



A happy retirement goes beyond financial certainty

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In our efforts to promote planning for retirement, we have more than focused on financial considerations. We have emphasized the need for prudent investment in assets that will provide a regular cashflow to support one's needs in retirement and ensure a "Zaabu life". However, we have not paid due attention to the non-financial aspects of retirement.

My friend Dr. Peter Kimbowa, popularly known as PK, recently lent me a book, *The Sky Gets Dark, Slowly*, by Zhou Daxin. The book

largely attempts to bring out the non-financial aspects of retirement planning, albeit in a scary way. Zhou attempts to demystify the non-financial considerations, which, nonetheless, have significant bearing on financial planning for retirement.

Most of what Zhou shares is not new only that we never pay great attention to the dynamics of retirement. Many of us only wake up to the reality of when we are about to retire or when we have retired. Indeed, many older persons are never prepared for what awaits them in old age. Zhou highlights some important non-financial situations any person heading to retirement should be aware of. His observations resonate with Uganda's situation and relate with the challenges facing many of the



First, it is important to appreciate that as you get older and retire, the number of people by your side dwindles. The world's demographics pyramid also affirms that at that age you are the minority. People in your parents' and grandparents' generation die and fade from memory. Many of your peers may be too burdened to look out for you while others may even find it harder to look after themselves. The younger generation that traditionally served as old age social security get busy with their own lives. Worse still, your beloved spouse may depart earlier than you. You therefore have to learn how to embrace retirement in solitude.

Secondly, no matter how glorious your previous career was or how famous you were, society will care less for you – apart from giving you the respect

they traditionally accord to the elderly. Ageing will transform you into a regular old man or old woman. The spotlight probably no longer shines on you. You should therefore plan on how to remain relevant to society. You must also overcome the urge to be envious or grumpy.

Thirdly, “health and age” become more inseparable in retirement. Fractures, cardio-vascular blockages, brain degeneration, cancer could pay you a visit any time, and you would not be able to turn them away. You will learn to live with illness and ailments. It is therefore important to secure your retirement medical cover. In addition, maintain a positive mentality and always get appropriate and regular exercise.

Of all Zhou's observations, the scariest is the one where you have to prepare for a bed-bound life, a return to the infant state. While our mothers brought us into this world on a bed, after a journey of twists and a life of struggle, we return to our starting point, the bed, under the care of others. The only difference being that, where we

once had our mothers to take care of us, we may not have any relatives to look after us in retirement. Even if we had relatives, their care may never come close to that of a mother. If you are lucky, you may have a nursing staff to take care of you, who may bear zero relation to you. Under such circumstances, prepare to be grateful for even that little care and please don't be difficult. Wearing smiles and a charming heart will give you that satisfaction as you prepare to meet your creator.

Point of caution, for those retiring with lots of savings, remember that there will be many swindlers and scammers waiting for you. They will endlessly be thinking of ways to encroach on your savings: through scam phone calls, text messages, mail, food and product samples, get-rich-quick schemes, products for longevity or enlightenment among other schemes. Beware, and be careful, hold your money close to you. Remember, a fool and his money are soon parted.

Finally, one non-financial aspect that is least mentioned in



planning for retirement, is the preparation to meet your creator. As we journey on earth, we are taught to be ready to meet our creator any time, irrespective of our faith denominations. More often than not we ignore this call and we are taken up by the winds of the world, chasing one deal after another; pursuing endless aspirations and ambitions. After sixty, you can be sure that you don't have many more years to live. If you have not been paying attention to your spiritual life, it is wise you become more serious lest you end up with a place in death that contradicts the "Zaabu" life that you have enjoyed in retirement.

While financial planning is paramount for an enjoyable and fulfilling retirement, non-financial aspects are equally important and should not be ignored.