

Dynamiques démographiques, politiques sociales et relations entre générations : vers de nouvelles configurations ?

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Recent publications of James NTOZI

James NTOZI, Loneliness in Uganda: examining social, economic and demographic risk factors. *Ageing and Society*, March 2015. Coauthors: Abel Nzabona and Gideon Rutaremwa.

James NTOZI, Factors associated with self-reported ill health among older Ugandans: cross sectional study. *Archives of Gerontology and Genetics*. 2015. Coauthors: Stephen O. Wandera, Valerie Goraz & Betty Kwagala.

Title of presentation : *Ageing in Uganda: Challenges and Values*

Co-author: Abel NZABONA (Makerere University, Ouganda).

Abstract

With high fertility and strong social network supporting the older persons, ageing has in the past not been a challenge in Uganda, like in most sub-Saharan countries. However, recently, increasing education and urbanization have encouraged young men and women to migrate to urban centres looking for opportunities. This has left the older persons, most of whom stay in the rural areas abandoned.

The population of older persons in Uganda has been increasing as displayed by the figure below, although the proportion is still low (3.7% in 2013) owing to high fertility rate. For example, while the number recorded during the 1969 was 559,000, this figure increased to 686,300 in 1991 (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning [MFEP], 1995). The 2002 national census indicated that older persons numbered 1,101,000 (UBOS, 2005) while the 2006 Uganda National Household Survey showed that this number had gone up to 1,196,400, doubling the 1969 population. The recent national household survey of 2010 has shown that there were 1,304,500 older persons in the country (UBOS, 2012), a population that is projected to 5,420,000 by 2050 (UNFPA & HAI, 2012).

With this rapid growth of older persons, there are many challenges facing the aged in Africa in general and Uganda in particular. First is decline in health, including hearing, sight and memory loss. Second, income short fall is a challenge older persons have to contend with (Barrientos, Gorman, & Heslop, 2003). This is largely due to exclusion from the workforce upon reaching retirement age of 55 to 70, which forces older persons to heavily rely on their pensions

and social security where they exist. Many jobs have no regular monthly pensions, but even where they exist, the retirees are not paid in time and the pensions too small to survive on. An example is my own institution, Makerere university, where those who retired since April 2009 have not received their promised pensions for over 6 years now and those who retired before April 2009 have pensions as small as Ugsh17,000/= (US\$3.50) per month and the highest is Ugsh. 300,000/= (US\$100.00). Third, loneliness is another challenge that older persons have to deal with (Victor & Scambler, 2009). Because men tend to have a shorter life expectancy than women, more married older females than older males become widows as they age and they are staying alone in rural areas as children are in urban centres (UNFPA & HAI, 2012). Fourth, the ageing population in Uganda is faced with financial constraints. Most older persons in Uganda do not have a background of working in the public service or private sector institutions, and hence are not eligible for pension, which makes their economic life to be very hard.

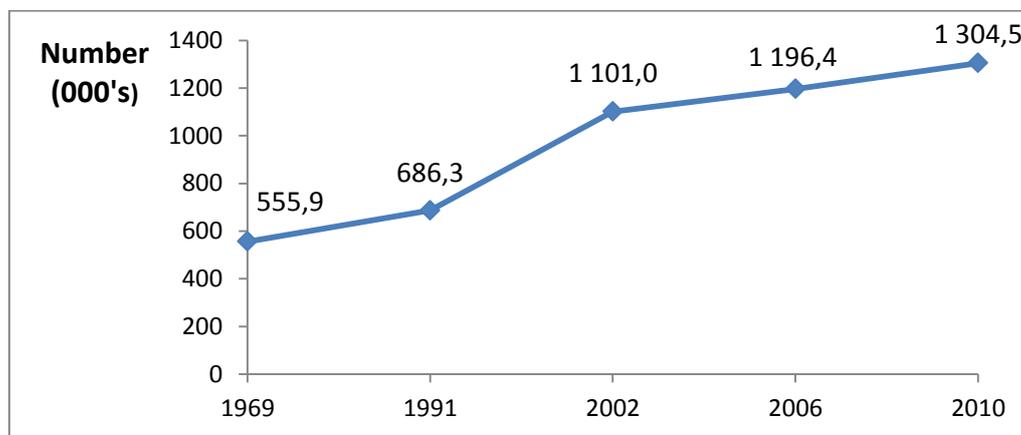


Figure 1.1 Trend in population aged 60 and above in Uganda, 1969-2010

Source: MFEP (1995), (UBOS, 2005) & (UBOS, 2012)

However, older persons in Uganda, like elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa have a lot of value for the society, which make them happy. Their value includes firstly, knowledge and possession of ethnoscience. Secondly, they monitor, maintain and protect family property in the rural areas. Thirdly, older persons have played a very important role of health caregivers to the sick and other vulnerable people. An example of this is the care they have given to the orphans of deceased relatives due to HIV/AIDS. Fourth, they tend to be trusted as community leaders, which makes them happy to be of value, despite their advanced ages.

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