



# Unearthing value proposition for funeral insurance

PREPARED FOR: ASSOCIATION OF KENYA INSURERS

PREPARED BY: IPSOS LIMITED

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**4** Main Findings



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# STUDY BACKGROUND

## Why would AKI like to conduct research on funeral insurance uptake?

There is an opportunity arising to offer a solution for death and burial arrangements based on changing dynamics in the market.

Death has become the second main household risk factor after drought and as a result funeral preparations are becoming increasingly important

Funeral costs and expenses are becoming difficult to manage especially in cases when the breadwinner dies. The family is burdened with costs to bury their loved ones

There is a slow shift in how funeral expenses are catered for. Historically funeral expenses were catered by communities and through the 'harambee spirit'. However, in urban areas where socialization involves 'individualism' which is slowly discouraging the 'harambee spirit'

AKI commissioned Ipsos to conduct a market understanding study i.e. to understand funeral customs and practices conducted as well as gauge barrier to uptake of funeral insurances

The image features a silhouette of a person holding a lantern, set against a dark, textured background. The scene is overlaid with abstract geometric shapes: a large yellow circle, a smaller white circle, and a dark blue semi-circle. The overall composition is split diagonally, with a dark grey/black area on the left and a bright yellow area on the right.

# RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

## Research objectives

The main objective is to understand funeral practices amongst various communities in Kenya and generate insights that will help create value proposition with regards to funeral insurance

### *Supply side*

**Supply#1:** To assess the **competitive landscape**, **existing funeral insurance** product features, processes and payment modes

**Supply#2:** To establish the **distribution channels**, **existing partnerships** and **challenges** faced

**Supply#3:** To explore the **regulatory environment** in relation to **death and disposal** to pinpoint **impeding factors** and **solutions**

**Supply#4:** To explore **existing funeral insurance products success stories** to determine best practice and improvement areas for the new concepts

### *Demand side*

**Demand#1:** To understand funeral **customs** and **current social cultural traditions** in Kenya

**Demand#2:** To determine funeral **cost allocation**, **funding mechanisms**, **planning** and **requirements** thereof

**Demand#3:** To unearth **experiences of bereavement** and establish whether the family was able to give **dignified sendoff** during the prevailing circumstances

**Demand#4:** To identify **awareness**, **usage**, **current needs** of funeral insurance products

**Demand#5:** To measure **likelihood of uptake** of funeral insurance and **profile 'acceptors'** of the new concept

# Structure Of The Report

This key findings will be outlined in the following ways:

- #1** Setting the context for funeral planning and execution
- #2** Funeral Insurance Evaluation
- #3** Case study for successful funeral insurance uptake – South Africa
- #4** Ideal Funeral Insurance Uptake
- #5** Conclusions & Recommendations

The image features a silhouette of a person holding a lantern, set against a dark, textured background. The scene is partially obscured by large, abstract geometric shapes in dark blue, white, and yellow. The overall composition is modern and minimalist.

# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY



# Qualitative methodology complemented with desk research was employed since the objectives are exploratory in nature 1/2

A total of 10 Focus groups were conducted broken down as follows:

Focus group discussions			
Region	Age	Key consideration	Other criteria
Nairobi	30-45 years	Currently have no insurance cover but are open/willing to taking funeral insurance	Christians and Asians( if willing)
	30-45 years	The bereaved people i.e. through sudden death or terminal illness	
Kisii	30-45 years	The bereaved people i.e. through sudden death or terminal illness	Christians & Traditionalists
	30-45 years	Currently have no insurance cover but are open/willing to taking funeral insurance	
Kisumu	30-45 years	Currently have any type of insurance cover	Christians & Traditionalists
	30-45 years	The bereaved people i.e. through sudden death or terminal illness	
Nyeri	30-45 years	The bereaved people i.e. through sudden death or terminal illness	Christians
	30-45 years	Currently have no insurance cover but are open/willing to taking funeral insurance	
Bungoma	30-45 years	The bereaved people i.e. through sudden death or terminal illness	Christians & Traditionalists
	30-45 years	Currently have no insurance cover but are open/willing to taking funeral insurance	

## Qualitative methodology complemented with desk research was employed since the objectives are exploratory in nature 2/2

A total of 26 in depth interviews were conducted .18 amongst chiefs, opinion and religious leaders and 8 IDI's in Nairobi broken down as follows:

### Key Informants

**Region** Nairobi, Mombasa, Kisumu, Nyeri, Kajiado, Eldoret

**Sample target number** *18 i.e. 3 per region*

**Respondent profile**

- Chiefs
- Elders /Opinion leaders
- Religious leaders e.g. pastors
- Community Welfare Associations

[All the above in each of regions]

### IDI's in Nairobi broken down as follows:

- Canon Insurance
- Old Mutual
- Madison Insurance
- APA Insurance
  
- Lee Funeral Home
- Civil Registration Department
- Liberty Insurance
- Sanlam Insurance



# Key Findings- Setting The Context For Funeral Planning & Execution

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## Extent to which funeral customs are being practiced 1/2

There are different funeral customs that are being practiced which mainly revolve around the 'harambee spirit' and the strong presence of community during the mourning period. In other instances there are practices conducted due to the good intentions behind the specific funeral practice

### Funeral Practices that all communities like

- Coming together to mourn, pray, fundraise, digging of the grave

### Funeral practices that Western and Nyanza province like

- Cementing of the grave to prevent bad spirits or anyone from stealing the body
- Keeping of the body for some days in order for the family to come to terms with the loss

## Extent to which funeral customs are being practiced 2/2

However it is evident that there are still some customs that are no longer being practiced for the following reasons:

### Prevalence Of Christianity

- There are certain customs and practices that are no longer done due to the **prevalence of Christianity that teaches fairness despite ones marital status among others**
- As a result, **customs that are perceived to be alienating of people have been abandoned e.g. unmarried men and women in the past** would be buried outside the compound or treated in a derogatory way.

### High cost of funerals

- **There is an over commercialization of funerals by the suppliers of the funeral industry who have continued to introduce more sophisticated coffins, funerals etc creating pressure for consumers to purchase these.**

### Scarcity of land as a resource

- Those in central province especially felt that **there is not enough land anymore to bury the dead. Cementing of the grave also uses a lot of space.**
- They feel that **the ancestral land can be used to cultivate for food which is more useful and beneficial than burying the dead. They feel that more public cemeteries should be created to bury the dead**

## Key challenges around funeral planning & execution 1/3

Main challenges revolve around three key things i.e. low awareness on the documents required to obtain police abstracts and death certificates, the process of obtaining police abstracts and death certificates and the high funeral expenses incurred

### *On the challenges of low awareness and process of obtaining abstracts and death certificates*

#### Low awareness on documents required to obtain police abstract and death certificate

- Some of the respondents claim to have low awareness of the documents required when obtaining a police abstract or death certificate
- As a result, respondents have had a difficult experience because they submit the wrong documents, or less documents than what is required

#### Process of obtaining abstracts and death certificates

- Many of the respondents claim that the police abstracts and death certificates take long to obtain i.e. for police abstract if one is taken round in circles
- Death certificates take about one week which most feel is a bit long, would prefer if they can be ready the same day
- However in Nairobi and Nyeri they are happy with the processes as the Huduma centres are efficient and helpful

#### Documents Required Include:

- ID of the deceased
- Police Abstract
- Burial Permits
- Death Certificate
  - Will (if it is available) after burial

## Key challenges around funeral planning & execution 2/3

Funerals are deemed expensive and therefore poses as a challenge to the respondents. Funerals are expensive for varied reasons as shown below:

### Burial expenses are dependent on ones lifestyle

If the dead person lived an extravagant lifestyle, or the family is popular and has a high class guest list then the funeral costs will be extravagant

### Specific cultures i.e. Western and Nyanza province have high costs of transport and food over and above other funeral expenses

Transport for funerals of people from Western and Nyanza province funerals are expensive especially if the deceased live in Nairobi . Food is also expensive due to certain funeral rituals that are conducted such as 'disco matanga' among others

## Key challenges around funeral planning & execution 3/3

### Continuation...

**Many of the deaths mentioned were due to sudden and in some instances terminal illnesses and therefore as a result the hospital bills are extravagant**

- Normal Funeral Budgets cost about Ksh. 50,000- Ksh. 300,000 for your average middle class home
- A Muslim funeral would cost about Ksh. 10,000
- Ksh. 400,000 to even 2,500,000 in the event that the person died of an illness and left a hospital bill
- Hospital bills can cost from Ksh. 100,000 to even about 1,000,000

**Many claim across different cultures that there is a lot commercialization of funerals today.**

- Funerals have become 'showy'. Over and above that, the funeral business is now offering more sophisticated designs of coffins, flowers used among others



## Funding mechanisms for funeral expenses

Funding mechanisms for funerals are highly communal. Most times, friends and family are mobilized to make contributions for funerals. In some instances there are already existing welfare groups that also contribute to funeral costs. A few others claim to borrow money from banks/shylocks to cover funeral expenses. Insurance covers are hardly ever used

### Contributions from friends and family

Families, well wishers, friends, church members among others are some efforts put in place

### Borrowing from banks/shylocks

A few claim that they have in the past borrowed money from banks and shylocks to cater for funerals

### Contributions from existing welfare associations

Different welfare, church 'chamas', relative groups and even Sacco associations have different agendas. In most cases funeral expenses is among many of the contributions that they make in their associations e.g. out of Ksh. 2000 that is contributed monthly Ksh. 200 is kept aside per member for funeral funds

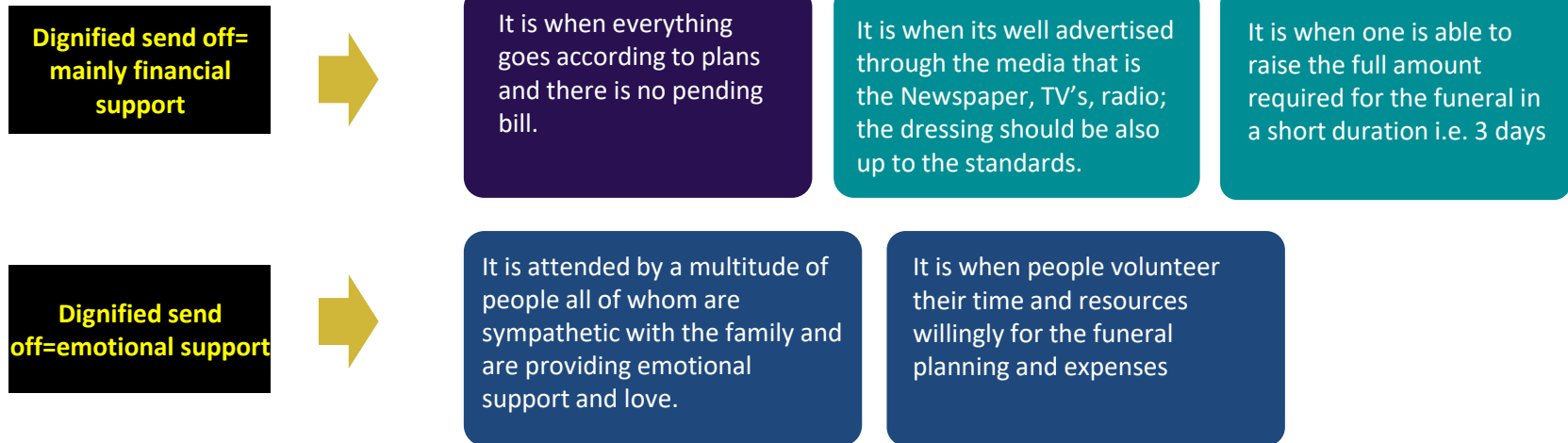
They however only cater for the immediate family

Saccos have a benevolent fund for their members

In Nyeri the members of the PCEA church contribute for funerals through home districts

## The definition of a dignified send off

The perceptions around a dignified send off are varied amongst respondents. For the majority this is when the funeral costs are completely catered for with some money left for the family to adjust after the death of the loved one especially if they were the bread winner. There are a few others who feel a good send off has to do with the emotional support provided for the loved ones during the mourning period



## Ability of families to give a dignified send off despite the high costs of funerals

Families are able to give a dignified send off. This is mainly driven by the strong communal culture of fundraising for funerals. Most budgets are achieved and as a result the funeral occurs accordingly. However, there were a few cases where respondents felt that they were not able to give a dignified send off as they were unable to meet the budget requirements

*'Yes, there was no medical bill and we met the budget and some cash remained'* **Nairobi respondent 30-45 years old**

*'We were able to give a dignified send off'* **Nyeri respondent 30-45 years old**



*'Partly no, because the casket was not up to the standard and the clothes, the money that was contributed did not meet the budget as was planned'* **Bungoma respondent 30-45 years old**

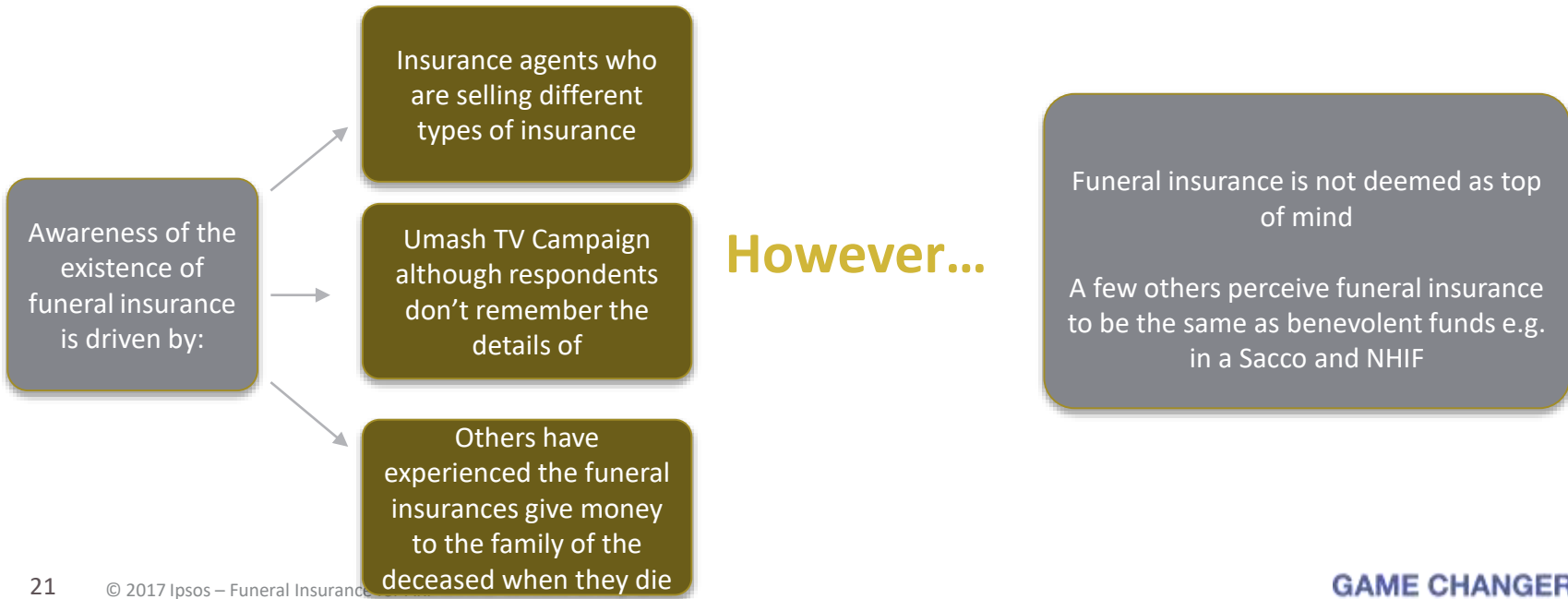


# Funeral Insurance Evaluation

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## Awareness levels of funeral insurance amongst consumers

There is low awareness of funeral insurance across cultures. However for those who are aware the main source of awareness is financial agents who sell different types of insurance. In other instances they have witnessed funeral insurance giving money during the death of a person they know. Umash TV campaign increased awareness of funeral insurance. However it is important to note that generally respondents are unaware of exactly what the offer contains i.e. where to access it, how to contribute amongst others. A few others associate funeral insurance with benevolent funds



## Current Offering Of Funeral Insurance 1/2

Almost all life insurance companies offer funeral insurance products as a rider. Different companies bundle them in different ways with some having monthly to annual contributions depending on the package

Insurance	Individual And Welfare Associations	Corporate	Bundling	Modes of paying premiums
<b>APA</b>	Contribute an average of Ksh. 2000 monthly and you can get access to Ksh, 500,000. This comes with a hospital benefit 'rider' . It is paid within 48 hours	Sold together with life insurance - the packages vary	They bundle with different products and benefits/riders but at an extra cost – hospital benefits, accidental death benefits, have a savings element to it, can cover the extended family e.g. parents in law	Cheque, Cash, MPESA, Standing Orders, Direct Debit from employer among others
<b>Canon</b>	Sold to individuals and families. Can decide to include members of the family . Contribute about Ksh. 1000-1200 and one gets access to Ksh. 100,000. It is paid within 48 hours	Sold to together with Group life package. Sold to employers to cover their employees. Pay a lumpsum that is a multiple figure of the employee's salary e.g. 3 or 4 or 5 times the annual salary. Funeral cover comes in as an addition	They bundle it with life, education and protection insurance	
<b>Madison+Montezuma</b>	Have about three packages ranging from access to Ksh. 100,000 to Ksh. 300,000. They also extend this to chamas as well  Montezuma depending on the package can come in and assist in providing several items for the funeral insurance product	Sold together with pension or group life cover	Bundled together with medical general insurance and Montezuma funeral services	
<b>Lee Funeral Home +Old Mutual +Faulu</b>	Contribution of premiums annually range from Ksh. 750 to Ksh. 20,000 annually will have access to Ksh. 50,000-200,000	Sold together with group life cover	Bundle with Lee Services as well as life cover	

## Current Offering Of Funeral Insurance 2/2

### Continuation...

Insurance	Individual And Welfare Associations	Corporate	Bundling	Modes of paying premiums
<b>Sanlam +Umash</b>	<p>Contribute a range from Ksh. 4000 to 10,000 to have access to Ksh. 100,000 to 1,000,000</p> <p><b>It includes also covering family members</b></p>	Sold together with life insurance - the packages vary	Bundle with Umash as well as life cover	Cheque, Cash, MPESA, Standing Orders, Direct Debit from employer among others
<b>Liberty Life Legacy Plan</b>	<p>Contribute from a minimum of Ksh. 400 monthly and one has access to Ksh. 100,000</p> <p>Other products include accident covers in which one receives double the premiums</p>	Sold together with life insurance - the packages vary	Bundle with life cover	

## Existing partnerships and distribution channels for funeral insurance

There are existing partnerships mainly between insurances and funeral homes, although it is evident that there are challenges in these partnerships. Distribution channels for funeral insurance are mainly insurance sales agents and account managers mainly because the product requires a 'push' strategy to the customer

### Existing partnerships

- Montezuma and Madison have a partnership that works in the following way:
  - Montezuma offer services, Madison does the sales
  - Use Montezuma to market their insurance business
  - The premiums are split for a successful sale of the product
- Lee funeral home and Old Mutual/Faulu have a partnership but it is very new i.e. one month old and works in the following way
  - Lee offer the services while Old mutual own and sell the product
- Umash and Sanlam partnership is as follows:
  - Umash offer the services and in some instances market the product in Newspaper advertisements
  - Sanlam sell and market the product

### Challenges experienced in the partnerships

- Uptake of funeral insurance across the country is still low
- Little marketing has been done for funeral insurance
- Funeral insurance is not given priority like pension, school fees plan, medical, etc
  - Seen as a negative product, only offered to maintain presence of the product
- Administration fees and revenue split challenges e.g. one of the partners asking for high commissions

### Distributions channels for funeral insurance products

- Sales agents are the key distribution channels for funeral insurance products
- Other channels include: emails, through partnerships i.e. funeral homes among others
- Branch networks of up to 30 branches in major towns



## Overall perceptions of funeral insurance- upon exposure of funeral insurance

Funeral insurance is perceived as affordable considering the premiums that need to be paid annually i.e. Ksh. 1000 for accessing Ksh. 100,000 and above. Other people perceive funeral insurance to be 'elitist' because of the perceived costs. However there is generally very low trust of insurances which is also reflected in funeral insurance



*'I think its for those rich people you know, people who have money who are able to afford funeral insurance '*  
Nyeri Respondent 30-45 years

*'I didn't know that all you need to do is contribute about Ksh. 1000 annually that is actually very affordable'* Nairobi Respondent 30-45 years

*'Most people think insurances are just con men and very dishonest people as they normally do not disclose all the information pertaining to a policy '*  
Nairobi Respondent 30-45 years

## Key barriers to uptake of funeral insurance

Key barriers to uptake of funeral insurance are MAINLY cultural i.e. we do not as a Kenyan culture talk about death or even desire to plan for it and we fundraise communally for funerals. Other barriers include the lack of knowledge on the different offers of funeral insurance as well as the general negative perceptions customers have towards insurances generally

Planning for ones death means that you are calling death to yourself

It is not in our culture to talk or plan for our deaths

Planning for your death means that one is calling it out

Strong social cultures that cater for funeral expenses

Our culture has strong social structures that cater for funeral expenses

Funeral costs are also contributed communally

Low awareness on what funeral insurance offers

Lack of knowledge on what funeral insurance offers

Funeral insurance is only for the employed, elite and aged

Perceptions that insurance including funeral insurance is only for those who are employed , the elite and aged

Insurances companies cannot be trusted

Perceptions that insurance including funeral insurance cannot be trusted

## What kind of people take up funeral insurance products

There is a general consensus from insurance companies that people from the western region are the main clientele of the funeral insurance product even though they target mainly families and an older age group i.e. from ages 35 and above

### Who Insurances Target

Men and Women aged 35 years and above who have families

They are middle income who are planning for their future

### Highest uptake is people from Western province & Chama groups

#### Western Province

- It is males from the western region who take up funeral insurance as culturally it is the men of the home who take on planning of funerals

#### Chama Groups-Sanlam

- For Sanlam the main clientele are Chama groups as the payout is higher
- This is also driven by the awareness campaign which led to enquiries

*'Most people who take up our product are people from low west end region and I think it's because that side, funerals are a great deal and of late the way we've been seeing, funerals are becoming more and more expensive' **APA insurance***



# Case Study For Successful Funeral Insurance Uptake – South Africa

CHOOSE A PLACE FOR THE LOVED ONES TO REST

# Case studies of success stories for funeral insurance products

## A look at AVBOB...



### Who are they?

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**AVBOB** has been a player in the funeral and life insurance industry for nearly a century. Founded in 1918 as a merger between two smaller burial societies, the company has since evolved beyond the twentieth century to emerge as one of the largest providers of funeral insurance in the country. It currently has 1.35 million policy-holders and covers 3.5 million lives

**It is a mutual society organization**

## Case studies of success stories for funeral insurance products 1/2

### AVBOB success of funeral insurance penetration in South Africa is driven by the following factors

#### Targeted the underserved black market

AVBOB recognized that there was a huge untapped market between LSM 2-7 who had been ignored yet they experience the burden of funeral expenses the most as opposed to the higher LSMs who were already financially able to cater for the funeral expenses

#### The South Africa culture give priority to large funerals and therefore incur high costs

The South African culture across different social economic classes give a lot of priority to large funerals. As a result high costs are incurred and therefore the product is all the more relevant to their needs.

#### Provided end to end services i.e. funeral parlors

AVBOB generally offer end to end funeral services i.e. from funeral insurance, parlours and manufacturing that focusses on the production of tombstones and coffins

Therefore they taken on the almost the full burden of funeral planning and assist with funding which is a key driver to uptake

#### Used their field agents to build trust in the product

Field agents are still the most effective distribution channel for their funeral products. This is mainly because assist in believability of the product and help answer complex issues of the product. A television campaign is good for creating awareness but not trust in the products existence and uptake. Field agents help build customer trust in the product

## Case studies of success stories for funeral insurance products 2/2

### Continuation...

#### Product offer is very appealing

AVBOB have lucrative funeral offers. These range **from nuclear to extended family coverage** as well **as a cashback product in which policy owners can receive some of the money back after 5 years of consistent contribution of premiums**

#### Heavy marketing activities both ATL and Technology

They have invested in TV and Radio campaigns as well as SMS marketing to create awareness on funeral insurance.

#### AVBOB solely focus on funeral products

AVBOB is a mutual society that solely focusses on funeral products. Because this is the priority focus of the society, customers are able to make a linkage between the company and product therefore deepening product awareness and importance

#### AVBOB is a mutual society and not just a commercial insurance firm

The success of AVBOB is driven by the fact **that the members are owners of the society**. As a result they are highly motivated to make it successful and push for the sales of different funeral products





# Ideal Funeral Insurance

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# Ideal Funeral Insurance

Based on the key themes that emerged from consumers as well as the case study on South Africa's AVBOB success story, the below are some of the elements that would contribute to an ideal funeral insurance offer

- Should adopt the 'Sonko rescue team concept' i.e. pay for the key budgetary items that are expensive i.e. transport, coffin and food.
- The cover should incorporate some money that can be left to the deceased
- Have a compensation/cash back plan i.e. for every five years a percentage is given to you in the event that one doesn't die
- A reward system should be incorporated for anyone who takes it up to encourage uptake overall
- The policy should offer a minimum of Ksh. 300,000 access in line with the budgetary costs for most funerals
- Should be transparent and honest about all the terms and conditions applied for for the cover
- Should be incorporated into their payment systems i.e. for every goods bought Ksh. 50 goes to the funeral insurance cover to encourage contribution. This makes it more seamless and slowly eliminates the mental barrier of uptake



- Should have a wide variety of premiums offer e.g. Retirement Benefits Authority have 'mbao pension plan' that caters to the lower SEC, have higher premiums for those who are terminally ill, a package for groups, family packages etc.
- Should have a compensation time of 24 hours from the time they let the insurance company know of the death





# Conclusions & Recommendations

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CHOOSE A PLACE FOR THE LOVED ONES TO REST

**AKI have an uphill task with regards to sensitizing the public on the importance of funeral insurance as the awareness is low and barriers to uptake are strongly engrained in our culture. Below are our recommendations on key issues raised**

Key Issue	Impact	Recommendation
Customers experience difficulty in accessing specific documents required during and post burial. They include police abstracts, death certificates among others. In some instances there is low awareness on documents that are required to facilitate the burial process	Increases the burden of mourning i.e. makes it even more difficult in an already very difficult time	AKI can ensure that <b>their communication campaign sensitizes the public on the documents required to facilitate the burial process</b>
Funerals in Kenya are deemed as expensive due to a combination of factors. For those in Western and Nyanza province there are high costs of food and transport incurred while many deaths incur high hospital bills	There is a general burden being felt by Kenyans around the costs of funerals even though they may not be open about it	AKI have an <b>opportunity to advise insurance companies to have packages that take care of the more expensive costs e.g. hospital bills, transport and food costs to make their offers more appealing</b>
Funding mechanisms are communal in nature and as a result dignified send offs are given despite high costs of the funeral	Even though the burden of funeral costs is being felt there is a lot of comfort found in the communal nature of funding for funerals	AKI can advise insurances <b>to add value to the existing communal nature of funding as opposed to discouraging it. What costs can insurance companies relieve to ease the burden of communal funding? Can they partner with other welfare organizations e.g. PCEA churches among others</b>

# Conclusions & Recommendations 2/3

## Continuation...

Key Issue	Impact	Recommendation
There is low awareness of funeral products by customers	There are many misconceptions associated with funeral insurance i.e. targeted to the old and elite, it is expensive like other insurance products among others	AKI have the opportunity to <b>correct perceptions and educate the public on the affordability of funeral insurance as well as the minimal requirements of the product</b>
There are strong cultural barriers to uptake of funeral insurance products	It is difficult for insurance firms to change customer mindset on the importance of planning for their funeral	AKI communication campaign <b>must focus more on the financial burden incurred for funeral costs as opposed to directly implying that funeral insurance helps one plan for their funeral</b>
Uptake of funeral insurance products is high amongst people from Western and Nyanza province	These are the low hanging fruits for funeral insurance firms.	AKI should place more emphasis in running their campaigns in these places. They should also advice insurance firms to invest more field agents in these regions to drive uptake
Sales agents remain the most effective way of selling funeral insurance	They build trust and confidence with the customer who are highly untrusting of insurance products	AKI should advice insurance firms to invest in sales agents as a strategy to build confidence in the product
Case study of South Africa has key learnings on diversity of product offering, prioritizing funeral insurance, giving more value to policy users, targeting the lower LSM among others	This can help increase uptake of funeral insurance in Kenya due to the similarity in culture	AKI can advice insurance firms on these learnings to drive uptake of the product  Some of the elements that can be borrowed from this case study <b>include cash backs</b>

## Conclusions & Recommendations 3/3

### Continuation...

Key Issue	Impact	Recommendation
There are challenges in the partnerships being experienced amongst Insurance firms and Bigger Funeral Homes	This has slowed down increased awareness of funeral insurance products in the market.	The insurance companies can form partnerships with cheaper funeral homes across the country to help offer more tangible services during the burial ceremony

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## GAME CHANGERS

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