

**RESEARCH-POLICY COMMUNITY (*UTAFITI SERA*) ON**

**SOCIAL PROTECTION IN KENYA**

**FINAL REPORT**

**PROJECT DURATION: FEBRUARY 16, 2016-AUGUST 31, 2017**

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background**

In February 2016, the African Institute for Health and Development (AIHD) signed an agreement with the Partnership of Social and Governance Research (PASGR) to host Kenya’s “Research-policy community (*Utafiti Sera*) on social protection in Kenya” project. The project was launched in a forum that was organized by PASGR and Knowledge Platform on Inclusive Development (INCLUDE) on May 13, 2015. This meeting brought together policy makers, practitioners, media and researchers to deliberate on how research that aims to influence social protection programmes in the country could be enhanced. They arrived at the conclusion that research organizations must focus on building a coalition of researchers, various policy actors, practitioners and users throughout the research process. This report covers the activities implemented by AIHD in collaboration with the PASGR under *Utafiti Sera* project.

Generally, *Utafiti Sera* represents a research-policy community made up of diverse and different actors and interests, working towards the overall goals of inclusive development and people’s wellbeing. The research-policy community works together to ensure that appropriate policy actions and uptake occur either through programmes, legislations, policies or administrative and other actions around an issue for which research has provided evidence. It is a combination of many things, a “process”, “space”, “platform”, “forum” and a “vehicle” for transforming evidence-based knowledge for policy uptake.

*Utafiti Sera* on social protection as a “process” involves sequences of activities that enable the building of a community of practice from where existing and new ideas and evidence flow from community members resulting in collective action to improve social protection policies and programmes. As a “place”, the scheme provides a platform for key stakeholders with interest, power, capacity and motivation to act in diverse ways to ensure research evidence is available and is used to make informed policy decisions and practices. As a “forum”, the initiative provides a platform for knowledge engagement by different members of the community and as a “vehicle”, the initiative constitutes transmission channels for shared knowledge and experiences to influence policy uptake.

### **1.2 Objectives of *Utafiti Sera***

The main goal of *Utafiti Sera* on social protection is to build and sustain a vibrant community of researchers, policy makers and practitioners who can advocate for evidence-based policy uptake. In order to achieve this goal, the initiative is pursuing the following specific objectives:

- i. Sustain a vibrant research-policy community on social protection in Kenya through well planned programme activities;
- ii. Generate new research evidence and synthesize existing relevant research evidence on social protection and make it available to policy makers and practitioners through various forms of communication; and

- iii. Engage key policy makers and practitioners through direct contact, policy advocacy and use of issue champions during meetings, policy debates and workshops.

## **2.0 STATUS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES**

This section describes the following: (i) Activities for *Utafiti Sera*; (ii) Accomplishment of activities for *Utafiti Sera*; (iii) On-going/pending activities for *Utafiti Sera*; and (iv) and challenges in implementing activities for *Utafiti Sera*.

### **2.1 Activities for *Utafiti Sera***

The PASGR, INCLUDE, AIHD and the Ministry of East African Community, Labour and Social Protection (MEACL&SP) and other members of the *Utafiti Sera Community* have undertaken a series of activities to inform and influence policies and programmes on social protection in Kenya. These include:

- i. Packaging of new and existing relevant research evidence to inform and influence policies and programmes on social protection in Kenya.
- ii. Organizing one-day forums on topical issues on social protection in Kenya.
- iii. Developing a 15-20 minutes video documentary on the impact of social protection programmes at the local level in Kenya.
- iv. Developing policy briefs and info-graphics on pertinent issues on social protection in Kenya.
- v. Providing a virtual platform for active knowledge exchange on social protection issues in the country through media engagement.
- vi. Supporting the MEACL&SP/Ministry of Devolution and Planning (MDP) to develop guidelines on social policy and social protection at the county level.

### **2.2 Accomplished Activities for *Utafiti Sera***

#### **2.2.1 Mapping of Existing Studies on Social Protection in Kenya**

The AIHD team undertook a mapping exercise of empirical studies on social protection. The objectives of the mapping were to: (i) identify research and other evidence relevant to social protection policy; (ii) document the current status of knowledge on social protection in Kenya; (iii) identify policy-related gaps in social protection in Kenya; and (iv) make recommendations on policy, research and programming.

The mapping exercise involved in-depth desk reviews of existing studies both published and unpublished. The documents reviewed included published peer reviewed articles, Government reports and documents, studies supported by PASGR and INCLUDE and other key stakeholders in the social protection sector. Documents reviewed and referenced were mainly sourced from the

Internet (online searches) and copies of in-house reports and documents on social protection. The end result of this exercise was a mapping report and a bibliography of studies on social protection.

Notably, the mapping exercise report informed the identification of five key thematic areas on social protection that demand policy attention in Kenya. These areas include:

- i. Developing a comprehensive legislation on social protection to ensure a coordinated and coherent approach to social protection programming;
- ii. Exploring alternative strategies to expand funding sources of social protection programmes;
- iii. Determining the appropriate exit, graduation and sustainability strategies of existing social assistance programmes;
- iv. Ensuring the design and implementation of social protection programmes and development approaches are coordinated; and
- v. Introducing universal cash transfers to senior citizens and persons with disabilities.

### **2.2.2 Organization of Forums**

The AIHD in collaboration with PASGR and the MEACL&SP successfully organized two ‘one-day’ forums to discuss specific social protection issues that demand attention in Kenya. The first forum took place on May 10, 2016 at Crowne Plaza Hotel in Nairobi. The main aim of this forum was to provide an opportunity for researchers, policy makers and practitioners to discuss pertinent and current issues on social protection in Kenya that need policy attention.

This forum brought together 49 key stakeholders in the social protection sector in Kenya, namely, the MEACL&SP, County Officials, Development Partners, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and the Media. The occasion was graced by the Principal Secretary, Ms. Susan Mochache of the MEACL&SP. In her opening remarks, Ms. Mochache recognized the importance of putting in place a law on social protection to ensure that the key milestones achieved in the sector are secured. In addition, she highlighted the need to develop more models of social protection, put in place graduation mechanisms, undertake proper monitoring of the available exit mechanisms; and conduct more in-depth research to inform legislation and integration of various social protection programmes.

In this forum, members of the *Utafiti Sera House* agreed to pursue five key topical issues on social protection that demand attention in Kenya as highlighted under the activity, *mapping of existing studies on social protection in Kenya*. However, since the need to put in place legislation on social protection was prioritized by the PS, Ms. Mochache and other key stakeholders in the sector, members of the House decided to focus on it as its main objective for this phase of work. The final report of this forum was shared with key stakeholders in the sector and forum participants.

The second forum took place on August 22, 2016 at Panafric Hotel, Nairobi and was attended by 40 participants. The forum dubbed “Stakeholders’ Consultative Forum on the proposed National

Social Protection Bill” brought together key stakeholders in social protection, including policy makers, practitioners, researchers and the media. The overarching aim of this forum was to share the content of the first draft of the proposed social protection bill with key stakeholders and to solicit input for its subsequent revision. The forum focused on four main objectives:(i) sharing of the content of the ‘zero draft’ social protection bill; (ii) sharing of experiences on social protection legislation from other countries;(iii) providing input into the current draft bill; and (iv) agreeing on the next steps in the development of social protection bill.

During the forum, Mrs. Cecilia Mbaka, the Head of the National Social Protection Secretariat (NSPS) representing the PS, observed that although Kenya had made a lot of strides in implementing social protection programmes, there was no law guiding the implementation of these initiatives. Consequently, the Government had embarked on a process of developing a National Social Protection Bill with the main aim of linking key stakeholders in social protection sector including, the National and County Governments as well as the private sector and coordinating the three pillars of social protection namely, social assistance, social health insurance and social security. In order to achieve this, delegates in the forum urged the technical team developing the bill to, consult broadly on the issue of establishing a coordination mechanism for social protection in Kenya and look at how other countries are managing social protection and borrow from their best practices. The final report of this forum was submitted to PASGR.

### **2.2.3 Video Documentary and Publicity**

This activity included the production of a video documentary on the cash transfer programmes at the county and national levels. The main aim of the documentary was to provide a broad overview of the current state of implementation of social protection in the country. The AIHD engaged the services of a consultancy firm, Reel Time Productions under the leadership of Mr. Dennis Kimaru, to undertake the activity.

The consultancy team documented the views of county officials, beneficiaries and implementers of social protection interventions in four counties: Bomet; Kakamega; Turkana; and Kwale. In these counties, the team focused on both the national and county specific social protection programmes. In Bomet, Kwale and Turkana views were collected on the cash transfer for older persons (OPCT), orphans and vulnerable children (CT-OVC) and persons with severe disabilities (CT-PWSD). Additionally, in Bomet and Turkana, the OPCT programme for older persons of 70+ years and the Hunger Safety Net Programme (HSNP) were documented respectively. In Kakamega, the team focused on two county specific programmes; shelter improvement for the elderly poor and free maternity and support for poor mothers.

At the national level, the team interviewed Government officials from the MEACL&SP including officials in the Social Protection Secretariat (SPS) and the Social Assistance Unit (SAU), Ministry of Devolution and Planning; Development Partners from World Bank and the World Food Programme; and researchers from Centre of Parliamentary Studies and Training, Institute for Development Studies of Nairobi University, PASGR and AIHD. The video documentary is complete and can be accessed through the link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nSPEWdBYhuU&feature=youtu.be>  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B69Hec3NKVBpN0JNMkEzVVc4Slk/view>

or

Apart from producing the documentary, the consultant documented and photographed participants during forums. Notably, a few short clips of the forum were edited and added to the thirteen minutes video documentary. Photographs taken during these forums can be accessed using the links below:

<http://reeltime.pixieset.com/pasgrutafitiforum/> and <http://reeltime.pixieset.com/utafitisera-legislationforum/>.

#### **2.2.4 Policy Briefs and Info-graphics**

This activity encompassed developing of two policy briefs and info-graphics on social protection. Policy briefs are an efficient way of communicating issues to policy makers and other stakeholders. The first and second briefs were dubbed, “Strengthening Kenya’s social protection agenda through research, programming and policy” and “The need for a comprehensive legal framework for social protection in Kenya” respectively. The two briefs describe pertinent issues on social protection as outlined under the activity, *mapping of existing studies on social protection in Kenya*.

The info-graphics included graphic visual representations of information, data or knowledge that showed patterns and trends in the social protection sector. The final policy briefs and info-graphics were shared with PASGR.

#### **2.2.4 Media Engagement**

This activity involved the production of newspaper articles and social media engagement. With regards to the production of newspaper articles, the AIHD in collaboration with the MEACL&SP engaged the service of two writers of local newspapers: Mr. John Muchangi of The Radio Africa Group and Mr. Daniel Wesangula of The Standard Media Group in producing four articles on social protection in Kenya. The main objective of this activity was to encourage debate on social protection and educate the general population. While undertaking this assignment, the writers travelled locally to Mombasa, Kwale, Busia and within Nairobi Counties to interview government officials and beneficiaries of the social protection interventions.

Mr. Wesangula of The Standard newspaper published two articles. The first story dubbed “Cash restores dignity to the elderly in Murang’a” was published on October 2, 2016. This article can be accessed through the link: <http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/2000218056/cash-restores-dignity-to-the-elderly-in-murang'a>. The second article titled “On welfare but won’t let life beat them down”, was published on December 4, 2016.

Mr. Muchangi of The Star Newspaper also published two articles. His first article entitled, “Cash transfers for disabled people: Is the Inua Jamii plan changing lives?” was published on December 28, 2016. This article can be accessed through the links: [http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2017/01/17/cash-transfers-for-disabled-people-is-the-inua-jamii-plan-changing\\_c1489024](http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2017/01/17/cash-transfers-for-disabled-people-is-the-inua-jamii-plan-changing_c1489024) and [http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2017/01/16/how-proper-research-led-to-success-of-inua-jamii-project-for-disabled\\_c1488616](http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2017/01/16/how-proper-research-led-to-success-of-inua-jamii-project-for-disabled_c1488616).

The second story titled, " From begging for food to farming: Grannies cash in on welfare plan” was published on March 9, 2017. The article can be accessed through the links: [http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2017/03/09/from-begging-for-food-to-farming-grannies-cash-in-on-welfare-plan\\_c1514621](http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2017/03/09/from-begging-for-food-to-farming-grannies-cash-in-on-welfare-plan_c1514621) and [http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2017/03/10/theres-no-evidence-social-protection-payees-binge-on-alcohol\\_c1522174](http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2017/03/10/theres-no-evidence-social-protection-payees-binge-on-alcohol_c1522174). Following the production of the articles both journalists provided narrative reports of their work (see reports attached separately to this report).

The social media engagement activity included writing and posting blog posts, live tweeting during meetings and use of twitter and Facebook to sensitize people on social protection. The AIHD worked with a consultant, Ms. Janet Adongo. Ms. Adongo posted two blog posts that can be accessed through the below links: <https://www.facebook.com/aihdKE/posts/1220521808005201:0> and <https://www.facebook.com/aihdKE/posts/1277066235684091:0>. She undertook live tweeting during the second *Utafiti Sera* forum, posted information on twitter and Facebook continuously. Notably, one can access the series of posts on our Facebook and twitter pages, AIHD Kenya and @AIHDKenya respectively. Furthermore, the consultant submitted two analytical reports on the viewership of the posts (see reports attached separately to this report)

### **2.3 On-going/Pending Activity for *Utafiti Sera***

Although the AIHD team has put a lot of effort in implementing activities under *Utafiti Sera* project, some activities are on-going/pending. These include,

1. Providing technical support to the ministries responsible for implementing social protection, and;
2. Organizing two breakfast meetings with political parties’ manifesto development committees.

#### **2.3.1 Technical support to the MEACL&SP/MDP**

Under this activity, the AIHD was tasked to support the MEACL&SP/MDP to develop guidelines on social policy and social protection at the county level. The team tried to have various meetings with the Council of Governors together with the NSPS, however the meetings were cancelled. Going forward, there is need to wait until the new government is in place to pursue this activity.

#### **2.3.2 Organization of Breakfast meetings**

The AIHD team was unable to organize two breakfast meetings with National super Alliance (NASA) and Jubilee Parties' Manifesto Technical Committees. This was mainly because the two Parties were engaged in their programmes by the time the meetings were scheduled to take place.

## **2.4 Challenges in Implementing Utafiti Sera Activities**

While undertaking the various project activities the AIHD encountered several key challenges, which are enumerated below in brief.

- i. Inadequate time: Time was a major constraint in implementing activities since most of them required collaboration with key stakeholders in the social protection sector. Bringing on board these stakeholders necessitated constant and persistent follow-up consuming a lot of time that was not factored in the initial schedule of activities.
- ii. Limited data on SP programmes: When undertaking the assignment, the AIHD team observed that although many studies have been done on social protection, data on the specific programmes, especially contributory schemes, was limited.
- iii. Challenges of co-organizing forums: Due to the need to co-own the initiatives, invitation letters for the forums were sent out too close to the scheduled date resulting in some of the invited participants failing to confirm their attendance or sending representatives due to their busy schedules. Moreover, there was a lot of back and forth in settling on a date for the forums and in developing documents such as invitation letters and agenda for the meetings.
- iv. Generally, there was a lot of back and forth in implementing activities of the project. As a result, considerable amount of time was spent on reviewing, revising and refining documents.
- v. Communication barrier: While implementing the project, the teams had different opinions and diverse perceptions on how to undertake the activities. This led to delays and in some cases stalemate scenarios.

## **3.0 CONCLUSION AND LESSONS**

### **3.1 Conclusion**

The AIHD has hosted *Utafiti Sera on social protection in Kenya*, an innovative mechanism to inform and positively influence and contribute to appropriate and relevant policies and programmes to address inclusive development and the wellbeing of citizens through research evidence, for over a year. During this period, the Institute undertook a series of activities to influence policies and programmes on social protection in Kenya. The activities include conducting research with the aim of informing and influencing policies and programmes on social protection, organizing forums on topical issues on social protection and providing a virtual platform for active knowledge exchange on social protection issues in the country.

Notably, the AIHD collaborated with key stakeholders in the social protection sector in implementing activities under the project. The Institute worked together with the MEACL&SP, whose leadership enthusiastically endorsed the work under this initiative. Furthermore, the AIHD linked with the private sector, communities, households and other non-state actors in social protection through this project.

While implementing the project, the AIHD created a research-policy community that consisted of researchers, government officials, civil society organizations, development partners and the media. Members of the research-policy community participated in the *Utafiti Sera* fora production of a video documentary and were furnished with project reports and other documents. Apart from creating and sustaining the community, the AIHD collected, synthesized and packed research evidence in the form of policy briefs, info-graphics, blog posts and newspaper articles to enable members of the community to interpret and use the data.

### **3.2 Lessons**

Key lessons from implementing the project include:

- i. Allocating ample time and allowing adequate spread of the activities to ensure that they are implemented successfully.
- ii. Encouraging evidence-based research in the social protection sector as a whole. This can be achieved through sustaining a vibrant research-policy community through which existing and new ideas, and evidence on social protection can flow from and among members of the community resulting in collective action to improve policies and programmes.
- iii. When co-organizing forums, the teams involved should ensure that invitations are sent out in good time and follow-up is made on confirmations. Furthermore, the main reference documents for the meetings should be prepared, revised and refined on time.
- iv. Provision of comprehensive, clear and prompt feedback on activities is a catalyst to implementing a project successfully.
- v. The need for effective communication between partnering organizations so that they can reach a mutual agreement about how to undertake project activities successful.

### **3.3 Future Engagement of Utafiti Sera Community on social protection in Kenya**

The AIHD team has deliberated on the way forward in engaging Utafiti Sera House in SP and therefore proposes the following plan:

- i. Sustaining networks or partnerships created so far through frequent interactions through fora or media.
- ii. Engaging the ministry responsible for social protection in the country when undertaking main activities on social protection.
- iii. Identifying gaps in advocacy and promoting advocacy on social protection in Kenya.
- iv. Supporting research on pertinent issues on social protection in Kenya.

- v. Engaging print and social media platforms when implementing projects on social protection.