

Research Article

Constituency Development Fund (CDF) as Tool for Infrastructure Development in the Context of Decentralization and Devolution in Zambia: A Case Study of Kabwe Central Constituency

Jackson Masozi Thole Kaira* , Gear Mumena Kajoba 

Geography and Environmental Studies, The University of Zambia, Lusaka, Zambia

Abstract

This study, titled "Constituency Development Fund (CDF) as Tool for Infrastructure Development in the Context of Decentralization and Devolution in Zambia: A Case Study of Kabwe Central Constituency," was conducted in Kabwe Central Constituency. Its primary objective was to evaluate the effectiveness of the CDF as a mechanism for infrastructure development within the framework of decentralization and devolution, which involves transferring responsibilities from the central government to local authorities. The study aimed to analyse the CDF's contribution to decentralization and devolution, its role in infrastructure development, the challenges associated with accessing the fund, and the measures implemented to enhance accessibility. A mixed-methods research approach was adopted, integrating both quantitative and qualitative techniques, though the study was largely qualitative to capture stakeholder perspectives on the CDF's role in infrastructure development. The target population consisted of 171 respondents, including 14 councillors, 10 senior local government officials, and various community stakeholders. Data collection methods involved semi-structured interviews with key informants responsible for CDF management, focus group discussions guided by structured interview protocols, and questionnaires for descriptive statistical analysis. An experimental study was conducted to ensure the reliability of the research instruments. Both primary and secondary data sources were utilized for analysis. The study examined the impact of independent variables on the dependent variable using thematic analysis and descriptive statistics, employing SPSS (version 20) and MS Excel for data processing. While CDF funds are allocated to local governments, infrastructure development levels vary across different areas some progressing significantly while others lag behind. Therefore, this study seeks to determine whether the CDF serves as an effective tool for infrastructure development in Kabwe Central Constituency. The findings indicated that key factors such as decentralization, devolution, project planning, stakeholder involvement, fund allocation, and monitoring and evaluation contribute to the effective utilization of CDF for infrastructure development. The study provides evidence that the CDF facilitates infrastructure development, as demonstrated by completed projects such as the Magandanyama Clinic, Katondo Local Court, road grading in Kalonga, Lwansanse, and Nakoli Wards, the construction of a police post in Katondo, and the development of markets like Njanji and Kamushanga, among others. The study recommends that the central government, in collaboration with local authorities, enhance governance and oversight mechanisms, encourage community participation, expand project coverage equitably, and ensure the timely and high-quality completion of CDF-funded projects to maximize community benefits.

*Corresponding author: kairajackson1992@gmail.com (Jackson Masozi Thole Kaira)

Received: 3 March 2025; **Accepted:** 18 March 2025; **Published:** 24 May 2025



Copyright: © The Author(s), 2025. Published by Science Publishing Group. This is an **Open Access** article, distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Keywords

Constituency Development Fund, Decentralization and Devolution, Fund Allocation, Monitoring and Evaluation, Project Completion

1. Introduction

The Local Government Act requires councils to deliver social services such as housing, recreational facilities, education, water, healthcare, roads, and waste management. Local government serves as a mechanism for social, political, and economic development at the local level, helping to bridge the development gap between urban and rural areas [1]. Since independence, local council administration has been shaped by three key reforms: the 1965 Local Government Act, the 1980 Local Administration Act, and the 1991 Local Government Act. The main objective of these reforms has been to establish democratically elected councils that foster sustainable development through active public participation in decision-making [2].

Local development in Zambia is primarily the responsibility of local government. To strengthen its role, the Cabinet Office introduced the Public Service Reform Programme (PSRP) in 1993, which included a focus on decentralization and enhancing local government. The main goal was to improve the efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and responsiveness of local and district governments in delivering quality services and development to communities. Constituency Development Funds (CDFs) are financial mechanisms that allocate resources from the central government to electoral constituencies for local infrastructure projects.

The Constituency Development Fund (CDF) serves as a financial resource allocated to Members of Parliament (MPs) to support the execution of small-scale projects within their constituencies [3]. In Zambia, the CDF aims to empower MPs and their local communities by allowing them to select and implement projects that best align with their needs and priorities. This fund is designed to address urgent, short-term community development requirements. It represents a central government transfer to local authorities as part of the fiscal decentralization process. The allocation and utilization of these funds are significantly influenced by elected MPs. However, the extent to which parliamentarians, local governments through their respective councils, and local citizens are involved in managing the funds varies across different countries [4]. Since the early 2000s, successive Zambian governments have prioritized decentralization as a key policy objective in the administration of the CDF. Both the Fifth (2006-2010) and Sixth National Development Plans (2011-2015) identified the deepening of decentralization, particularly through devolution, as a crucial policy target (GRZ 2006; GRZ 2011). Likewise, the Seventh National

Development Plan (2017-2021) highlighted that limited decentralization contributed to significant economic and social inequalities in the country. The plan noted: "The contributing factors that have led to inequalities include the inability to effectively implement the Decentralization Policy to an extent that resources and decision-making have precluded people at lower levels from effectively participating in the planning and implementation processes" [5].

The Government of the Republic of Zambia has prioritized decentralization as a key strategy for achieving development, alleviating poverty, and promoting job creation through active citizen engagement at the local level. To implement decentralization in accordance with the Constitution, the Government has committed to transferring substantial resources from the National to the Local Government level. Consequently, the fund has expanded in both scope and budget, increasing from K1.2 million in 2021 to K25.7 million in 2023, and further rising to K28.3 million in 2024 per constituency [6]. The broadened scope of the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) focuses on three main areas: Community Projects; Youth, Women, and Community Empowerment; and Secondary Boarding School and Skills Development Bursaries [6].

Zambia's local government system is based on the principle of fiscal decentralization/devolution. Furthermore, the Local Government Act CAP 281 of the Laws of Zambia (Section 45) allocates CDF grants to councils to support the implementation of development projects within their jurisdictions. These grants are distributed annually to fund capital projects in areas such as water and sanitation, health services, fire services, road services, education services, and agricultural services. However, the level of infrastructure development across various wards appears to vary, with some being more advanced than others. This study seeks to investigate whether the CDF serves as an effective tool for infrastructure development in the different wards of Kabwe Central Constituency.

The primary goal of this research was to evaluate whether the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) serves as a tool for infrastructure development within the context of decentralization and devolution in Kabwe Central Constituency. The objectives of the study were: to determine how the Constituency Development Fund contributes to devolution and decentralization, to examine its role in infrastructure development, to identify the challenges people face in accessing the Constituency Development Fund, and to assess the measures

taken to enhance access to the Constituency Development Fund.

The Importance of the Study: The Republic of Zambia's government has long pursued a decentralization program through devolution, aiming to transfer public service delivery to local development institutions at the District and Sub-district levels. As part of this effort, local institutions' capacity to implement public programs, such as Primary Health Care and Water and Sanitation Services, must be strengthened through the efficient use of financing strategies like the CDF. It is anticipated that the findings of this study will offer valuable insights into resource utilization that will improve the ability of local authorities to manage CDF projects effectively, ensuring sustainable local development. Additionally, the study will help explain why some wards within the same constituency excel in infrastructure development while others lag behind. The research is also expected to contribute to the documentation of "best practices" by identifying key variables that influence successful project management. These best practices can be replicated in other areas to help resolve challenges in the CDF implementation, identification, and devolution processes.

2. Materials and Methods

This study utilized a mixed research design, with a primary focus on qualitative research, to explore people's perspectives on the role of CDF in infrastructure development. It incorporated both qualitative and quantitative methods to support thorough data collection and analysis. The research was comparative, comparing wards in the constituency that were performing well with those that had not seen development, despite receiving CDF funding. According to Creswell (2009) [8] and Ajaja (1996) [9], a research design is defined as "the arrangement of conditions for data collection and analysis that aims to balance relevance to the research objectives with efficiency in procedure." It is also regarded as a blueprint for gathering and analyzing data [10].

2.1. Population

A population refers to the complete set of all units related to the issue or phenomenon being studied, encompassing all potential observations of the same type [11]. This includes all individuals or documents intended to be included in the study. The Kabwe Central constituency consists of 14 wards, with a total population of 179,275 [12]. Participants were chosen from councillors, council management staff, and community members. The total sample consisted of 171 respondents, which included 147 community stakeholders, 14 ward councillors, and 10 senior management officials from the Civil Centre.

2.2. Sample Size

A sample refers to a small portion of a population chosen

for observation and analysis [13]. It is a group that includes a part or subset of the individuals or objects from the population, selected to represent it. Using Slovin's formula for a known population, the study sample consisted of one hundred seventy-one (171) respondents. Fourteen (14) councillors were selected from all the wards in the Kabwe Central constituency, while only ten (10) senior management staff were chosen from the Local Government. Additionally, 147 community stakeholders were selected from the Kabwe Central Constituency, including heads of households (both men and women) and youths.

2.3. Sampling Procedure

Purposive sampling, also known as nonprobability sampling or purposeful sampling, is based on a specific purpose rather than being random [14]. On the other hand, random sampling, or simple random sampling, occurs when every unit in a clearly defined population has an equal chance of being selected. Simple random sampling is used to select a smaller sample from a larger population, which is then studied to make generalizations about the entire group. This method was applied in selecting households for the study. The research employed both purposive and random sampling techniques. Purposive sampling was used to choose respondents who were thought to have knowledge about CDF projects, particularly the Council Management and Council, to gather background information on the operations of CDF and the factors influencing the completion or non-completion of these projects. Random sampling was employed to ensure that community members who participated in CDF projects had an equal opportunity to share their opinions on the factors affecting the completion of these projects. The sampling frame included the constituency, wards, and the population within those wards.

2.4. Data Collection Instruments

An interview is a focused conversation between two or more individuals [15]. Conducting interviews was essential for collecting valid and reliable data that aligned with the research questions and objectives. A questionnaire, in a general sense, refers to any data collection method where each participant is asked to answer the same set of questions in a predetermined order [16].

This study employed both semi-structured interviews with key informants involved with the CDF in council committees, as well as questionnaires for data collection. These methods provided descriptive statistics, complemented by focus group discussions for men only, women only, and a mixed group of both women and men. An interview schedule was utilized to guide the questions during the interviews. According to De Vos et al. (2005) [17], some participants prefer being interviewed over completing a questionnaire. The primary data for this study was collected through interviews and question-

naires. The questionnaires were distributed to gather first-hand information to help answer the research questions. Secondary data was obtained from relevant journals and literature on the topic. Newspaper articles and official policy documents from the Government of Zambia were also consulted.

2.5. Data Analysis

Data analysis is defined as "the process of organizing, structuring, and interpreting the vast amount of collected data" [14]. The completed and returned questionnaires were examined for completeness and subsequently categorized, coded, and entered for analysis. Frequencies, descriptive statistics, and inferential statistics were then generated. Descriptive analysis was applied to the quantitative data using frequencies and percentages for each research question. For the qualitative data gathered from key informants, it was categorized, leading to the identification of content themes, in line with the principles of thematic content analysis in qualitative research methods.

2.6. Ethics Consideration

In carrying out the study, the researcher initially obtained ethical approval from the University Of Zambia Institute Of Distance Education. The researcher made sure that ethical considerations were rigorously followed to ensure the full protection of respondents and to maintain the integrity of the research, as outlined below:

The researcher is obligated to respect any information obtained through professional or business relationships and, as such, cannot disclose such information to third parties without explicit permission from the owners. To maintain accountability and openness in the review process, the researcher acknowledged the responsibilities of the respondents and assigned specific tasks to them, ensuring transparency in the research operations and procedures to uphold review standards [8].

The researcher also took autonomy into account. This involves recognizing the individual's right to choose their own course of action based on their personal wishes and plans. Respect for individuals is demonstrated by acknowledging that their autonomy and right to self-determination form the foundation for their ability to make decisions and judgments independently [12].

The researcher also addressed the issue of informed consent. Informed consent is a crucial aspect of the research, involving key components such as providing information, ensuring voluntariness, and confirming understanding. When offering information, researchers must ensure that respondents are adequately informed about the nature of the research, the procedures involved, as well as the study's objectives, potential risks, benefits, and available alternatives [12].

Voluntariness is also significant. Consent must be given

freely and can be withdrawn at any time. Undue influence may include coercion, deprivation, or the exertion of control or authority over potential respondents. Voluntary participation implies that respondents make an informed decision, while consent assumes the accuracy of the information provided [8]. Issues of truthfulness are crucial without honesty, respondents cannot fully exercise their rights to informed consent, justice, and fairness.

2.7. Sample Distribution and Response Rate

Out of the 171 community respondents reached out, all the 171 questionnaires were fully completed and returned. This gave a response rate of 100%. This impressive response rate was realized because the researcher uses a drop-and-wait-as-you-fill approach. This method proved to be cost effective because it did not entail a return journey to collect the filled questionnaires.

3. Results

The findings are structured around key themes that emerged from interviews, focus group discussions, and direct observations. This study sought to capture local perceptions of Constituency Development Funds (CDF).

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents Based on Age.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
18-22 years	20	11.7%
23-27 years	15	8.8%
28-32 years	21	12.3%
33-37 years	30	17.5%
38-42 year	30	17.5%
43-52 years	25	14.6%
Above 53 years	30	17.5%
Total	171	100

A total of 171 participants were purposively selected for the study. Their demographic characteristics included gender, age, educational background, length of residence in the constituency, and work experience were collected.

Among the sampled 171 respondents 68% were between the age of 18 to 39 years and 32% were 40 years and above.

Regarding gender, Majority 113 were males, which is (66.0%) whereas 58 were female, which is (34%).

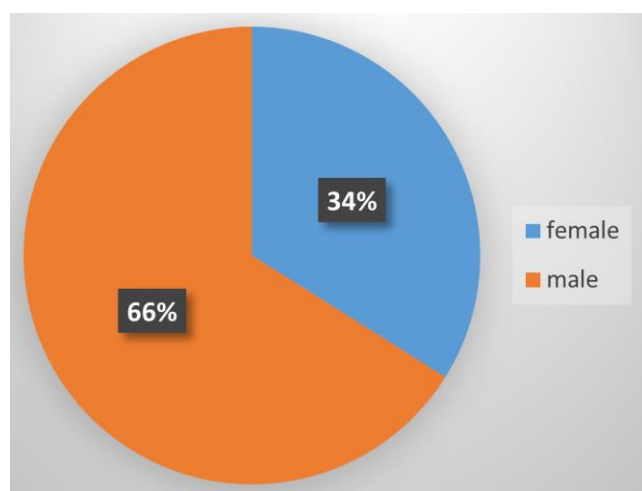


Figure 1. Gender of Respondents.

Table 2. Duration of Residency in the Constituency.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
1-5 years	21	12.3
6-15years	35	20.5
16-25years	50	29.2
Above 25 years	65	38
Total	171	100

When establishing their duration as residents in this constituency, majority (88.0%) of the respondents had resided in this constituency for over 10 years.

Table 3. Distribution of Respondents based on Education Level.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
No Education	10	5.8
Primary	45	26.3
Secondary	50	29.2
Tertiary (Diploma, Degree)	61	35.7
Postgraduate (Masters)	5	3
Total	171	100

On the distribution of education level 6% did not have formal education, 26% reached primary level, 29% attained secondary level, 36% had tertiary level and 3% postgraduate.

Table 4. Distribution of Respondents based on Work Experience.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
1-11 months	5	2.9
1-5 years	30	17.5
6-10 years	27	15.8
11-15 years	15	8.8
16-20 years	60	35.1
21 years and above	34	19.9
Total	171	100

The results on work indicated that the majority of the respondents had between 16-20 years of work experience and had scored 35.1%, followed by 8.8% for those with 11 to 15 years work experience. The others who had worked for 6 to 10 years obtained 15.8%, those above 21 years had 19.9%, 1 to 11 months had 2.9% while the least came from those with 1 to 5 years who had only 17.8%. The findings revealed that the respondents had enough work experience to understand the Constituency Development Fund in their communities.

The demographic profile of the participants offered insight into the diverse backgrounds represented in this study. Variations in age, gender, education, length of residence in the constituency, and work experience contributed to shaping the understanding of CDF as a tool for infrastructure development.

3.1. Distribution of Responses Based on Whether or Not People Know the Meaning of CDF

Table 5. Know the meaning of CDF.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	159	93
No	12	7
Total	171	100

The study aimed to determine whether the respondents were aware of the meaning of the Constituency Development Fund (CDF). The results showed that 98.2% of the respondents understood what CDF meant, while 1.8% did not.

The findings indicated that most respondents were familiar with CDF activities, suggesting that the information they provided was likely accurate and reliable for the study.

When asked whether they knew the meaning of CDF, the following theme emerged:

Awareness and Understanding Depth.

When it comes to awareness, many respondents are aware of the basic meaning of CDF as Constituency Development Fund, while others are unaware.

With respect to Understanding Depth, those familiar with CDF often lack in-depth knowledge of its structure, purpose, and implementation.

One respondent from Kabwe Central had this to say:

"I've heard of CDF, but I'm not sure what it specifically funds in our area."

Another female respondent said:

"I know CDF stands for Constituency Development Fund, but I don't know the details of how it works."

On the contrary one male respondent aged 85 expressed ignorance and said:

"I don't know what CDF means at all."

3.2. Distribution of Responses Based on Whether CDF Resources Are Used Properly

Table 6. Are CDF Resources used properly?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	89	52
No	63	36.8
Do not know	19	11.1
Total	171	99.9

The study sought to establish the opinion of the respondents on the utilisation of the CDF. The study findings indicated that 52% respondents revealed that the Constituency Development Fund was being used properly while 36.8% indicated the CDF was not properly used and 11.1% were not sure on how CDF was used. The responses revealed that the CDF was used for the intended objectives, thus supporting the purpose it was introduced for.

When a question was asked to find out whether or not CDF resources are used properly, the following themes emerged; *Accountability, Positive Perception and Mismanagement.*

Concerns were raised about transparency and accountability in CDF spending.

With regard to Positive Perception, about 52% feel that the funds are used adequately, particularly in visible projects like schools or clinics.

With respect to Mismanagement, there were reports of misuse and lack of oversight in spending.

A respondent from Kabwe central constituency echoed his voice and said:

"I feel the money is not always going where it's supposed to."

Furthermore, a 47-year-old man commented:

"They have built a new school using CDF, which seems like a good use of funds."

However, the other respondent said:

"I'm not sure how they spend the money because we don't see a report."

3.3. Do CDF Projects Improve the Welfare of the Community

To consider a project successfully completed, it must enhance the well-being of community members. Therefore, this study aimed to determine whether CDF projects contributed to improving community welfare.

Table 7. CDF projects improve the welfare of the Community.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	93	54.4
No	60	35.1
Do not know	18	10.5
Total	171	100

The findings revealed that 54.4% of respondents believed CDF had a positive impact on community welfare, while 35.1% felt there was no improvement, and 10.5% were uncertain about its effects.

When asked about the impact of CDF projects on community welfare, three key themes emerged: *Community Impact, Mixed Results, and Inequality in Distribution.*

Regarding Community Impact, positive effects were observed in areas where projects had been completed, particularly in health and education. Infrastructure Development: Completed projects, such as upgraded roads, schools, and health facilities, provided tangible evidence of positive change. For example, in Luansanse ward (Katondo Primary School), Kalonga ward (Kakama Primary School), and Kaputula ward (Kaputula Primary School), the construction of new classrooms led to a 40% increase in student enrollment between 2020 and 2023, as recorded in district education reports. Similarly, a newly established community school in Kafulamase contributed to a decline in dropout rates.

Health Sector: Significant improvements included the establishment of the Pollen Clinic, Katondo Labour Ward, and Magandanyama Clinic. Additionally, road grading and clearing initiatives further enhanced accessibility and infrastructure.

Some report benefits, while others feel projects are incomplete or not maintained.

Complaints about projects only benefiting certain parts of the constituency.

One Respondent from Katondo (Lwansanse ward) said:

"The new health centre funded by CDF has really helped us."

Another respondent expressed her views and said:

"The projects are good, but they should be more wide-spread across our area."

Additionally, respondent X said:

"Sometimes, they start a project and leave it unfinished, which doesn't help anyone."

3.4. Should CDF Continue

Table 8. Should CDF be continued?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	94	55
No	58	34
Do not know	19	11
Total	171	100

According to the study, 55% of respondents agreed that the CDF should continue, while 34% opposed it and preferred its discontinuation. The remaining 11% were uncertain about whether the CDF should be sustained.

The results indicate that most respondents recognized the benefits of the CDF, which, if properly implemented, could provide essential goods and services to the community.

When a question was asked whether CDF should continue or not Continuing, the following themes emerged; *Support for Continuation and Calls for Overhaul*.

With respect to the Support for Continuation, there was broad support for the continuation of CDF about 55% of respondents acknowledged the continuation, but with calls for improvement in management.

With respect with Calls for Overhaul, the people suggested that restructuring of CDF to improve efficiency and impact.

On the same themes the following were responses from three respondents from Kamushanga compound (Kalonga ward):

"Yes, it should continue, but there should be stricter rules on how the money is used."

"CDF is useful, but they need to make sure it benefits everyone."

"I think CDF is a good idea, but it needs to be managed better."

3.5. Is CDF an Effective Tool for Decentralized Development

The Constituency Development Fund (CDF) is widely regarded as a powerful driver of local development. This study gathered respondents' perspectives on whether CDF serves as an effective tool for decentralized development.

Table 9. Effectiveness of CDF for Decentralized Development.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	98	57.3
No	52	30.4
Do not know	21	12.3
Total	171	100

Findings revealed that 57.3% of respondents agreed that decentralization supports local development, while 30.4% believed CDF was not an effective development tool. The remaining 12.3% were undecided.

Overall, the study indicated that most respondents perceived CDF as beneficial for local community development. To assess whether CDF is an effective tool for decentralized development, two key themes emerged: *Effectiveness in Concept and Challenges in Implementation*.

Regarding Effectiveness in Concept, CDF is considered theoretically sound for addressing local needs. However, under Challenges in Implementation, factors such as poor planning, mismanagement, and lack of follow-through were identified as obstacles to its effectiveness.

Respondent X had this to say on the first theme:

"CDF could be very effective if managed well."

Another respondent from Kachulu market said:

"I think it's a good approach to bring development closer to the people."

On the contrary a 55-year-old widow said:

"The idea is good, but sometimes it's not implemented effectively."

3.6. Planning and Identification Affect Completion of CDF Projects

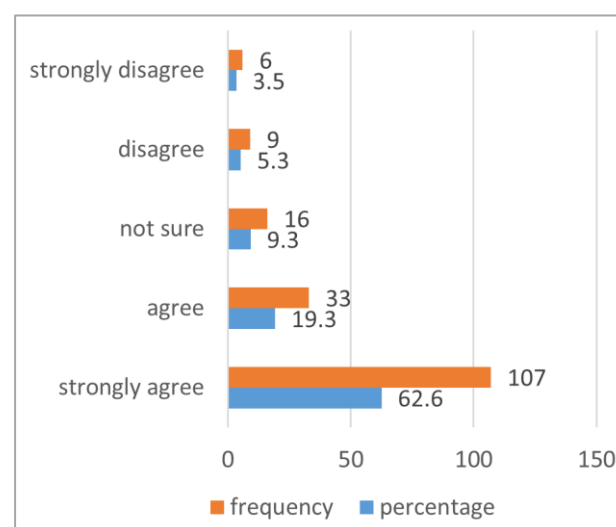


Figure 2. Planning and Identification.

The involvement of various stakeholders in planning and project identification was crucial for the successful completion of CDF projects. The study aimed to assess the role of stakeholders in project identification and planning, and the findings were as follows: 107 (62.6%) of the respondents strongly agreed that project planning and identification influenced their completion, while 33 (19.3%) agreed, 16 (9.3%) were uncertain, 9 (5.3%) disagreed, and 6 (3.5%) strongly disagreed. With a total of 171 respondents, the majority considered planning and project identification to be essential. The study concluded that when all stakeholders are involved in the planning and identification stages, project completion is typically successful. Therefore, the lack of involvement from all stakeholders in these stages can negatively impact the completion of CDF projects.

To address the question of whether planning and identification affect the completion of CDF projects, the following themes emerged: *the Importance of Planning and the Challenges in Identification*.

With respect to Importance of Planning, projects can be successful if linked to thorough planning and community involvement.

With respect to Challenges in Identification, research showed that projects often do not align with actual community needs, leading to incomplete or irrelevant projects. The following were the responses from three different respondents from Kabwe central constituency.

"When they consult us before starting, projects finish faster and are more useful."

"Sometimes, they plan projects that don't benefit us, so they just get abandoned."

"Better planning means better projects. I wish they would listen to us first."

3.7. Allocation of CDF Affect Completion of Projects

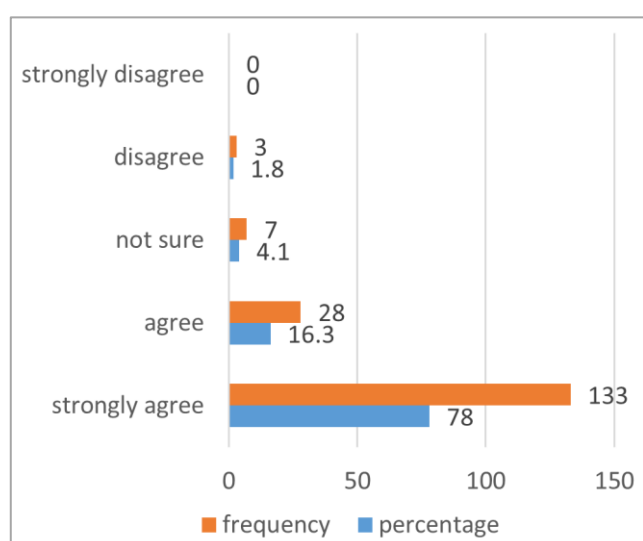


Figure 3. Allocation effect on CDF project completion.

The study's findings showed that 133 respondents (78%) strongly agreed that the allocation of CDF impacts project completion, 28 (16.3%) agreed, 7 (4.1%) were uncertain, and 3 (1.8%) disagreed. None of the respondents (0%) strongly disagreed. Out of the 171 respondents, the study indicated that both the frequency and amount of funds allocated to CDF projects influenced their completion.

Proper allocation of funds is crucial for the successful completion of CDF projects, and these funds should be sufficient and distributed on time to ensure effective implementation.

The following themes emerged when a question was asked about Allocation of CDF Affecting Completion of Projects. *Funding Limitations, Prioritization and Financial Oversight*.

With respect to Funding Limitations, the respondents in focus group discussion were of the view that insufficient funds cited as a major barrier to project completion.

With respect to Prioritization, Complaints were raised from finding, about 78% of respondents said that funds are often spread too thin, leading to incomplete projects.

With respect to Financial Oversight, the minority of the respondents said there is Need for better tracking of allocation and spending.

One respondent from Pollen compound said:

"Sometimes they start with too little money, so the project stalls."

Another male respondent aged 30years emphasized:

"If they allocated funds properly, more projects would be completed on time."

One village chairman from Katondo complained:

"Projects don't finish because they don't give enough money for each one."

3.8. Political Involvement Affects the Completion of CDF Projects

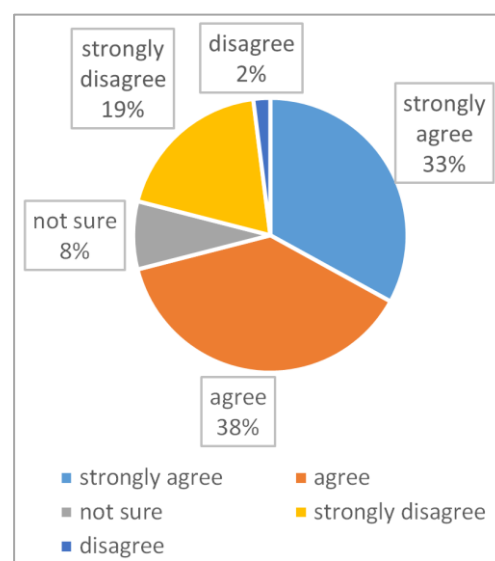


Figure 4. Political involvement.

Regarding the assumption that Members of Parliament (MPs) were politically involved in the implementation of CDF projects, the study gathered the following insights from respondents. The findings showed that 59 respondents (33%) strongly agreed that political involvement influenced the completion of CDF projects, while 65 respondents (38%) agreed. Meanwhile, 15 respondents (8%) disagreed, and 32 respondents (19%) strongly disagreed. Overall, the study revealed that more than half of the respondents believed political involvement had an impact on the completion of CDF projects.

In order to respond to the question which sought to find out if Political Involvement affects CDF Project Completion, the following four themes emerged;

The first theme that emerged was Political Influence and Prioritization; Politicians prioritize projects that will boost their image and likelihood of re-election, often side-lining necessary but less visible projects. The following were responses from the key informants from Kabwe central constituency who said:

"Projects that politicians see as 'vote magnets' are the first to get funding."

"If it doesn't get them votes, it's likely to be delayed or side-lined."

"The projects that aren't flashy just don't get done because they don't win votes."

The second theme was Misallocation of Resources and Favouritism; Political interference often leads to resources being diverted to favoured areas or groups, impacting the equitable distribution of funds. The following were responses from the key informants from Kabwe central constituency who said:

"The resources go to the 'favourite' groups or villages others miss out."

"It's a matter of who's loyal to the current political party."

"Resources sometimes disappear in certain constituencies, and no one can explain why."

The third theme that emerged was Political Cycles and Project Continuity; Changes in political leadership disrupt ongoing projects, often causing delays or abandonment. The following were responses from the key informants from Kabwe central constituency who said:

"Whenever a new leader comes in, the previous projects are either delayed or abandoned."

"The project stops when the elections are near; politicians don't want to be associated with projects started by others."

"It's a cycle each new politician comes with their own set of projects, leaving others incomplete."

The last and fourth theme that came up was Accountability and Transparency Issues; Political interference often results in a lack of transparency and poor accountability for CDF funds. The following were responses from the key informants from Kabwe central constituency who said:

"There's no one holding politicians accountable for where the money goes."

"Politicians don't have to report how the funds were spent, so it's difficult to track progress."

"Funds are allocated, but no one ever questions how they're used."

3.9. Monitoring and Evaluation Affect CDF Project Completion

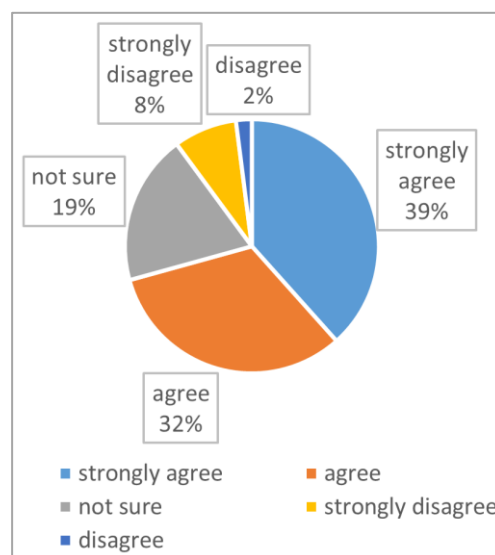


Figure 5. Monitoring and Evaluation.

The monitoring and evaluation of projects played a crucial role in ensuring the successful completion of CDF projects. Therefore, it was essential to monitor projects at every stage. Regarding the monitoring and evaluation of CDF projects, 67 respondents (39%) strongly agreed, while 55 respondents (32%) agreed that these processes impact project completion. On the other hand, 14 respondents (8%) strongly disagreed, 3 respondents (2%) disagreed, and 32 respondents (19%) were uncertain about the impact of monitoring and evaluation on project completion. The findings indicated that the majority of respondents believed monitoring and evaluation influenced the successful completion of CDF projects.

In order to find out if Monitoring and Evaluation affects CDF Project Completion, the following four themes emerged.

Importance of Systematic Monitoring, Systematic monitoring helps in tracking progress and ensuring projects remain on schedule. The following were responses from the key informants from Kabwe central constituency who said:

"When there's regular monitoring, projects tend to stay on course."

"With proper tracking, it's easier to spot issues before they become problems."

"Monitoring is crucial for identifying where projects are falling behind."

Insufficient Monitoring Resources, Many CDF projects

lack adequate resources for consistent monitoring and evaluation, leading to poor oversight. The following were responses from the key informants from Kabwe central constituency who said:

"We don't have enough resources to properly monitor each project."

"Without the funds, monitoring is irregular, and projects suffer."

"Sometimes, projects go unchecked for months due to a lack of manpower."

Impact of Independent Evaluation, Independent evaluation helps improve project outcomes by providing unbiased assessments of project progress and needs. The following were responses from the key informants from Kabwe central constituency who said:

"Independent evaluators don't have political agendas and

give honest feedback."

"When evaluations are independent, there's less risk of funds being misused."

"Projects evaluated by third parties tend to perform better."

Accountability through Feedback Loops, Monitoring and evaluation create a feedback mechanism that holds implementers accountable for progress. The following were responses from the key informants from Kabwe central constituency who said:

"If there's no one checking, people don't feel pressure to complete projects on time."

"The feedback from regular checks helps ensure accountability."

"Evaluation creates accountability, it ensures that those responsible meet deadlines."

3.10. Data on CDF Project That Have Been Completed and the Amounts of CDF Resources That Have Been Spent on Them

Table 10. CDF Funded Projects 2022-2023 in Kabwe Central Constituency.

S/N	Project	Approved Amount (kwacha)	Expenditure	Balance
	Allocation for Completion of 2022 and Proposed 2023 Community Project			
1	Completion of Ablution Block at Katondo Primary School	98,111.22	82,520.00	15,591.22
2	Rehabilitation of Ablution Block at Highridge secondary school	131,785.00	103,440.32	28,344.68
3	Completion of School Hall at Highridge School	334,869.38	291,633.88	43,235.50
4	Completion of Mothers' Shelter at Pollen Clinic	496,788.00	443,594.69	53,193.31
5	Rehabilitation of Njanji Market	586,310.25	459,000.00	127,310.00
6	Completion of Kamushangsa Market	788,000.00	99,153.86	688,846.14
7	Completion of C-Gate 1/3 Crb	320,163.00	263,108.45	57,054.55
8	Completion of magandanyama clinic	1,496,203.46		1,496,203.46
9	Completion of Gombe Primary Ablution Block and Water Connection and Completion of Gombe Secondary School	368,429.69	338,440.60	29,989.09
10	Completion of Neem Tree 1/3 Crb	630,002.26	630,002.26	
11	Completion of pump house and wall fence at Chindwin secondary school	1,703,344.50	1,703,357.50	
12	Katondo Local Court			
13	Kakama primary school 1/3 Crb			

Table 11. CDF Funded Projects 2024 Grant in Kabwe Central Constituency.

S/N	Project	Approved Amount (kwacha)	Expenditure	Balance
	COMMUNITY BASED PROJECT			

S/N	Project	Approved Amount (kwacha)	Expenditure	Balance
1	Procurement of 480 school desks	1, 524,200.00		1,524,200.00
2	Procurement of ambulance	2,700,000.00		2,700,000.00
3	Procurement of Grader and Roller compactor	5,820,000.00		5,820,000.00
4	Completion of family future primary school 1/4	500.000.00		500.000.00
5	Magandanyama clinic OPD (ward and ablution block)	1,050,000.00		1,050,000.00
6	Kasanda market rehabilitation	1,000,000.00		1,000,000.00
8	Waya Market Rehabilitation	658,000.00		658,000.00
9	Construction of Ablution, security fence, water and Electricity at Kabwe Central Hospital	1,800,000.00		1,800,000.00

4. Discussion

The main purpose of the study was to investigate whether constituency development fund is a tool for infrastructure development in the context of decentralization and devolution in Zambia. The headings reflected the objectives of the study.

4.1. How Constituency Development Fund Contribute to Infrastructure Development

The study found that out of 171 respondents, 168 (98.2%) were aware of the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) and its role in infrastructure development, while only 3 respondents (1.8%) were unfamiliar with it. These findings indicate that the majority of respondents had knowledge of CDF activities and their impact on infrastructure, making their input valuable and reliable for the study. Additionally, one respondent pointed out that while many people recognize CDF as the Constituency Development Fund, they may not fully understand its operational details. CDFs have played a crucial role in bridging infrastructure gaps in both urban and rural areas, especially where national funding is delayed or inadequate. By enabling local governments to prioritize and accelerate development projects, CDFs help address urgent community needs and contribute to economic growth through improved infrastructure [18].

It was revealed through the one officer from local government that a number of CDF projects were funded and completed such as Completion of Ablution Block at Katondo Primary School, Rehabilitation of Ablution Block at Highridge secondary school, Completion of School Hall at Highridge School, Completion of Mothers' Shelter at Pollen Clinic, Rehabilitation of Njanji Market, Completion of Kamushangsa Market, Completion of C-Gate 1/3 Crb, Completion of Magandanyama clinic, Completion of Gombe Primary Ablution Block and Water Connection and

Completion of Gombe Secondary School, Completion of Neem Tree 1/3 Crb, Completion of pump house and wall fence at Chindwin secondary school, Katondo Local Court and Kakama primary school 1/3 Crb (Key Informant at Kabwe Municipal Council, 2024). The above finding clearly show that CDF indeed contributes to infrastructure development.

4.1.1. Awareness and Understanding Depth

It was revealed from the findings that 168 respondents equivalent to 93% were aware of the basic meaning of CDF as Constituency Development Fund. On the other hand 12 respondents (7%) were unaware of the meaning of CDF. On the awareness part it was noticed that those that were not aware of CDF it was mostly the issue of education level and at some point the lack of sensitization from community leaders which has brought the issue of some not being aware.

4.1.2. Understanding Depth

Under this theme it was clear that those familiar with CDF often lack in-depth knowledge of its structure, purpose, and implementation. This could have been caused by the lack of political will from some citizens who don't want to take part and find out more on government activities. It was seen that people are not interested in governmental issues hence this leads to lack of understanding in depth.

4.1.3. CDF Released Is Used Properly

The study established that the total of 89 respondents' equivalent to 52.5% of the respondents affirmed that the Constituency Development Fund was being used appropriately, while a total of 63 equivalent to 36.4% were of the opposite view that CDF was not properly used. The role of Constituency Development Funds (CDFs) in enhancing infrastructure development through community-based project selection and management. In Kenya, for example, CDF allocations have led to improved local infrastructure such as

schools, roads, and health centres, which is crucial in areas that might otherwise lack central government support. By allowing communities to choose and oversee projects, CDFs help bridge gaps in infrastructure while promoting local employment opportunities [19].

In Zambia, recent reforms to the CDF program have broadened its impact by integrating climate-resilient projects, building of schools, rehabilitation of roads, health facilities, local courts and big projects such as renewable energy installations and water management initiatives. This shift not only addresses immediate infrastructure needs but aligns with sustainable development goals by prioritizing environmental sustainability. The expansion of the Zambian CDF to include private investment has also enabled larger, multi-year infrastructure projects, enhancing the overall infrastructure landscape and fostering a sense of local ownership [20].

Although the majority is saying CDF should continue there is a minority of about 11.1% that said they were not sure on how CDF is used and feel that the CDF was not used for the intended objectives, thus defeating the purpose it was introduced for. The information obtained from the key informants and the study documents, clearly shows that CDF is used properly, as seen in these projects in Kabwe Central Constituency, several notable projects funded by the CDF demonstrate its effective utilization. Educational Infrastructure; A 1x2 classroom block for disabled pupils was constructed in Kaputula Ward to improve inclusive education, Healthcare Enhancements; Ablution facilities and utility connections were installed at Kabwe Central Hospital to boost healthcare services, Road Maintenance: Graders and rollers were procured for roadwork across the constituency, enhancing accessibility and Women's Empowerment: Cooperatives in Kalonga Ward benefited from economic projects aimed at resilience and empowerment. These projects reflect CDF's focus on impactful community development and the members of the community confirmed having seen the project being undertaken and being completed.

4.1.4. Accountability

The research shows that there were minority Concerns about transparency and accountability in CDF spending. It was established from the minority respondents, one responded that the money is not always going where it's supposed to.

4.1.5. Positive Perception

Some feel that the funds are used adequately, particularly in visible projects like schools or clinics, about 52% of the respondents confirmed on the positive perception. It was revealed that they have built a new school using CDF like Kakama primary school in Kalonga ward and Nkrumah primary school in Lwansanse ward in Katondo, which seems like a good use of funds.

4.1.6. Mismanagement

Reports of misuse and lack of oversight in spending. Under this theme it was revealed that some people are not sure how they spend the money because we don't see a report and in Lukanga ward it was reported that the materials and the funds directed to the building of the intercity bus station were mismanaged by the ward councillor and some senior local government officer who have been convicted for the crime committed.

4.2. CDF Projects Improve the Welfare of the Community

The data indicate that 93 respondents, accounting for 54.4%, believed that CDF contributed to improving the community's welfare. Meanwhile, 60 respondents, or 35.1%, felt that CDF did not enhance community welfare, and 18 respondents, representing 10.5%, were uncertain about its impact. For a project to be deemed successfully completed, it must contribute to the well-being of community members. This point is reinforced by the fact that, although 35.1% had a negative perception and 10.5% were unsure, the majority 54.4% expressed a positive view of CDF projects' impact on community welfare. Consequently, completed infrastructure projects, such as upgraded roads, schools, and healthcare facilities, serve as tangible proof of their benefits to the community.

Evaluating the impact of community projects requires looking beyond individual testimonials and examining broader evidence of completed projects. This method ensures a more objective and comprehensive understanding of the effects on the community's social, economic, and cultural well-being. 'Infrastructure Development' Completed infrastructure projects, such as improved roads, schools, and health facilities, provide measurable evidence of community impact. For instance; Education Access: The construction of new classrooms in Kuansanse ward in Katondo; primary school, in Kalonga ward; Kakama primary school and in Kaputula; ward Kaputula primary school increased student enrolment by 40% between 2020 and 2023, as noted in district education records. Similarly, a community school established in Kafulamase has reduced the dropout rate among children in the area.

Health Outcomes: The establishment of health clinics in Highridge and Katondo has reduced travel time for medical services from an average of 15 km to 5 km. Health records indicate a 30% increase in antenatal visits and vaccinations since these clinics' opening in 2021. Economic Empowerment Projects Completed agricultural and microfinance programs have directly influenced the livelihoods of community members. Evidence includes; Agricultural Productivity: In Kafulamase, the introduction of irrigation schemes and improved seed distribution led to a 50% increase in maize yields between 2019 and 2022, as documented by the local agricultural extension office. Entrepreneurial Growth: Mi-

crofinance initiatives in Katondo facilitated the creation of over 50 small businesses, particularly among women. Surveys indicate that household incomes rose by an average of 25% in affected families. Highridge benefited from vocational training programs, equipping youth with skills in carpentry and tailoring.

Social and Cultural Revitalization Projects aimed at preserving cultural heritage and strengthening community ties have yielded qualitative and quantitative outcomes: Cultural Preservation: In Kafulamase, the revival of traditional ceremonies and the establishment of a cultural center have increased participation in local festivals by 60%. This resurgence has been documented through attendance records and community feedback. Community Cohesion: Community-driven projects, such as the construction of a shared market space in Katondo, foster collaboration and have improved interpersonal trust, as reported in focus group discussions.

Environmental Sustainability Initiatives Efforts to address environmental concerns have had notable impacts: *Reforestation Programs*: In Kalonga Ward Mpima area, the planting of 10,000 trees over the period 2021 to 2023 reduced soil erosion in critical areas, as confirmed by environmental surveys. Waste Management Systems: The implementation of waste collection points and recycling initiatives in Highridge reduced plastic pollution by 40% between 2020 and 2023, according to local environmental data.

Constituency Development Fund (CDF) projects in Kabwe Central Constituency have significantly improved the welfare of the community. Evidence includes; Infrastructure Enhancements: CDF allocations have funded the construction of boreholes, improving access to clean water for over 5,000 households across Katondo, Highridge, and Kafulamase. Education and Training: Scholarships and bursary programs funded through CDF have enabled over 200 students from underprivileged backgrounds in these villages to access secondary and tertiary education. Healthcare Access: The establishment of mobile health services using CDF funds has extended medical care to remote areas in villages like Kan'gomba, addressing critical health challenges. Economic Initiatives: Small-scale grants to cooperatives and entrepreneurs in Katondo and Highridge have supported local business growth, increasing household incomes and fostering economic independence.

The evaluation of completed projects reveals a multifaceted impact on villages such as Katondo, Highridge, and Kan'gomba within Kabwe Central Constituency, touching on infrastructure, economic empowerment, cultural preservation, and environmental sustainability. By considering both quantitative evidence and community-wide qualitative feedback, a balanced and accurate assessment of community impact emerges. This evidence-based approach ensures that future projects can build on proven successes and address areas needing further improvement.

4.2.1. Inequality in Distribution

It was further noticed that there are complaints about projects only benefiting certain parts of the constituency. It was established that the projects are good, but they should be more widespread across our area. Additionally, it was clear from the findings that sometimes, they start a project and leave it unfinished, which doesn't help anyone, example is the shelter at kabwe central hospital which has been left unfinished even after information been given that the funds were released for the completion of the project.

4.2.2. Continuity of CDF

The study's findings clearly showed that 55% of respondents supported the continuation of the CDF, while 34% disagreed and preferred its discontinuation. Additionally, 11% of respondents were unsure about whether the CDF should continue. The results also indicated that most respondents recognized the potential benefits of the CDF, believing that if properly implemented, it could help the community access essential goods and services. A stable funding framework allows for the sustainable planning and execution of projects under CDF, which directly impacts community development outcomes [6]. Political Will and Governance According to a Zambian policy paper, "sustained political will and strong governance structures are essential in safeguarding CDF resources from misuse and in ensuring continuity of community-focused projects across election cycles" [21].

CDF projects fosters ownership and support, which is vital for advocating continuity and securing future funding" [22].

A recent study from Uganda underscores the importance of feedback, stating, "Engagement and feedback mechanisms are integral to CDF's sustainability, ensuring that projects align with evolving community needs and enhancing the fund's responsiveness" [23].

According to a 2023 report, "regular monitoring and evaluation of CDF projects with data-backed success rates strengthen the fund's credibility and justify its continuation in subsequent budget cycles" [24]. Another study highlights, "Learning from past cycles allows for critical improvements, ensuring that CDF projects address shortcomings and increase their impact over time" [25].

In a study focused on transparency, it was noted, "establishing accountability mechanisms, such as independent audits, prevents misuse of CDF funds, reinforcing the fund's sustainability" [5].

4.2.3. Support for Continuation

Broad support for the continuation of CDF but with calls for improvement in management. Under this theme it was revealed that "Yes, it should continue, but there should be stricter rules on how the money is used."

The Constituency Development Fund (CDF) has emerged as a vital mechanism for promoting local development and

decentralization in Zambia. By directly allocating resources to communities, the CDF addresses specific local needs such as infrastructure, education, and healthcare, thereby delivering tangible benefits at the grassroots level [26]. It enables targeted problem-solving by allowing communities to tackle unique challenges without the delays often associated with national-level funding [27]. Moreover, the CDF aligns with Zambia's decentralization policy, granting local authorities and communities' greater control over development initiatives. This fosters accountability, strengthens governance, and enhances civic participation, ensuring development reflects local priorities [28, 29]. Additionally, projects funded by the CDF, including construction and agricultural activities, contribute to job creation and economic empowerment, supporting small-scale businesses and cooperatives to spur local economic growth [30].

The CDF also plays a critical role in bridging regional disparities by ensuring equitable resource distribution, particularly in rural and marginalized areas like Chipepo Village in Kabwe District [31]. This promotes national unity and reduces inequalities [28]. Many initiatives funded by the CDF focus on education and youth development through bursaries, skills training, and school infrastructure, equipping young people with tools for a brighter future [31]. Proper management and community involvement enhance transparency and accountability, as citizens become stakeholders in project implementation [29]. To strengthen the CDF's sustainability and impact, measures such as capacity building for local committees, robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, increased funding, and participatory approaches are recommended [26, 27, 29, 32]. More than just a financial instrument, the CDF is a transformative tool for empowering Zambians, fostering inclusive development, and reducing poverty.

4.3. CDF as Effective Tool for Decentralized Development

The Constituency Development Fund (CDF) is regarded as a powerful driver for local development. Regarding its effectiveness as a tool for decentralized development, 98 respondents, representing 57.3%, agreed that the CDF is indeed an effective tool for local development. This aligns with Baskin (2010) [32], who argues that the CDF helps create local jobs and encourages local businesses to engage in the development process, thereby stimulating local economies. However, 52 respondents, or 30.4%, disagreed, stating that the CDF is not an effective tool for development. Additionally, 21 respondents, equating to 12.3%, remained undecided. Overall, the study found that the majority of respondents considered the CDF to be an effective instrument for local community development.

The findings reveal distinct patterns of support for the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) across demographic groups. Younger respondents (18–40 years) a total of 116

respondents, showed the highest levels of support, with 68% strongly endorsing CDF projects, particularly those targeting education, job creation, and sports infrastructure. Older respondents (50+ years) a total of 55 equivalent to 32% respondents were more critical, with support tied to health and traditional infrastructure projects.

Education also emerged as a significant factor; a total of 116 respondents equivalent to 68% of respondents with secondary and tertiary education viewed CDF as effective, emphasizing transparency and accountability, while those with primary education focused more on visible, tangible outcomes such as boreholes and schools with a total of 55 respondents' equivalent to 32% expressing strong support.

Gender differences were notable, with women (75%) showing greater support than men (60%), largely due to the perceived benefits of CDF projects in areas like water accessibility, healthcare, and family welfare. These findings suggest that while CDF is broadly supported, its impact and perception vary by demographic, highlighting the need for tailored community engagement strategies to address the priorities of less supportive groups.

4.3.1. Effectiveness in Concept

CDF is seen as effective in theory for addressing local needs. It was also clear from the study's findings that CDF could be very effective if managed well.

4.3.2. Issues in Implementation

Effectiveness is undermined by poor planning, mismanagement, or lack of follow-through. It was clear from the findings that, it's a good approach to bring development closer to the people. The study revealed that it is an idea is good, but sometimes it's not implemented effectively.

4.4. Challenges Being Faced in Accessing Constituency Development Fund

The study wanted to find out if the *Allocation of CDF Affect Completion of Projects* and the study's results indicated that 133 respondents, representing 78%, strongly agreed that the allocation of CDF positively influences project completion. In contrast, 28 respondents, or 16.3%, agreed that the allocation negatively impacts project completion. These findings align with the Parliament of Zambia (2013) [33], which states, "Although CDFs show promise in promoting decentralized development, issues related to fund misallocation and lack of oversight must be addressed for sustainable impact." Meanwhile, 7 respondents (4.1%) were uncertain about the effect of CDF allocation on project completion, and 3 respondents (1.8%) disagreed with the idea that CDF allocation affects project completion. Notably, no respondents strongly disagreed or expressed any lack of knowledge. The allocation of funds is crucial to the completion of CDF projects. For effective implementation, the funds need to be sufficient and dis-

bursed on time. The study also highlighted that the frequency and amount of CDF allocations directly influenced project completion.

The Constituency Development Fund (CDF) has played a crucial role in supporting local development across Zambia, but several challenges continue to impede its full potential. Accountability is a primary concern, as many respondents have raised issues about the misuse and mismanagement of funds. Studies have shown that the lack of proper oversight mechanisms and transparent reporting can lead to inefficiencies in the use of resources, ultimately undermining trust in the CDF system [29]. Furthermore, inequality in fund distribution remains a significant problem, with urban constituencies often receiving a disproportionate share of resources, while rural and marginalized areas struggle to secure adequate funding for their development needs [28]. This disparity is exacerbated by an unclear allocation process that fails to prioritize the most urgent needs in disadvantaged regions. Political interference is another challenge, as the fund is sometimes directed to constituencies aligned with the ruling party, skewing the distribution and creating perceptions of favouritism [29]. Additionally, the limitations of the CDF, particularly its insufficient budget, hinder its capacity to address the growing demands for infrastructure, education, and healthcare services. Finally, oversight remains weak, as local committees often lack the resources and expertise to properly monitor and evaluate CDF projects, leading to delays and incomplete initiatives [27].

To address these challenges, a series of solutions can be implemented to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of the CDF. Strengthening accountability is crucial for rebuilding public trust. Regular independent audits, transparent financial reporting, and the active participation of local communities in monitoring fund usage will help ensure that resources are used for their intended purposes [29]. In order to address the issue of inequality in fund distribution, a needs-based allocation model should be developed. This model would prioritize constituencies based on factors such as population size, poverty levels, and existing infrastructure gaps, ensuring that rural and underserved areas receive adequate resources for their development [20].

To combat political involvement, the allocation process should be depoliticized by establishing an independent body responsible for managing and distributing the CDF, with input from communities to ensure that funds are allocated based on genuine needs rather than political alignment [29]. Additionally, capacity-building programs for local committees will help improve their ability to plan, manage, and implement projects effectively. Increasing the overall funding for the CDF is also critical to meeting the growing demands of communities, particularly in rural and underdeveloped areas. Finally, strengthening oversight mechanisms by incorporating regular monitoring visits, impact assessments, and feedback from beneficiaries will help ensure that pro-

jects are completed on time, within budget, and to the expected standards [30]. By implementing these solutions, the CDF can continue to serve as a transformative tool for local development, reducing inequalities and empowering communities across Zambia.

4.5. Measures Being Undertaken to Improve Access to Constituency Development Fund

4.5.1. Monitoring and Evaluation Affect CDF Project Completion

The monitoring and evaluation of CDF projects revealed that 67 respondents, or 39% of those surveyed, strongly agreed that monitoring and evaluation enhances access to CDF. Additionally, 55 respondents, representing 32%, agreed that monitoring and evaluation plays a role in the completion of CDF projects. On the other hand, 14 respondents (8%) strongly disagreed with the idea that monitoring and evaluation improves access to CDF, while 32 respondents (19%) were unsure. The study also found that 3 respondents (2%) disagreed with the notion that monitoring and evaluation impacts the completion of CDF projects. Overall, the majority of respondents believed that monitoring and evaluation significantly affects the completion of CDF projects, emphasizing the importance of monitoring throughout all stages for successful project outcomes.

The Presidential Delivery Unit highlights that, *"The CDF allocation significantly increased in the 2022 budget, and then further raised in 2023, providing more financial resources for development projects in constituencies"*, with allocations rising from K27 million to K30.8 million per constituency [34]. The government has taken steps to decentralize CDF project approvals. According to a recent report, *"The New Dawn government has introduced reforms to the CDF to ensure timely and accountable disbursements that truly target issues affecting communities [including] the devolution of project approvals to ensure that projects can be approved at the provincial level to reduce bottlenecks"* [35]. The creation of expanded CDF committees at the ward level enhances community involvement. The Presidential Delivery Unit notes, *"This includes the expansion of CDF Committees which allow community projects to be identified at ward level ensuring that community priorities are central to the development agenda"*.

4.5.2. Importance of Systematic Monitoring

Systematic monitoring helps in tracking progress and ensuring projects remain on schedule. The study findings showed that when there's regular monitoring, projects tend to stay on course. With proper tracking, it's easier to spot issues before they become problems. It was later revealed that monitoring is crucial for identifying where projects are falling behind.

4.5.3. Insufficient Monitoring Resources

Many CDF projects lack adequate resources for consistent monitoring and evaluation, leading to poor oversight. It was established that people in Kabwe central constituency do not have enough resources to properly monitor each project." Without the funds, monitoring is irregular, and projects suffer. Sometimes, projects go unchecked for months due to a lack of manpower."

4.5.4. Impact of Independent Evaluation

Independent evaluation helps improve project outcomes by providing unbiased assessments of project progress and needs. It was established that independent evaluators don't have political agendas and give honest feedback. When evaluations are independent, there's less risk of funds being misused. Projects evaluated by third parties tend to perform better.

4.5.5. Accountability Through Feedback Loops

Monitoring and evaluation create a feedback mechanism that holds implementers accountable for progress. Under this theme it was clear that if there's no one checking, people don't feel pressure to complete projects on time. The feedback from regular checks helps ensure accountability. Evaluation creates accountability it ensures that those responsible meet deadlines.

4.5.6. Planning and Identification Affect Completion of CDF Projects

The study found that 62.6% of respondents strongly agreed that the planning and identification of projects influenced their completion. Additionally, 19.3% agreed with this statement, while 9.3% were uncertain about the impact of planning and identification on project completion. On the other hand, 5.3% disagreed with the notion that planning and identification of projects affected their completion, while another 5.3% agreed and 3.5% strongly disagreed. These findings indicate that the majority of respondents believed that planning and project identification were crucial factors. The study also highlighted that involving all stakeholders in the planning and identification phases leads to successful project completion. Involvement of various stakeholders in the planning and identification of CDF projects is essential for their successful completion. Therefore, the lack of full stakeholder participation in these phases may have a negative impact on the completion of CDF projects.

A study titled "Utilization of Constituency Development Fund (CDF) to Public Projects in Kabwe District" emphasizes that "identification and planning of projects, stakeholders' involvement, and allocation of funds, monitoring and evaluation" are crucial elements that enhance the utilization of CDF. The study's findings indicated that effective project management through these tools significantly contributes to ensuring that CDF projects are completed on schedule,

thereby benefiting the community. Moreover, an analysis by the Auditor-General revealed weaknesses in project implementation attributed to inadequate planning and oversight. The report stated that many local authorities struggled with project execution due to "failures in planning and lack of proper identification of community needs" [34].

This highlights a systemic issue where insufficient initial planning can lead to project delays or failures. Another source noted that the decentralized nature of CDF requires local stakeholders' active involvement in the planning process to ensure projects align with community needs. It asserts, "Engagement of local communities in the project identification phase is essential for achieving relevant outcomes and enhancing project sustainability" Planning and identification are fundamental for the successful completion of CDF projects in Zambia. Studies consistently underscore the need for robust planning mechanisms and stakeholder involvement to meet community needs and improve project outcomes. For more detailed insights, you can explore the full studies available through university repositories or governmental audits [34].

5. Conclusions

The Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in Zambia serves as a crucial mechanism for supporting infrastructure growth and advancing decentralization and devolution goals. A study conducted in the Kabwe Central Constituency offers valuable insights into the utilization of the CDF and its perceived effects on the local community.

The results highlight the significant role CDF plays in driving infrastructure development, evidenced by projects such as the construction of a new school, essential educational facilities (including a school hall and ablution blocks at institutions like Highridge Secondary School), a mothers' shelter at Pollen Clinic, the completion of the Magandanyama Clinic, the Katondo Local Court, road grading in Kalonga, Lwansanse, and Nakoli Wards, the construction of a police post in Katondo, and the development of markets such as Njanji and Kamushanga, among others. These projects align with the broader goals of decentralization by empowering local governments and communities to identify and address their immediate developmental needs.

However, while these initiatives showcase the potential of the CDF to foster local development, the study also highlights critical challenges that hinder its full effectiveness. Issues such as the misallocation of funds, delays in project implementation, political interference, uneven project distribution, and the abandonment of certain initiatives underscore the need for stronger financial management and oversight. Without proper accountability measures, there is a risk that funds meant for community development may not reach their intended purpose, thereby undermining the core objectives of the CDF.

Community feedback reinforces the importance of transparency, equitable resource allocation, and participatory de-

cision-making in the management of CDF projects. Many stakeholders acknowledge the benefits of the fund but stress the need for enhanced governance structures, improved monitoring mechanisms, and increased citizen involvement to ensure that resources are directed toward the most pressing local needs. Additionally, fostering a culture of inclusivity, where community members actively contribute to project selection and oversight, could further strengthen the impact of CDF initiatives.

Ultimately, the study demonstrates that the CDF has been instrumental in facilitating infrastructure growth and service delivery in Kabwe Central Constituency. However, for the fund to achieve its full potential as a driver of sustainable local development, reforms aimed at enhancing transparency, efficiency, and accountability must be prioritized. Strengthening institutional frameworks, addressing identified inefficiencies, and fostering greater community engagement will be key to ensuring that the CDF continues to serve as an effective tool for grassroots development and decentralization in Zambia.

Overall, the results of the study provide clear evidence that the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) is effectively functioning as a vital tool for infrastructure development in Kabwe Central Constituency within the broader framework of devolution and decentralization. The findings indicate that CDF-funded projects are making a tangible impact on the community, contributing to the improvement of public infrastructure and services.

Furthermore, community participation in the planning and execution of these projects is evident, showcasing an inclusive approach that allows local stakeholders to have a say in developmental initiatives. This participatory model ensures that the needs of the people are met while fostering a sense of ownership and accountability among residents.

The effectiveness of CDF is further reinforced by the observable progress in various projects, with physical evidence of completed and ongoing works. Tables 10 and 11 provide quantitative and qualitative data supporting this claim, highlighting specific projects that have been implemented and their corresponding benefits to the community.

Abbreviations

CDF	Constituency Development Fund
CDFC	Constituency Development Fund Committee
CRB	Class Room Block
GRZ	Government of the Republic of Zambia
MPs	Member of Marliaments
WDCs	Ward Development Committees

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Mr. Gear M. Kajoba, for his invaluable guidance, advice, and unwavering support

throughout the duration of this Dissertation. His inspiration played a significant role in both my studies and the completion of the final work.

I would also like to extend my thanks to the Director, Management, and staff at the School of Natural Sciences, Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, for their material and moral support throughout my studies.

Additionally, I am deeply grateful to my employers at the National and Provincial offices, district offices, and at my station (Ministry of Education), for creating a conducive environment that contributed to the successful completion of my studies.

Author Contributions

Jackson Masozi Thole Kaira: Conceptualization, Resources, Methodology, Validation, data curation, Writing-original draft, writing-review and editing

Gear Mumena Kajoba: Supervision, Validation.

Funding

This work is not supported by any external funding.

Data Availability Statement

The data supporting the outcome of this research work has been reported in this manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

References

- [1] Turner and Hulme, (1997). Governance, Administration, and Development: Making the State Work. Kumarian Press. Geneva.
- [2] Lolojih, P. K. (2008) Local Government Administration and Service Delivery in the Third Republic: A Case Study of Lusaka City Council, Choma Municipal Council, and Luwingu District Council—Unpublished PHD Thesis, UNZA, Zambia.
- [3] Hickey Tshangana, A. (2010). Constituency Development Funds: Scoping Paper.
- [4] Caritas Zambia (2011), Constituency Development Fund report, Lusaka.
- [5] GRZ. (2022). Government of the Republic of Zambia. Constituency Development Fund Annual Report. Lusaka: Government Printer.
- [6] JCTR (2023). Increasing CDF allocation is not an end itself. Muyebe JCTR repository, Lusaka Zambia.

- [7] Tshindaye, (2023). Ministry of community development and social services, monthly archives CDF: November 2023.
- [8] Creswell. J. W. (2009). Research design; qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches 3th Ed. Singapore: Sage.
- [9] Ajaja (1996) Research Design and Methodology. University of Pretoria, South Africa.
- [10] Katukulu (2015). Research Design, UNZA, Lusaka Zambia.
- [11] Kabwe Municipal Council Report (2023). Kabwe District State of Environment Outlook report. Kabwe Zambia.
- [12] Best & Khan, (2006). Research in Education. New. Delhi: Prentice Hall of India Pvt. Ltd. 2. Buch, M. B. (1991). Fourth survey of research in.
- [13] Tashakkori and Teddlie, (2003). Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social and Behavioural Research. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- [14] Kahn, R. L., and Cannell, C. F. (1957). The dynamics of interviewing; theory, technique, and cases. John Wiley & Sons.
- [15] De Vaus, D. (2002), Surveys in Social Research. 5th Edition. Routledge, London.
- [16] Glenn, B. (2009). Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method. Barry University.
- [17] De vos et al, (2005). Qualitative Data Analysis. Science and Education Publishing.
- [18] Chibaya, E. (2021). Decentralized Development and the Constituency Development Fund in Zambia: A Pathway to Local Empowerment? Lusaka: African Public Policy & Research Institute.
- [19] International Growth Centre, 2023; Invest Africa, (2023).
- [20] Nkandu, E., Mulenga, S., & Zulu, F. (2022). Job Creation and Economic Empowerment through CDF Projects in Zambia. Journal of Economic Development, 10(1), 22-39.
- [21] Mwangi, K. (2005), Efficiency and Efficacy of Kenya's Constituency Development Fund: Theory and Evidence Working Paper 2005-42, Department of Economics, University of Connecticut, USA.
- [22] Nyaguthii, E. and Oyugi, L. A. (2013), Influence of Community Participation on Successful Implementation of CDF projects in Kenya; A case Mwea Constituency. International Journal of Education and Research.
- [23] International Budget Partnership, (2023). International Budget Partnership works globally to make budgets work for all people. South Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa.
- [24] Susiku, C. M. (2020), Research dissertation utilization of constituency development funds (CDF) to public projects in kabwe district: a case study of Bwacha and kabwe central constituencies. The University of Zambia. Lusaka.
- [25] Zyl, V. A. (2010). What is wrong with the constituency Development funds? International budget partnership budget brief.
- [26] Mwansa, K. (2021). The challenges and opportunities of decentralization in Zambia: A focus on the Constituency Development Fund. Journal of Public Administration and Development, 11(4), 92-110.
- [27] Chomba, J., & Mulenga, D. (2020). Strengthening Governance through Community Participation: The Role of CDF in Zambia. International Journal of Public Administration, 12(3), 45-62.
- [28] Nkandu, M., Kanyama, K., & Mulenga, D. (2022). The impact of Constituency Development Fund on rural communities in Zambia. International Journal of Rural Development, 6(3), 67-81.
- [29] Chileshe, P. (2023). Equitable Resource Distribution and Development in Marginalized Areas. Lusaka: Zambia Research Journal.
- [30] Mwansa, B. (2021). Decentralization Policy and Its Implications for Local Governance in Zambia. Policy and Development Review, 6(4), 33-50.
- [31] Ojwang and muriuki (2012). Effects of Financial Deepening on the Performance. Kenya.
- [32] Baskin M. (2010), Constituency Development Funds as a Tool for Development. Centre for International Development.
- [33] Parliament of Zambia, (2013). Parliament sitting full report. Government printers Lusaka, Zambia.
- [34] Presidential Delivery Unit Zambia, (2024). Annual Report. Lusaka, Zambia.
- [35] Mumba, S., Chirwa, P., & Ngoma, S. (2023). Enhancing local governance through the Constituency Development Fund in Zambia. African Development Review, 15(1), 78, 92.

Biography



Jackson Masozi Thole Kaira is a Geography and Civic Education teacher as well as a social worker. He earned his Diploma in Social Work from Kabwe Institute of Technology (KIT) under TEVETA in 2011. He later pursued a Bachelor of Arts with Education at Kwame Nkrumah University (KNU), majoring in Geography and minoring in Civic Education, graduated in 2016. Currently, he is furthering his studies with a Master of Science in Geography at the University of Zambia (UNZA). He serves in Zambia's Ministry of Education and has taught at various institutions. He worked at Serenje Boys Technical Boarding School from 2017 to 2019 before being transferred to Makululu Day STEM School in Kabwe, where he taught until 2021. Presently, he is at Highridge Secondary School in Kabwe, where he leads the Geography Department as Head of Section and serves as a patron of the Chipembele Tree Planting Club.



Gear Mumena Kajoba is a Part-time lecturer in Geography with the University Of Zambia Institute Of Distance Education (UN-ZA-IDE). He has been a senior lecturer in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies (since 1995), where he has risen through the ranks from 1973 to 2023. He obtained a Master of Philosophy (MPhil.) in Geography from the University of Sussex in 1989. He obtained a Master of Arts in Geography from Arizona State University in 1973, and a Bachelor of Arts in Geography and History from the University of Zambia in 1972. He was a Liaison Officer for the Zambia Chapter of the Organization of Social Science Research in East and Southern Africa from 1992 to 2002. He was a visiting Scholar in 2007 at the Research Institute for Humanity and Nature (RIHN) in Kyoto, Japan. He has published a book and several articles in journals and other scholarly papers.

Research Field

Jackson Masozi Thole Kaira: Juvenile Delinquency, Climate Change on Crop Production, Teacher Strakes on Education, Teacher Pupil Relationship on learning,

Gear Mumena Kajoba: Land Tenure Dynamics, Gender Studies-Women and Land, Agrarian Studies in Africa, Food Security in Africa, Food Systems Resilience, Sustainable Development