of actions on issues of older people. Though not widely implemented, there is a law which includes free inpatient admittance to older people (women aged 55 and more, and men aged 60 and more). The law applies only to the General and Central Public Hospitals. Older people are also included in the current National Strategic Plan for HIV and AIDS.



Capability

94

4.2/100

Mozambique's older population suffers many problems that mainly stem from the country's lack of proper social protection policy. This puts them at risk of food insecurity, lack of primary health care and proper shelter. The percentage of older people in Mozambique's labour force is one of the highest in the world. However it means that older Mozambicans have to work until very late in life. Most of them are engaged in subsistence activities. The National Agricultural and Livestock census showed that 29.3% of small and medium scale farmers are older people.

A study conducted by HelpAge International in Chokwe district of Gaza Province in 2008 showed that 43.4 % of older people earn their income from agriculture, 10.6% through casual labour, 2.3% run small business where they mostly sell food, 4.5% sell natural resources like thatching grass, firewood and charcoal while the rest live by government subsidies, pensions and family support.



Enabling environment

96

45.1/100

A survey carried out by HelpAge in 2013 found that of the 104 older men and women interviewed, 61% of respondents did not feel safe from crime; 74% of respondents have experienced one form of crime, violence or abuse since the age of 50. Witchcraft accusations, financial abuse including land conflict, physical abuse and sexual abuse are the common cases of abuse especially among women.

The state of public transport is generally poor and is worse for older people, who for instance can barely manage to board the often over-crowded buses.

In February 2014, the Law No. 3/2014, on the Promotion and Protection of the rights of old people was adopted and is now pending regulation. Through the Age Demands Action Campaign and related advocacy activities we will be pushing the government to speed up the regulatory framework of the law, which is long overdue.

The Global AgeWatch Index ranks countries by how well their older populations are faring.

For general enquiries please contact HelpAge International's Media Manager, Sarah Gillam (sarah.gillam@helpage.org).

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