

SOCIAL PROTECTION

Mapping

KNOWING THE 'INFORMAL' NATIONAL FORCE

A major research project in six Africa countries confirms that many people are not reached and many needs are not met by State social protection services, even when supported by major NGOs, donors and large faith-based organisations (FBOs). National health insurance and national pension schemes, for example, are available only to a very small minority in formal employment.

Governments know the shortfalls are often met by self-help initiatives, and they know why and how, but they do not have adequate information on where these services (community based organisations – CBOs) are, who operates them, or exactly what they do. Independent research coordinated by PASGR in 30 districts of six countries (see table) shows a profound disconnect is profound.

Yet such information is fundamental to policy, budgeting and any hope of coordinating and integrating public and private social service resources and efforts. Using a crude proportional estimate from the research samples, there could be as

bership associations, to address a wide range of general and particular vulnerabilities.

Each one of these informal groups is small and highly localised, but there are hundreds of thousands of them, everywhere. And the studies show that CBOs deliver more services to more people in more places than the entire official social protection system.

They do much. And they could do significantly more with a little help. But they are effectively excluded from State or any other external support because they do not comply with rigid official structures or

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Study coverage by country, local government and social protection providers

Country	Total districts in country	Total districts sampled	Total NSAs identified in study districts	Crude estimate of national total
Ethiopia	770	4	1,094	210,595
Ghana	170	9	983	18,568
Kenya	300	7	865	37,242
Senegal	46	3	210	3,220
Tanzania	169	2	426	35,917
Uganda	112	5	536	12,006
TOTAL	1567	30	4,114	317,548

many as 300,000 non-state actors providing social protection services in the study countries. Some 80% are CBOs, but less than 10% of them are captured in State directories.

Citizens have mobilised an array of their own informal safety nets, insurance and credit schemes, self-help groups and mem-

modern management templates. They do not network with which each other. Duplication is rampant.

POLICY CHALLENGE

There is a self-evident need to positively harness the CBO resource and to make it a

key part of the national system. In that process, there is opportunity to strengthen and coordinate CBO service delivery and to give State and external funding support.

The essential steps include:

- Thorough and comprehensive mapping of the identities, locations and activities of all CBOs.
- Universal registration – conducted for information, not regulation – as the most rational approach.
- A simple, voluntary registration system (at least initially) driven by incentives which give CBOs immediate, practical and visible benefits to encourage compliance.
- These incentives can establish a policy and pattern for long-term support, which will ensure CBOs, are regularly and positively engaged and therefore enabled and steered to the leading edge of social welfare service delivery, nationwide.

Detailed study data and analysis from research on non-State actors in social protection in 30 diverse areas of six countries is available from PASGR.