

UGANDA SOCIAL PROTECTION FACT SHEET

Poverty & Vulnerability



National poverty rate 16.1%
(≈ 7 million people) as of 2023/24

Absolute poverty: Rural
19.4% vs. Urban 10.3%



Karamoja region remains the most impoverished in the country: 74.2% of its population live below the poverty line (\$1 ≈ UGX 3,600 a day)

Fragility to shocks: Nearly 50% of Ugandans remain vulnerable to slipping into poverty due to crises such as drought, illness, and inflation



Youth disengagement: 50.9% of youth (18–30) are NEET (Not in Employment, Education, or Training)

Rural population: 76% live in rural areas, often lacking adequate social services



Child poverty: 56% of children (0–17 years) are multidimensionally poor

Children's nutrition status: 24.4% are stunted, 3.2% are wasted, 3.4% are overweight, 9.7% are underweight



Older persons: Only 5% of those aged 60+ receive pensions

Internally displaced persons (IDPs): 1.5 million+



Age dependency ratio: 85.7% (2023)



Informal economy: Over 90% of workers are in informal employment



Universal Health Insurance: Not yet established.

Unemployment: 12.6% (14–64 years)



Labour force participation rate: 42.9% (14–64 years)



Out-of-school children: 26% (ages 6–12); rural 28% vs. urban 21%



HIV prevalence: 5.1% among adults (15–49) (2023)



Poverty rate among female-headed households: 22% (male-headed households: 19.5%)



Uganda's constitution: Mandates Social Protection.

Social Protection Framework & Financing

Policy landscape



Uganda's National Social Protection Policy was established in 2015 to build a comprehensive system addressing risks across people's life cycles

A newer National Social Protection Strategy (2023–2028) serves as a roadmap to reduce socio-economic disparities through two pillars: social security and social care/support services

Coverage financing gaps

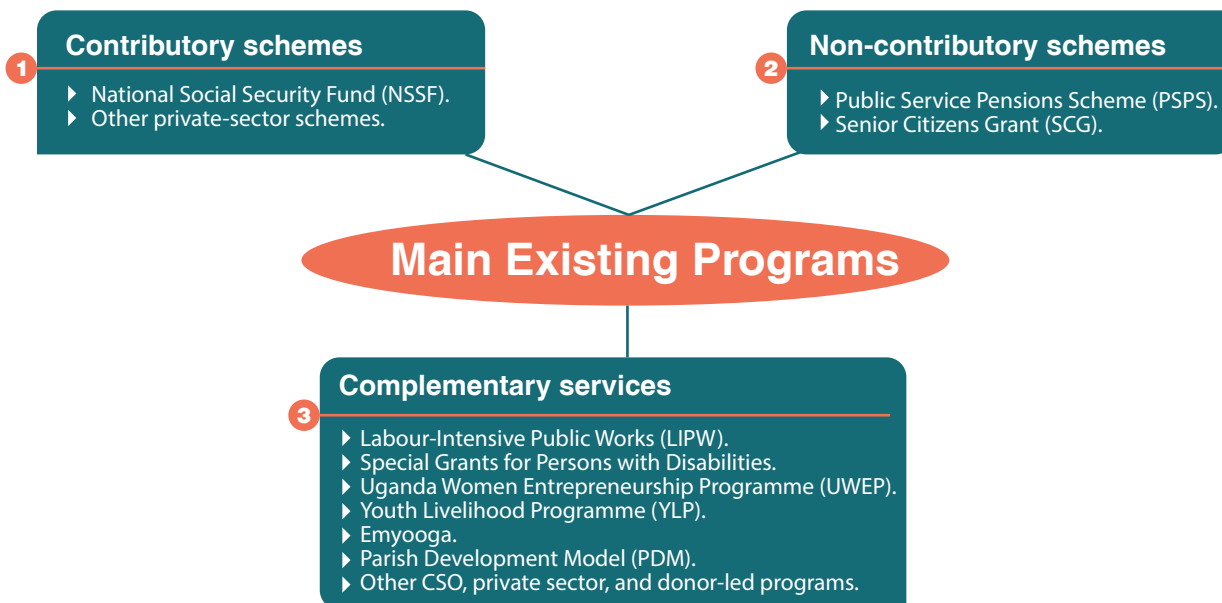
Only ~3% of the population is covered by social protection schemes, among the lowest in the region



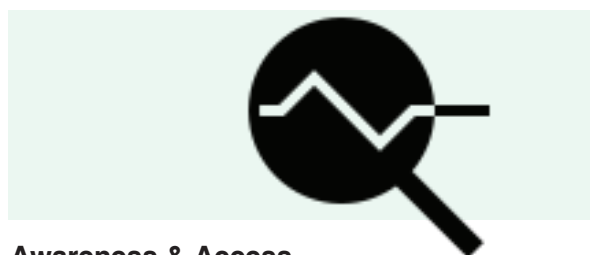
Social protection spending (excluding healthcare) is 0.7% of GDP, compared to Kenya (1.4%), Tanzania (2.5%), and Rwanda (1.3%)

As of 2024

- ▶ 6.2% of the population received at least one SP benefit.
- ▶ 1.2% of vulnerable populations received social assistance.
- ▶ 2.5% of the population had health insurance coverage.
- ▶ 21.9% of the elderly (60+) benefited from at least one SP scheme.



Vulnerable Ugandan Women’s Perspectives Regarding Social Protection Programs: ICRW Research Findings



Awareness & Access

- High awareness of SP programs.
- Women’s main source of SP information: informal networks (friends, leaders, community contacts).

Positive

- Free maternal & child healthcare.
- Access to education for children.
- Skills training & entrepreneurship better income & food security.

Challenges

- Exclusion due to weak social ties or lack of information.
- Benefits often insufficient, irregular, or eroded by hidden costs.
- Poor management, corruption, and exclusion.
- Public health & education institutions viewed as often overcrowded, - understaffed, or demanding payments

Women’s aspirations for reform

- ▶ Equitable, transparent, and participatory SP systems.
- ▶ Simplified, inclusive eligibility and fair selection processes.
- ▶ Active involvement of women in SP design & delivery.
- ▶ Stronger accountability & anti-corruption measures.
- ▶ Sustained investment in quality health, education, and livelihood services.

Works consulted

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