

<b>Institution: University of East Anglia</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: 24 Anthropology and Development Studies</b>
<b>Title of case study: Building a case for extending social pension schemes in developing countries.</b>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>Social pensions targeting poor households have emerged as a major anti-poverty policy for developing countries. Since 2008, programmes have been established or extended in Bangladesh, Mexico, Peru, Uganda and the Philippines. Collectively, these programmes provide regular cash payments to at least six million households not previously covered by formal social protection. DEV research significantly contributed to this by (i) raising awareness of social pensions among NGOs, UN agencies and key policy makers; (ii) providing robust evidence of the effects of existing social pension programmes; and (iii) more recently, identifying limitations of existing schemes and the need for complementary interventions.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>Peter Lloyd-Sherlock, Professor of Social Policy and International Development at the University of East Anglia, was joint principal investigator with Armando Barrientos (Manchester University) of the first-ever international study of social pensions. The study included a quantitative survey, in 2002, of over 2,000 households containing older people in rural and urban catchments in Brazil and South Africa [Research Reference (RR) 1]. Lloyd-Sherlock jointly led all quantitative and qualitative aspects of the research including its conception, design, analysis, interpretation and dissemination. The survey was complemented with in-depth qualitative interviews with a subset of the sample households, and key informant interviews with stakeholders, including national and international policymakers. The study demonstrated that social pensions were effective in reaching households in deprived settings, that a high proportion of pensioners lived with young grandchildren, and that in over 80 per cent of cases pensioners shared most of their benefit with other household members. The study found pensions significantly reduced the intensity of poverty and enhanced the financial resilience of older people's households [RR2; RR3]. These positive effects were consistent for Brazil and South Africa, indicating the international potential for social pensions as a pro-poor policy option.</p> <p>Lloyd-Sherlock was also joint principal investigator on a follow-up survey of the same households in 2008/9 [RR4]. This combined a questionnaire survey with 50 in-depth interviews. Lloyd-Sherlock jointly led all aspects of the research. The second survey showed that the effect of social pensions on household economic circumstances reported for 2002 had been sustained [RR3, 5]; it also found that social pensions are associated with high levels of subjective wellbeing in older people. However, the study households' overall economic situation was strongly influenced by the wider economic context; reduced employment opportunities for younger members of coloured households in South Africa had led to increased impoverishment. A key finding of the second survey is that although social pensions made a significant contribution to household wellbeing, this effect was strongly mediated by the wider context of labour market dynamics, appropriate health policies and the promotion of financial literacy among pensioners. These results called for a broader approach to social protection.</p> <p>The findings of the second study have fed into new, on-going studies on the relationship between social protection and health policy for older people. These include research collaborations with the World Health Organisation (WHO), an advisory position with the Department for International Development (DFID) and a new ESRC funded research project led by Lloyd-Sherlock on pensions, health and wellbeing for older people in developing countries. They also include NGO collaborations: for example, in 2011 Lloyd-Sherlock was a senior adviser for a HelpAge International scoping study on the extension of social pensions in Indonesia.</p>

### 3. References to the research

[all available at [www.uea.ac.uk/international-development/impact](http://www.uea.ac.uk/international-development/impact)]

1. 2001-2003: 'Non-contributory pensions and poverty prevention in developing countries? A comparative study of South Africa and Brazil' (joint principal investigator with Armando Barrientos). Funded by DFID, £200,000. Rated as outstanding/successful in DFID's post-award evaluation.  
<http://www.sed.manchester.ac.uk/research/ageingandwellbeing/ncpps/Papers/NCPPSleaflet1.pdf>
2. P. Lloyd-Sherlock (2006) 'Simple transfers, complex outcomes. The impacts of pensions on poor households in Brazil', *Development and Change* 37(5).  
<http://www.bwpi.manchester.ac.uk/Pensionwatch-briefing-7.pdf>
3. P.Lloyd-Sherlock et al. (2011) 'Pensions, poverty and wellbeing in later life: comparative research from South Africa and Brazil', *Journal of Ageing Studies* 26 (3): 243-252.
4. 2007-2011: 'Ageing, well-being and development. A comparative study of Brazil and South Africa'. Funded by ESRC (joint principal investigator with Armando Barrientos). £270,345. ESRC evaluation very good; ESRC reviewer comment: "having access to, and being listened by, the variety of audiences represented by governments (UK, Brazil, South Africa), international organisations (ILO, WHO, UN), international media, and global civil society (INGOs like HelpAge) lends this study the kind of social impact that academic research rarely achieves".
5. P. Lloyd-Sherlock, J. Saboia and B. Ramirez-Rodriguez (2012) 'Cash transfers and the wellbeing of older people in Brazil', *Development and Change* 43 (5):1049-1072.

### 4. Details of the impact

The impact of this research has mainly been achieved through an intensive process of engagement with a wide range of key international non-academic stakeholder organisations.

**HelpAge International (HAI):** Our research facilitated HAI's impact in this policy arena and affected HAI's own priorities in numerous ways:

- (i) HAI had not engaged with social pension issues before the first research project, which played a critical role in establishing its interest in this field. The initial research idea was first conceived at a meeting between Lloyd-Sherlock, Barrientos and Mark Gorman, then Chief Executive of HAI [Impact Reference (IR)1]. HAI fed into the development of the research proposal. It agreed to be a formal partner in the project and the subsequent 2008-9 study, and was involved in all stages of the work.
- (ii) The studies provided HAI with robust, credible data on social pensions, which it used in policy engagement [IR 2, 3]. Lloyd-Sherlock continues to engage with HAI weekly, both formally and informally, advising and supporting its work on social pensions in multiple ways. In 2009 he presented the results of the 2008/9 survey to a specially-convened meeting of HAI social pension country officers, and in 2012 he participated in a HAI expert meeting on income security in old age. The questionnaire used for the 2002 and the follow-up surveys has been drawn on for the development of separate HAI surveys of older people's wellbeing in countries such as Bolivia.

HAI is now recognised as the lead international organisation that has driven the social pension agenda, with strong support from DFID and working closely with national governments and other international organisations ([www.helpage.org/download/510158401a9cc/](http://www.helpage.org/download/510158401a9cc/)). Between 2007 and 2011 HAI significantly contributed to the implementation or extension of social pension schemes in 18 developing countries, affecting over 12 million older people. According to the CEO of HAI, 2006-13:

'The longitudinal study on Brazil-South Africa social pensions in particular has shaped our

## Impact case study (REF3b)

thinking on the inter-generational impacts of social pensions – on older people and their families – and helped to support the broader social protection agenda. Peter and Armando’s work is well respected in the policy and donor community, and their studies are regularly cited in key policy debates and policy consultation on social protection’ [IR4].

**UN agencies:** The finding that social pensions had similar effects in different countries was of particular interest to the International Labour Organisation (ILO). According to an ILO Senior Social Security Specialist, the research “strongly helped underpinning argumentation in favour of non-contributory pensions...that a south-south learning approach is feasible...and ideas to move on regarding solutions to similar countries can be shared with similar benefit among developing countries” [IR5] In 2011 Lloyd-Sherlock presented to a specially-convened social protection seminar at the ILO HQ, Geneva.

Following the first study, Lloyd-Sherlock was lead author of the Global Guide for the Implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, published by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs in 2008 and circulated to all UN member states [IR6]. In 2010/11 Lloyd-Sherlock was seconded to WHO, in part to develop strategies linking social pensions to interventions to enhance older people’s health [IR 7].

**DFID** was both a funder and a non-academic stakeholder in the 2001-3 study. In 2011-2012 Lloyd-Sherlock was engaged by DFID as a Senior Research Fellow, partly to advise on social protection issues including social pensions. According to the Senior Social Development Adviser, (DFID), the research:

“showed that DFID pensions can be an effective entry point to reducing the economic vulnerability and poverty of whole households....it evidenced social pensions/cash transfers for older persons, particularly women, as a less politically contentious route into wider benefits for entire households. It also alerted DFID to the need to understand the effects of pensions within a wider social development context....The fact that DFID then engaged Peter Lloyd-Sherlock as a research fellow ensured that the evidence coming out of this research contributed to DFID’s wider understanding (research) and application (policy) of inter-generational or life course approaches to reducing poverty and vulnerability” [IR8].

The governments of Brazil and South Africa have both been receptive to the research findings, with invited presentations to government agencies. For example, in 2011 South Africa’s Department of Social Development devoted a four hour meeting attended by over 400 officers to a presentation by Lloyd-Sherlock and the study team.

## 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

[all available at [www.uea.ac.uk/international-development/impact](http://www.uea.ac.uk/international-development/impact)]

1. Statement from the Director of Strategic Development, HelpAge International. “I am entirely satisfied that the case study provides an accurate account of the research and its impact on HelpAge International”.
2. HelpAge International (2003) ‘Non-contributory pensions and poverty prevention. A comparative study of Brazil and South Africa’. London: HelpAge International <http://www.helpage.org/silo/files/noncontributory-pensions-and-poverty-prevention-a-comparative-study-of-brazil-and-south-africa-.pdf>
3. Armando Barrientos and Peter Lloyd-Sherlock (2011) ‘Pensions, poverty and wellbeing. The impact of pensions in South Africa and Brazil, a comparative study’. HelpAge International Policy Brief [569 downloads July 2012 to July 2013]. <http://www.helpage.org/resources/publications>
4. Statement from the Chief Executive Officer, HelpAge International, 2006-2013.

## Impact case study (REF3b)

5. Statement from the Senior Social Security Specialist for the Americas and the Caribbean, ILO.
6. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, New York (2008) 'Guide to the national implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing'.  
<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/ageing/documents/papers/guide.pdf>
7. Director, Department of Ageing and Life Course, World Health Organisation. "I am happy to verify that Peter Lloyd-Sherlock has shared the contents of his REF impact case study with me and that they present an accurate description of the influence of his research" (email dated 19.09.13).
8. Statement from the Senior Social Development Adviser in Governance, Social Development and Conflict Team in the Research and Evidence Division, DFID, 2006-12.