

First IAGG Africa Regional Conference
17-20 October 2012

From the measure of residential arrangements to the reality of family support and care for older persons in Uganda

Valérie Golaz*, Gideon Rutaremwa**
and Stephen Ojiambo Wandera **

* INED-IRD / CEPED, France - CPAS, Makerere University, Uganda

** CPAS, Makerere University, Uganda

Older adults in Uganda

- 5% of the population are over 60 y old
- Little support from the government, apart from cash transfer scheme in 14 pilot districts
- Rely mainly on family when they need assistance
- But many have lost children and gd children (civil war, HIV/AIDS, ...)
- How can we assess their situation? A quantitative approach can be combined with a qualitative one to try and reflect about what to collect and how, in order to assess the support older people get in case of need.

Outline

1. Methodology
2. Analysing older adults' vulnerabilities through census data
3. The complexity of older adults daily challenges and support
4. What can we measure and how?

Methodology

- Secondary analysis of census data (Antoine, Golaz, 2011; Golaz, Rutaremwa, 2011)
- In depth interviews with older adults and their close relationships in 7 different places in Uganda*
- Study areas in different settings (rural areas – small town – capital city)

* FS (INED, 2008-2009), IGLEA (IRD, 2009-2013) and HH-MM (ANR-ESRC 2009-2013) Projects, with special thanks to Ernestina Coast (LSE), Alexandra Fanghanel (UCL) and Claire Medard (IRD) for their participation in data collection

1

Analysing older adults' vulnerabilities through census data

Household structure and residential arrangements

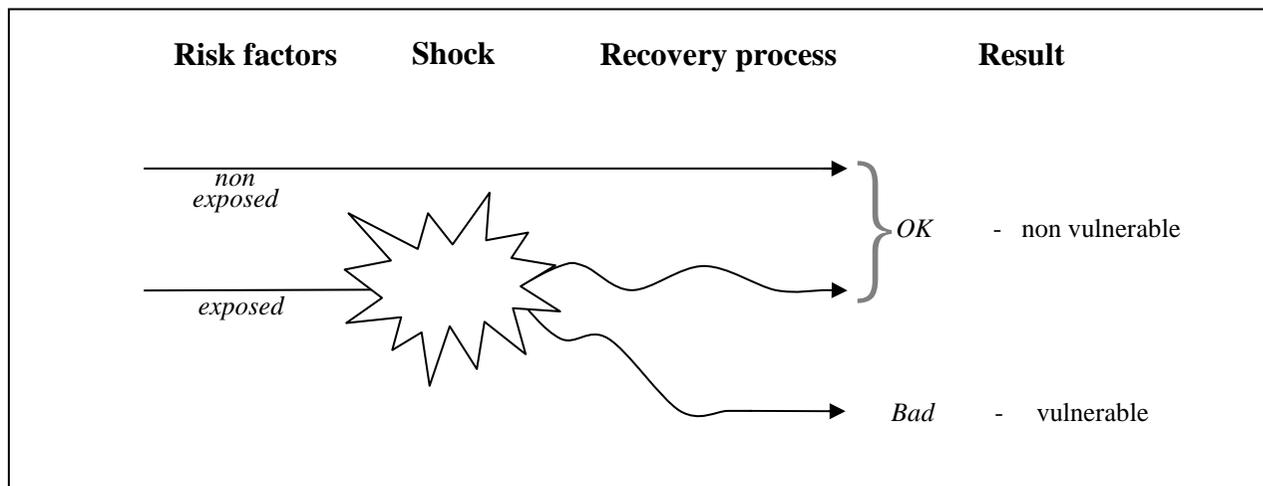
- Basic demographic data, available in all sources.
- There is a possible approach of the situation of older people through household data.
- Individual characteristics, household characteristics and the characteristics of other household members can be put together to build indicators of vulnerability for older persons.

3 types of vulnerability

1. Structural vulnerability : old persons living alone or with children only
2. Relational vulnerability : old persons in a marginal position within the household
 - Not closely related to HH head
3. Economic vulnerability : old persons who are the only providers for their households

3 types of vulnerability

- 3 types of vulnerability
 - to grasp the capacity to recover from a given shock (health issue, outside phenomenon, ...)
- Which do not take into account poverty



2002 population and Housing Census

- **Structural vulnerability:**
14% of older men; 21% of older women
- **Relational vulnerability:**
11% of older men; 26% of older women
- **Economic vulnerability:**
30% of older men; 23% of older women

2

The complexity of older adults
daily challenges and support

6 case studies

1. John, a lonely man [Wakiso]
2. Lilian, who stays alone but is well supported [Kampala]
3. Rose, an active widow with a wide and diversified network [Kampala]
4. Mariam, is not alone but without much resources [eastern region]
5. Anna, or the advantages of staying together
6. George, who lives with his wife but feels vulnerable

1. John – Lonely

Context

- Lives alone in rural Wakiso aged 70.
- Sick – chronic cough
- Wife, two daughters died, two grand daughters never see him & he feels helpless and bitter.
- Family contacts, the son of a brother who brings small gifts, sister and grandchildren (wash dishes).
- Lives on land rather large for a single person, about 1.5 ha planted with coffee and bananas.
- Revenue from coffee allows him to use some help to grow the rest.

Vulnerability

- Demographics - structural vulnerability
- No family labor, hires someone to cultivate. Note here that economic survival does not depend on his own work.
- Contrary to what he suggests, his sister is an important resource for him, especially through visits of sister's grandchildren.
- Spatial proximity with the family of his sister is not fully selected, it stems from the fact that their land belonged to their father.

2. Lilian – alone but supported

Context

- Aged 71, lived in Kampala over 25 years
- Husband died in the war
- Survived with 1 son, married – 3 kids, lives far, works near her home
- 3 g-children who are married live in the K'la
- 1 g-daughter called during interview

Vulnerability

- Isolation makes little sense in this case
- Grand daughters in K'la are very close and support Lilian in daily life
- Son physically distant but provides significant material support
- Lilian mothered g-daughters in difficult times
- If she lived with one of her g-daughters, in any case she would be marginalized in relation to household resources.

3. Rose - Kampala

Context

- Widow – had 10 children
- Runs a shop in rural Kampala
- Educated all her children
- Elder son dead
- Lives with 1 son physically disabled and niece aged 10
- 4 children work in the US

Vulnerability

- Statistical = economic vulnerability [only bread winner]
- But Rose is better off – one child comes every Xmas from the US

4. Mariam – Busia, Uganda

Context

- Aged 63, widow
- Lives with her son and 4 g-children (belong to her son)
- Son divorced, makes bricks, buys some food
- Miriam had been sick, no adequate treatment

Vulnerability

- Not economic vulnerability?
- Poor hh, g-children lack adequate support for schooling
- No treatment for Miriam

Activity, poverty, vulnerability and health

- Difficulties come up at usually later ages, with health issues hampering normal activities and thus, limiting the role of the older adult as a provider for his/her family
- Poverty is a major factor of vulnerability
- The management of health issues reveals the family support that older persons can rely on.

Closeness and support

- Living as a couple: a security that concerns mainly older men
- In many cases, difficulties of measuring support from residential arrangements based on the concept of household
- Geographical closeness vs close relationship... what matters most?

Expectations and mutual help

- Expectations lie mostly on descendants (children, gd children).
- Relationships are always expected to go both ways : from older adults to children and children to older adults, same with grand children.
- But in practice, lots of variations, over time, bwn different children/ gd children

Support systems dynamics

- A support system - built over time and places should be looked at as a whole.
- The older adult is only one person in a network of support givers and receivers.
- Support systems under pressure when children have gone missing

3

What do we need to measure
and how?

What do we need to measure?

- The support network: extent, composition, intensity of relationships

.... But this is difficult if not impossible to access directly

- The available resources in the support network

.... Even more difficult

How can we measure it?

- A simple issue, at stake for all older persons, reveals the support system on which the older person relies: **HEALTH**
- How has the older person been cared for during a recent illness?
- What would the family do if the older person needed support in the context of a serious Health issue?

Thank you
for your attention