

# SOCIAL PROTECTION

## Registration

### STATE ENGAGEMENT WITH SMALL SOCIAL PROTECTION PROVIDERS

Many community based organisations (CBOs) are not formally registered – not because they wish to hide, but because the registration process is mistrusted, too complex and offers no visible benefit.

The result is that government has inadequate information on the largest group of non-State actors in social welfare – self help groups and membership associations. Independent research in 30 diverse areas of Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Senegal, Tanzania and Uganda shows this problem is widespread.

### POLICY CHALLENGE

Mapping of CBOs is essential, but registration efforts will suffer from the law of diminishing returns unless they are voluntary, free and unconditional (to overcome mistrust), simple and assisted by local offices with ready templates (to overcome documentation obstacles), and encouraged by immediate, direct and visible benefits (as an incentive to action).

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Status of non-state social protection actors

Status of NSAs	Country					
	Et	Gh	Ke	Se	Tz	Ug
Informal (unregistered)	54.2	73.0	29.0	57.3	46.0	41.7
Legally registered	45.8	27.0	71.0	42.7	54.0	58.3

Et Ethiopia Gh Ghana Ke Kenya Se Senegal Tz Tanzania Ug Uganda

**Mistrust:** Many CBOs associate any government connection with licence fees and restrictive regulation, not with access to additional benefits. The misgivings are often mutual, for as soon as registration is linked to a benefit opportunity there can be a flood of spurious applications.

**Complexity:** Current registration requirements demand levels of documentation that CBOs do not possess and cannot produce. They do not have written books of account, regulations or constitutions and, in many cases, do not have the resources (time and skills) to start producing them.

**Benefit:** The diverse studies coordinated by PASGR in six countries found State directories of non-State actors universally incomplete, often inaccurate and out of date. Informal CBOs reported virtually no interaction with or support from the State, whether registered or not. Registration does not surely or easily enable CBOs to seek external funding.

established, progressive formalities, compliance and improvement can be cooperatively pursued without undermining the very traditions which make CBOs so acceptable and effective to their constituents.

There are numerous ways to prevent spurious registration...if it is conducted at a very local level (e.g. by area chiefs who know the community groups); if applications are supported by references from other CBOs of long-standing; and, if the incentives provided are of high value to legitimate operations without interesting opportunists (e.g. mentoring, skills training and project-specific material support). CBOs themselves - and especially their beneficiaries - can be an extremely effective policing mechanism if given the trust and mandate.

Fuller details on this, with statistical data and analysis from the studies, are available from PASGR.