



An Analysis of the 2026/27 National Budget

The Promise

In 2025, the government of Uganda promised to expand the Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE)¹ by lowering eligibility from 80 to 65 years and increasing the grant from UGX 25,000 to UGX 35,000. This reform would benefit over 1 million older persons.

The Reality

A look at the FY2026/27 Ministerial Policy Statements for the Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development shows that only UGX 121.2 billion has been allocated, far below the UGX 373.36 billion needed. That leaves a Funding Gap of UGX 252.16 billion.

This is despite the overall national budget increasing from **UGX 72.37 trillion in FY 2025/26** to UGX 78.24 trillion in FY 2026/27 — with SAGE receiving less than 0.2% of the total allocation.



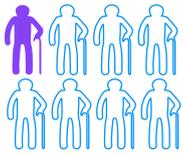
Fiscal Year	Eligible Age	Monthly Grant	Beneficiaries	SAGE Budget (UGX bn)	Additional Required (UGX bn)
FY2025/26 (current)	80+	25,000	306,759 (currently)	121.20	-
FY2026/27 (next)	65+	35,000	1,048,598 (projected)	373.36	252.16

A Stagnated budget Amidst Rising Need

Financial Year	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	2026/2027
Amount (UGX Bn)	121	121	100	121	121

¹ The Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE) is a program under the [Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development](#) that currently provides cash transfers to older persons aged 80 years and above aimed at improving their livelihood.

While Uganda's older population grows, funding for SAGE has remained stagnant, and at times even declined as shown in the above table.



Uganda has **2.3 million** people aged 60+, but only **~307,000** receive SAGE.

The pension has **not increased since 2013** and has lost value due to inflation.



A flat budget in a growing population means shrinking coverage and deepening old-age poverty.



A Mismatch in Priorities

Hundreds of billions are still spent on non-essential items. Redirecting even a portion could fully fund SAGE expansion.



In **FY 2026/27**, the government plans to spend **US\$ 166 Billion** on MPs' cars.



The Cost of Delay

Failing to fund social protection particularly the expansion of SAGE:

- Erodes public trust and accountability: When approved social protection reforms are not backed by resources, it weakens confidence in government commitments.
- Undermines the progressive realisation of the right to social security enshrined in the Constitution.
- Deepens structural poverty and inequality: Without predictable income support, many older persons, particularly women, and the rural poor who face cumulative disadvantages over the life course, remain exposed to multidimensional poverty, economic dependence, and social exclusion.

This is not just a budget issue. It tests the social contract between the state and the people.



The Call

We demand that government transform political commitment into fiscal reality:

1. Fully fund SAGE expansion now. Allocate the full UGX 373.36 billion required to deliver the Cabinet promise.
2. Reprioritize wasteful spending toward social protection. Redirect funds from non-essential expenditures to close the UGX 252.16 billion funding gap.
3. Enact a Social Protection Act. Guarantee social security as a justiciable right, protected from political whims and annual budget volatility.