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Assessing Factors Influencing the Failure of Constituency Development Fund (CDF) Projects in Education and Health Sectors in Zambia: A Critical Analysis

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Abstract

This study critically evaluates factors leading to the failure of Constituency Development Fund (CDF) projects within Zambia's education and health sectors, aiming to recommend effective strategies for improving project success rates. Utilizing a sequential mixed-method approach, the research examines the effectiveness of existing management strategies, identifies key factors contributing to project failures, and explores challenges faced by project committees. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, a literature review, and five focus group discussions (FGDs) with 46 respondents from Chongwe Constituency. Purposive sampling was employed to gather both primary and secondary data. Quantitative data were analyzed using the mean t-test to determine factors significantly impacting community engagement and project outcomes. Qualitative data underwent thematic analysis to explore themes from interviews, literature, and FGDs, enhancing the triangulation of findings. Findings reveal that despite the alignment of management practices with best practices, factors such as failure to use CDF, funding delays, lack of transparency and accountability, weak monitoring and evaluation, limited community involvement, and limited community knowledge of CDF, contractor incompetence, Key challenges faced by implementors included, volunteer status of WDCs which was unsustainable and challenging, lack of capacity building contribute to project failures. The study advocates for improved project management practices, enhanced stakeholder engagement and education about CDF to communities and robust monitoring to increase project success.

Keywords: Constituency Development Fund, Success, Failure, Projects, Education and Health Sectors, Challenges, Strategies

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1. Introduction

The Constituency Development Fund (CDF) serves as a vital tool in addressing developmental challenges in both developing and underdeveloped economies. It aims to tackle issues like unemployment, extreme poverty, and lack

of infrastructure development (Olinto & Uematsu, 2010). Operating as a government budget allocation mechanism, the CDF allocates funds to constituencies to finance local development projects, primarily focusing on sectors such as education and health (Tsubura, 2014). The fund was established in Zambia in 1995 to bridge the financing gap

for micro-community-led projects across the country's constituencies (Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, 2022).

Over the years, the scope and funding of the CDF have expanded, with an increased emphasis on community involvement and project selection based on local needs (Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, 2022). Despite this, challenges persist, including delayed projects and incomplete infrastructure. While the CDF primarily supports smaller-scale community projects, such as school construction and procurement of educational materials, issues with project completion and effectiveness remain problematic (PwC, 2023).

Given these challenges, there was a need to investigate factors contributing to the failure of CDF projects, particularly in the education and health sectors. This research aims to critically assess these factors, with a focus on selected constituencies as epicenters of the study. By understanding the underlying issues impacting project success, policymakers can implement strategies to enhance the effectiveness of the CDF and ensure sustainable development in Zambia's rural area.

1.2 Problem Statement

In Zambia, the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) was initiated to drive grassroots progress in pivotal areas like education and health, aiming to bridge the gap between urban and rural development through improved infrastructure and services.

However, the 2020, 2021 and 2022 Auditor General's reports review that 740 community projects from 2020 and 2021 were incomplete or of inferior quality two years after their start beyond timeframe, budgets and scope allocated and were brought forward for implementation in 2022. Further in 2022, the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development approved 4,168 community projects which included construction of classroom blocks and health posts. By the 31st December 2022, the local authorities had only completed 34% of the projects, 23% were work in progress and 43% had not been implemented. This discrepancy not only signifies a failure to construct essential facilities but also represents missed opportunities to elevate health and education standards in rural communities. Factors such as bureaucratic inefficiencies and the misallocation of resources have been suggested as culprits, yet a detailed investigation focusing specifically on Zambia's education and health sectors is absent.

This lack of targeted research obstructs the optimal use of CDF resources, perpetuating the risk of further misallocations and the consequent deprivation of vital services in these communities. Therefore, this study is imperative to discern the root causes of these project failures, enabling the CDF to realize its developmental potential for Zambia.

1.3 Research Objectives

General Objective

To investigate factors that contribute to the failure of Constituency Development Fund (CDF) Projects in Zambia with the view to recommend the optimum strategy to increase the success rate of community CDF projects in the education and health sectors.

Specific Objective(s)

1. To identify strategies being used to manage CDF projects in Zambia's education and health sectors.
2. To assess the effectiveness of strategies in managing CDF projects in Zambia's education and health sectors.
3. To identify the key factors contributing to the failure of CDF projects in Zambia's education and health sectors.
4. To investigate challenges faced by project committees in implementing CDF projects in Zambia's education and health sectors.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Background

Constituency Development Fund (CDF)

The Constituency Development Fund (CDF) serves as a governmental budget allocation method that assigns a designated portion of the national budget to various constituencies. This funding is intended to support local, modest-scale development endeavors such as erecting schools, clinics, and water supply systems (Tsubura, 2014; International Budget Partnership, 2010). Many countries worldwide among them India, Malaysia, Pakistan and Philippines have embarked on different kinds of policy reforms called community-driven development (CDD) "equivalent to Constituency Development Fund (CDF)" aimed at bringing about development and eradication of poverty through funding local development projects, and provide technical assistance to help make local decision-making more inclusive, transparent, and democratic (Casey, et al., 2021). Given the aforementioned and in order to address the issue of rural development and poverty, African countries like Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Ghana, Rwanda, and Zambia, among others have consistently emphasized the role of the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) as a tool for social and economic development. For rural development to meet sustainable development such infrastructure development, it requires special resources and institutions to manage their tailored local needs (Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), 2016).

Origin of CDF

In Zambia, the CDF was founded in 1995 to support micro-community projects as part of the country's larger decentralization and local development policy. The primary goal was to provide resources to bridge the financing gap caused by the lack of available funds to finance micro-community-led projects in all constituencies across the country. Parliament appropriated and disbursed the first funds from this fund in 1995. Between 1995 and 2016, the

Fund operated under Section 45 of the Local Government Act Cap 281 of the Laws of Zambia. However, in 2016, the Constitution introduced the Constituency Development Fund. Following this change, the Local Government Act was revoked, and in 2018, the Constituency Development Fund Act was implemented. This new legislation addresses the management, allocation, utilization, and accountability of the Fund. The government developed the first guidelines in 2006 commonly known as the "CDF Guidelines to guide on the Management and Utilization of the Fund" with the expectation that all Constituencies will abide by project selection and procurement in line with the guidelines (Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, 2022).

The Constituency Development Fund has broadened its reach and budget allocation, emphasizing community participation in determining local development goals or objectives. This underscores the importance of exercising increased prudence in the fund's utilization and management. Moreover, it mandates selecting initiatives and programs in alignment with community needs, thereby fostering social welfare, infrastructure enhancement, and employment opportunities. In 2021, the government increased the CDF amount per constituency from K1.6 million to K25.7 million and has further increased from K25.7 million in 2022 to 28.3 million in 2023. The CDF's expanded scope includes three (3) distinct areas: Community Projects; Youth, Women, and Community Empowerment; and Secondary Boarding School and Skills Development Bursaries(ibid).

Causes of Failure or Success of Projects

Despite an increase in CDF allocation to the budget of Zambia, constituencies are likely to fail to implement or complete most CDF projects if proper management is not carefully considered.

Munns and Bjeirmi, (1996) highlights that project performance goals are linked to the scheduling and control of project operations in a well-coordinated time and cost-effective manner so that projects can be completed within the project's preplanned scope. This emphasizes the importance of identifying and attaining project goals, and a project is a means to that end. In terms of the significance of project management performance and concepts, project management is defined as "the process of controlling the achievement of the project objective by applying a collection of tools and techniques."

Many researchers comprehensively identify highly influential factors that contribute to project failures, such as an inadequate project foundation, the wrong person as project manager, an inadequately defined scope, a lack of technical project management, a lack of commitment to the project, time, cost, and customer satisfaction, and specifically the management model (Thomasa & Fernandez, 2008). The reality is that project success and failure are two sides of the same coin; hence, Papke-Shields, et al., (2010) observe a link between the usage of project management strategies and project success. As a result, it is believed that project management is sustainably measurable in terms of time, cost, and quality, with an emphasis on long-term and customer-oriented results. On the other hand, Ika, (2009) warns against connecting project management objectives (time, cost, and quality) with project success.

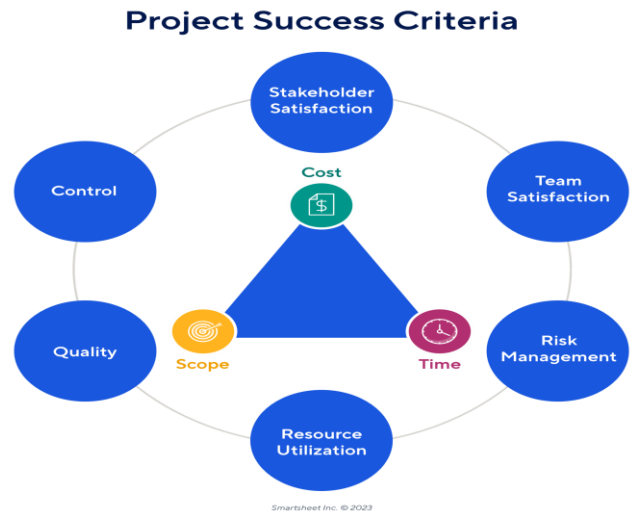


Figure 1. Illustrates Project Success criteria

Source: "Original" Iron Triangle Project Success Criteria

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Theory of Local Governance and Development

The 'Theory of Local Governance and Development' postulates that for grassroots development projects to be successful, there should be a harmonious interaction between local governance structures, community involvement, and resource allocation (Brown, 2017).

The theory also embodies the transfer of power (financial, political, personnel), functions, and duties to democratically elected councils and administrative units. These authorities include making and executing development plans rooted in locally identified priorities, managing their own budgets, mobilizing and allocating resources based on their priorities, appointing statutory committees and boards, and enacting ordinances and by-laws (CJLG, 2009).

Civic Culture theory

The Civic Culture theory is a political theory that seeks to explain how citizens participate in politics, make decisions, and influence government policies. The theory suggests that a stable democracy requires a civic political culture, which fosters political participation, accountability, and trust in the government (Almond & Verba, 1963).

The use of the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) can be viewed as an example of the practical application of Civic Culture theory principles. The CDF is a government program that provides funds to Members of Parliament (MPs) for the implementation of development projects in their respective constituencies. By involving citizens in the identification, planning, and implementation of development projects in their communities, the program aims to promote participatory democracy and citizen empowerment.

Stakeholder Theory

According to the stakeholders' theory, managers must be aware of a shared sense of the value that they are positioned to create, bringing all stakeholders to a round table. It demands that managers need understand their responsibilities to the business and the types of relationships they build with other stakeholders as they oversee the business vision and mission. This theory advocates for the happiness of all those involved, with equal benefits sought. It

calls for the representation of various individuals and groups who have an impact on the achievement of the set goals and believes that each stakeholder has varying levels of influence and interest with the sole goal of increasing stakeholder satisfaction (Agle & Wood, 1997).

There is a logical model that stakeholders can use to strategically manage resources and prioritize decisions about how much effort to put into investing in their needs while improving effective communication. It entails working with stakeholders to plan specific projects and initiatives based on their needs. Monitoring ensures that the projects are successful and that stakeholders recognize value for money. The theory provides stakeholders with a lens through which to connect funds and strategy (Parmar, et al., 2010).

Stakeholder participation is critical for CDF success because it aligns with the CDF's vision, mission, and goals for achievement and adding value to its intended beneficiaries. This theory applies because CDF management must be aware of a shared sense of the value that they are positioned to create, bringing all stakeholders to a round table for project discussion and implementation.

The Dispatching Model/Theory

The dispatching model believes that planned tasks can be completed by notifying the agents of the tasks to start (Koskela & Howell, 2002). It specifies task scheduling, based on conceptual priority-ordered ready lineup. Allocating or assigning tasks or jobs to a project team, typically by administrators, is the fundamental setback with dispatching (Johnston & Brennan, 1996).

This theory is in line with how CDF Projects are submitted for approval to the local authorities and have to wait for approval and allocation of funds for them to commence.

2.3 Empirical Review

Chrine et al.'s (2020) investigation into the impact of the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) on rural development, particularly focusing on the health and education sectors in Rufunsa Constituency, provides valuable insights into the challenges and shortcomings associated with CDF implementation. Employing a descriptive analytical research approach that integrates both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, the study utilized questionnaires and semi-structured interviews as primary data collection instruments. The study sample comprised 109 participants residing in Rufunsa Constituency. The findings of the study revealed significant inconsistencies in the disbursement of funds by the Government of the Republic of Zambia, leading to the non-completion of numerous CDF projects. Particularly alarming was the observation that CDF had not effectively improved education initiatives within the constituency. This lack of progress was attributed to various factors, including insufficient and poor infrastructure such as inadequate buildings and roads, a shortage of teachers, and a lack of essential learning materials like books and chalks.

Moreover, the study highlighted a concerning lack of community and stakeholder involvement in project identification, preparation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation processes within the health and education sectors. This lack of engagement was primarily attributed to the community's limited knowledge and awareness of CDF

channels, sources, quantities, and the frequency of fund disbursement. As a result, local communities and stakeholders were unable to actively participate in decision-making processes regarding the allocation and utilization of CDF funds, leading to suboptimal outcomes in terms of project implementation and impact.

The findings of Chrine et al.'s study underline the critical importance of enhancing transparency, accountability, and community participation in the management of CDF funds. Addressing issues related to fund disbursement consistency, infrastructure development, human resource capacity, and community awareness and engagement are essential steps towards improving the effectiveness of CDF initiatives in promoting rural development, particularly in sectors as crucial as health and education. By fostering greater collaboration and communication between government authorities, local communities, and other stakeholders, policymakers can work towards overcoming the identified challenges and realizing the full potential of CDF in driving sustainable rural development in Rufunsa Constituency and beyond.

A study done by Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR) to understand the usage of the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in Zambia (The Study was conducted in four constituencies namely Lukasha in Kasama, Mongu Central in Mongu, Simoonga in Livingstone and Wusakile in Kitwe): The Case of Education, Health, Water and Sanitation Projects The study used an exploratory study design that obtained various views, opinions, and perceptions from different sources of informants based on the instruments of data collection from 105 respondents. Findings were that CDF resources, in the past to present, have been used to finance projects in these areas with a few deviant cases such as financing of law and order. However, the study revealed that future prospects for further investments in these social sectors using CDF are threatened by the following factors: Allocation of resources is faced with different competing local community development needs. Failure to adhere to the legal provisions, especially in terms of community engagement and public dissemination of information, financial in particular, has made the CDF vulnerable to abuse and misapplication. Knowledge about CDF in general, and the lack of access by the public to critical information about the management, administration, and financing of CDF projects among the members of the public inhibits the prospects of communities to mobilize, articulate, and influence the allocation and use of the CDF resources, including for social development causes. Finally, the consistent failure by the Government to ensure that these resources are provided in a timely and adequate manner has affected the implementation of projects, thereby contributing to the prevailing poor social conditions experienced in most of the local communities in Zambia (Musamba & Kumbutso, 2019).

Phiri's (2016) comprehensive study on community participation in Constituency Development Fund (CDF) projects in Kanyama Constituency sheds light on the intricate dynamics surrounding community involvement in development initiatives. The research engaged a diverse sample, encompassing 300 household respondents, an official from the Lusaka City Council, and eight local leaders. Employing purposive sampling for key informants and informed respondents, while household respondents were

selected through systematic random sampling, the study adopted a mixed-methods approach, integrating qualitative and quantitative primary and secondary data.

The study's outcomes illuminated the nature of community participation in CDF projects, highlighting variations across different stages of project implementation. Notably, community involvement primarily manifested through consultation and unskilled labor, with limited engagement observed in project identification, implementation, and monitoring phases. This observation underscores the existence of barriers that hinder comprehensive community participation in development processes.

Identified factors influencing community participation levels encompassed a range of socio-economic and institutional challenges. These included insufficient knowledge and awareness about CDF among community members, prevalent poverty levels, inadequate understanding of participation rights and opportunities, limited information dissemination mechanisms, and negative community attitudes towards participation. Such factors collectively impede the effective engagement of communities in CDF projects, hindering the realization of their full potential as agents of development.

Despite the extensive exploration of community participation dynamics, Phiri's study did not explicitly delve into the root causes behind the failure of most CDF projects to reach completion. This gap in the analysis suggests a need for further investigation into the specific challenges and systemic issues contributing to project failure within the context of Kanyama Constituency.

Susiku's (2020) study on the utilization of Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in public projects within Kabwe district presents significant insights into the mechanisms that contribute to successful project management. Employing a descriptive research design incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, the study engaged 150 CDF stakeholders, with a sample of 110 respondents selected for data collection through questionnaires and in-depth interviews. The analysis integrated both primary and secondary data, revealing the pivotal role of various CDF tools in enhancing project utilization.

Among the key findings of the study was the recognition of CDF tools such as project identification and planning, stakeholder involvement, fund allocation, and monitoring and evaluation as critical contributors to project success. These tools were identified as instrumental in ensuring the efficiency and effectiveness of project management processes within the Kabwe district. Particularly noteworthy was the positive impact of stakeholder engagement on project outcomes, emphasizing the importance of community participation and ownership.

Drawing from these findings, the study recommended improvements in the management of CDF tools to enhance project management effectiveness. Specifically, the Government was urged to focus on refining the processes associated with project identification, stakeholder engagement, fund allocation, and monitoring and evaluation. By strengthening these aspects of project management, policymakers can facilitate the timely completion of CDF projects, thereby maximizing their benefits for the intended beneficiaries.

It becomes evident that effective utilization of CDF

requires a comprehensive approach that encompasses various stages of project implementation. This includes not only the initial identification and planning phases but also ongoing stakeholder engagement, transparent fund allocation, and systematic monitoring and evaluation. By prioritizing these aspects of project management, policymakers can ensure that CDF investments yield tangible and sustainable outcomes, contributing to the overall development of communities within Kabwe district and beyond.

A Study by Chibomba, (2013) to establish the effectiveness of CDF as a tool for community development in Katuba Constituency which was qualitative in nature and also focused on the implementation process to assess the effectiveness. Showed that awareness of the fund among Katuba Constituency members was low, and knowledge of the application process and project selection criteria was limited. The study also showed that CDF-funded infrastructure projects had contributed less to the development of road networks, schools, and health facilities in Katuba constituency due to a lack of funding, expert advice, poor planning, and lack of coordination between the community and government officials.

This study was conducted seven months after the Presidential general elections and as a result newly elected MP and the ward councillors were still settling into their new offices. The constituency under study did not also have a Constituency Development Committee (CDC) at the time of the study, therefore it was difficult to get some important information for the study from the old CDC. The study was also limited in the methodology as it only used qualitative approach.

Kafunda (2017) conducted research to examine the implementation process of constituency development-funded initiatives aimed at providing education services in the Sinazongwe constituency. The study used both descriptive and exploratory investigations for triangulation. Structured questionnaires were utilized to gather quantitative data, and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were used to obtain qualitative data, with a total of 50 respondents chosen by multistage random sampling and purposive sampling. The study found that CDF construction projects were rarely completed on time and that numerous challenges were encountered during project implementation, including limited community participation, late disbursement of funds and construction materials, and insufficient awareness of CDF guidelines. Beneficiary groups and district technocrats were widely known to participate. Projects were rarely completed on time, and their quality left much to be desired.

In a study conducted by Likando, et al. (2023), the goal was to examine the challenges contributing to the limited adoption of the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) by Small and Medium-Scale Enterprises (SMEs) in Kafue, Zambia. Employing a qualitative methodology, the research utilized purposive sampling to collect primary data from 40 respondents through semi-structured interviews, literature review, and two focus group discussions (FDGs). Thematic analysis, along with document scrutiny and data validation, was employed to analyze the gathered information. The findings of the study highlighted various challenges hindering SMEs from effectively utilizing the available CDF, including irregular disbursements, lack of accountability, technological inadequacy, scarcity of skilled labor, unfavorable government fiscal policies, policy

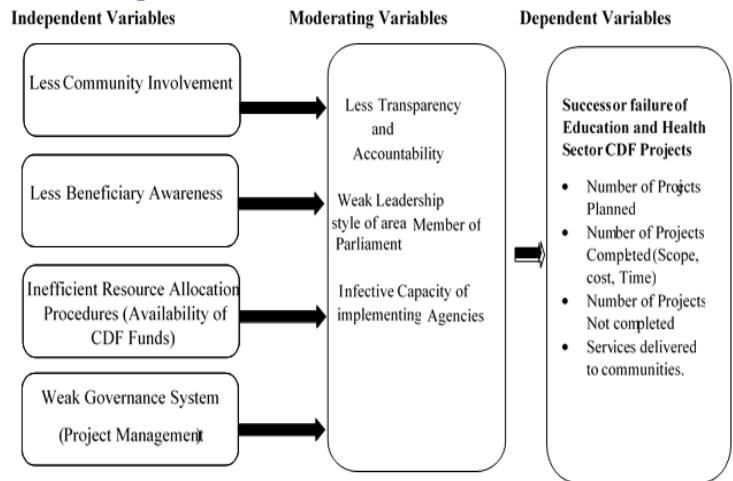
inconsistencies, inadequate sensitization, political influences, and insufficient funds. The emerging themes underscored notable qualitative discrepancies in the obstacles encountered by SMEs regarding the low uptake of CDF. The study proposes several recommendations, including a 40% increase in the allocation of funds within the current CDF policy of 2022, enhanced monitoring and implementation initiatives, and intensified skills training for both SMEs and CDF professionals. Additionally, it suggests that corporate entrepreneurs foster a culture of teamwork in training and developing their management and workforce, thereby enhancing capacity building to confront business challenges and capitalize on the Constituency Development Fund.

A study conducted by Opiyo, et al., (2016) whose objectives were to determine the effect of fund allocation on project implementation also to determine the effect of fund disbursement on project implementation, and finally establish the effect of monitoring on project implementation in Butere, Kenya. The study targeted a population of 135, and a sample of 100 was selected using purposive sampling method. Findings were that fund allocation, fund disbursement, and monitoring affect project implementation (Fund allocation processes and regulations were revealed to be relatively weak. CDFs faced challenges in the disbursement of funds to fully achieve the program's intended goals). The study recommended that the government increase its budget allocation and there should be a separation of powers between fund allocators and implementers to avoid cases where MPs are both fund allocators and play implementation.

In a study conducted by Daudi, (2019) on the efficacy of constituency development catalyst fund in Tanzania: the case of Mwanza and Moshi urban constituencies. The study has utilized a cross-sectional research design employing both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Respondents were sampled using the non-probability technique and applied content analysis to analyze information from respondents. Findings were that the fund had been significantly effective in addressing development challenges. Roads, schools, hospitals, and market construction projects improved accessibility to social services and enhanced economic activities in the areas. However, the study found the existence of elements of political biases and mismanagement of the fund that impaired the efficacy of the fund.

The goal of a 2019 study by Kadori et al. was to evaluate the role of the National Constituency Development Fund (NCDF) in providing instructional resources to improve secondary school education access in Mombasa County, as well as to assess the contribution of the NCDF to the improvement of secondary school education access rates. The study also looked into the role of the NCDF in providing infrastructure to improve secondary school education access. The study employed a descriptive research design. The 646 participants in the study were divided into 32 administrators, 582 teachers, and 32 public secondary schools from each of the four Sub-Counties. This study research found that NCDF enhanced access to public secondary school education in Mombasa County including improving access rate, provision of infrastructure facilities, and provision of instructional resources.

2.4 Conceptual Framework



Source: Researcher's Own Concept (2023)

The conceptual framework above demonstrates four independent variables, namely; less community involvement, less beneficiary awareness, inefficient resource allocation and weak governance systems. The overriding assumption is that this model of CDF management would not guarantee sustainable development in the education and health sectors.

Independent Variables:

- 1. Less Community Involvement:** This variable refers to the extent to which community members are engaged and actively participate in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of CDF projects in the health and education sectors. It may be operationalized through metrics such as the percentage of community members involved in project planning meetings, volunteer participation rates, or community feedback mechanisms.
- 2. Less Beneficiary Awareness:** This variable measures the level of awareness and understanding among project beneficiaries regarding the objectives, benefits, and implementation processes of CDF projects. Operationalization could involve surveys assessing beneficiary knowledge of project goals, information dissemination strategies, or attendance at project awareness campaigns.
- 3. Insufficient Resource Allocation:** This variable reflects the adequacy of financial, human, and material resources allocated to CDF projects in the health and education sectors. Operationalization may include analysing budgetary allocations, resource utilization rates, or the ratio of allocated funds to project requirements.
- 4. Weak Governance System:** This variable assesses the effectiveness, transparency, and accountability of local governance structures responsible for overseeing CDF projects. It could be operationalized through indicators such as the existence of corruption allegations, the timeliness of decision-making processes, or community perceptions of governance integrity.

Dependent Variables: Success or Failure of Projects in Health and Education:

- 1. Number of Projects Undertaken:** This metric quantifies

the total number of CDF projects initiated within the health and education sectors over a specified period. Operationalization involves compiling project records or databases maintained by relevant authorities.

2. **Number of Projects Not Completed:** These variable measures the proportion of CDF projects within the health and education sectors that were initiated but remain unfinished or abandoned. Operationalization may involve tracking project status through site visits, interviews with project implementers, or official project completion reports.

Measurement of Success or Failure: The success or failure of CDF projects in health and education sectors can be determined based on predefined criteria such as:

- **Completion Status:** Projects completed within the specified timeframe and budget are considered successful, while those unfinished or abandoned are deemed failures.
- **Impact Assessment:** Evaluation of the tangible outcomes and benefits delivered by completed projects, such as improved health service delivery or enhanced educational infrastructure.
- **Stakeholder Satisfaction:** Community perceptions and feedback regarding the effectiveness, relevance, and quality of project outcomes.
- **Alignment with Development Goals:** Degree to which projects contribute to broader development objectives and priorities within the health and education sector

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Study Design

A research design can be thought of as the structure of research. It is the ‘glue’ that holds all of the elements in a research project together. A research design is an outline for the collection, measurement, and data analysis whose mandate is to answer the question under research (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

3.2 Research Philosophy and Approach

The research design that was used in this study was a descriptive survey. Descriptive survey was employed as a method of collecting information by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals (Orodho, 2003). The study used mixed method design to reach the respondents in order to gather factual information and to quantify the trends and patterns associated with the success or failure of CDF projects in education and health. Additionally, it aimed to obtain in-depth insights into the essential elements influencing CDF project outcomes and to comprehend the context. The decision to employ a mixed-method design further strengthened the research approach by allowing for a comprehensive exploration of the subject matter. By combining both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, the study aimed to achieve a

more holistic understanding of the factors influencing CDF project outcomes. Quantitative methods, such as administering questionnaires, enabled the researchers to collect numerical data that could be statistically analyzed to identify trends and patterns. On the other hand, qualitative methods, such as semi-structured interviews, facilitated the gathering of in-depth insights into the contextual factors shaping the success or failure of CDF projects.

Moreover, the use of mixed methods enabled triangulation, which involves corroborating findings from different data sources to enhance the validity and reliability of the research outcomes. By triangulating quantitative survey data with qualitative interview responses, the study could offer a more nuanced interpretation of the research findings, thus increasing the credibility of the results.

3.3 Sampling Design

Target Population

A population is a group of individuals or objects from which samples are taken for measurement. It is a collection of all the elements about which a study wishes to make some inferences (Cooper, et al., 2003). The target population included community key informants (community leaders, CDF business-related leaders, health workers, education workers), Ward Development Committee (WDC) members, and CDF committee members.

Population Size

The population size for this study was drawn from those directly involved with CDF that is; 13 CDFC, 21 WDCs and 25 key informants conveniently selected across 21 wards of chongwe. Sampling Frame

The sample size for this research comprised CDFC members from selected constituencies, selected constituency key informants for a FGD, and Ward Development Committee (WDC) members who provided epistemological knowledge on the study matter.

Study Sample

The sample size for this primary data comprised of 46 participants categorized as 9 CDFC, 8 WDCs and 25 key informants through 4 FGDs that provided epistemology knowledge on study matter.

Table 2 Study Sample

Description of Respondents	Designation of Respondents	Sample size
CDFC	Selected Members	8
WDCs	Selected members	8
Health and School administrators	DHO and DEBS	4
Chongwe Town Council	Town Clerk	1
Key Informants	Health workers, Headmen, School workers, Community influencers (4 FGDs)	25
Total		46

Sampling techniques

Sampling is the procedure a researcher uses to gather people, places, or things to study. Orodho and Kombo (2002) define sampling as a process of selecting a number of individuals or objects from a population such that the selected group contains elements representative of the characteristics found in the entire group. It should be noted that the main constraints in deciding on the sample size to use are usually resources and time. They argue that the proximity of the researcher's home to the study sample is a factor to consider in research. As a result, distance coverage impediments are reduced while interaction rates between the researcher and respondents at personal levels, both formally and informally, increase (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

In this study, homogenous and expert purposive sampling were utilized to select participants with similar characteristics or traits related to CDF, allowing for a thorough understanding of the phenomenon and a detailed description of the particular group. This approach enabled the researcher to focus on individuals with expertise relevant to the study topic. The expert purposive sampling provided technical know-how on the study matter, ensuring that the participants could clarify certain information crucial for the study's credibility and guidance.

3.4 Data Collection Method

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, such as the MP representative, Ward Development Committee Chairpersons (WDC), key informants and Constituency Development Fund Committees (CDFC). Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were utilized to gather collective opinions and experiences from community key informants, including health and educational personnel, headmen, and other community influencers. These discussions aimed to collect information on whether or not they provided opinions on the locations and quantities of school and health facilities to be constructed as well knowledge around the use of CDF

Data Collection Instruments

Primary data was collected through semi-structured interviews using KoboToolBox and Focus Group Discussions (FDGs) using interview guide. These two methods were employed in the study to triangulate and probe themes emerging from the instruments.

3.5 Data Preparation and Analysis

This research integrated findings using a parallel design where both semi-structured interviews and FGDs were collected concurrently, and the results were compared to provide a comprehensive understanding.

Quantitative data utilized both descriptive and inferential statistics, including one sample t-test comparing means. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, mean and

percentages were employed. Excel and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) were used for data analysis. Results were presented in tables, figures, charts, and graphs. Data were coded, variable categories were assigned labels, and they were then fed into the computer program.

Qualitative data underwent thematic analysis along with a review of relevant documents, reports, and project documentation to gain perspective and context of the CDF projects.

To ensure reliability and credibility of the qualitative research, a comprehensive methodological approach was used. Triangulation, involving multiple data sources and methodologies such as interviews, observations, and documents, was employed to cross-check conclusions. Participant checking was conducted by soliciting participant input on the study findings to encourage transparency and participant validation. External validation, obtained through the supervisor, was crucial in evaluating the study process and results. An audit trail was maintained, providing a clear record of the study process for evaluation. Regular credibility checks were performed to address potential researcher biases. Prolonged involvement with participants and the research setting was prioritized for a deeper understanding, while dependability was exhibited through steady and consistent research processes with thorough documentation. These tactics worked together to increase the study's overall trustworthiness and credibility.

4. Results and Discussion

This section offers a detailed quantitative analysis of the obtained results, providing statistical insights and interpretations.

4.1 Demographics

Gender

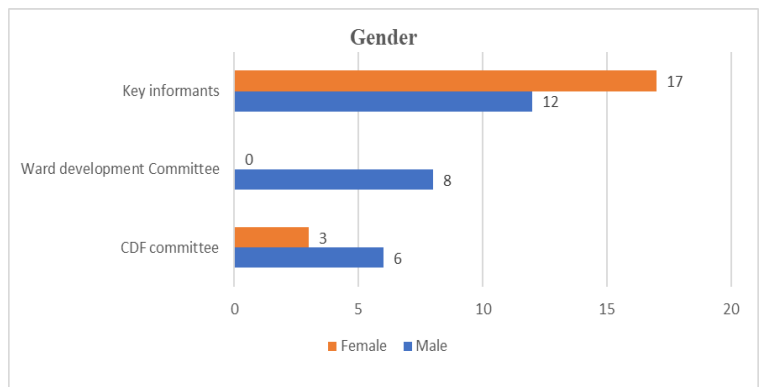


Figure 3: Gender

The figure above presents the gender distribution among respondents engaged in various committees related to Constituency Development Fund (CDF) projects Chongwe, expressed as percentages of the total respondents. Analysis reveals a significant gender disparity across committees, with men comprising (6)13.04% of the total respondents within CDF committees and, while women

represent only 6.52% and males were 8 representing 17.39% within Ward Development Committees females were none. However, among key informants, women constitute a higher proportion at (17) 36.96%, compared to men at (12)26.09%. This highlights an encouraging trend of female participation as sources of expertise in CDF-related matters. Nonetheless, addressing the gender gap within CDF and Ward Development Committees is imperative to ensure more inclusive decision-making processes and foster development initiatives that cater to the diverse needs and perspectives of all community members.

Age Group

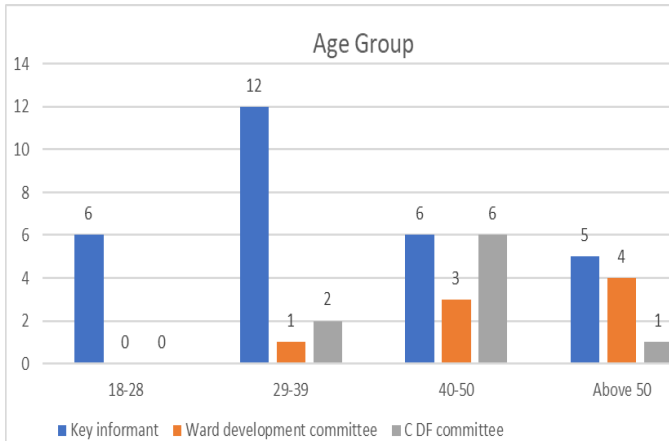


Figure 4: Age Group

The tables provide a breakdown of the age distribution among key informants, members of Ward Development Committees, and participants in CDF Committees, expressed as percentages of the total respondents within each group, out of a total of 46 respondents.

The age distribution among key informants shows that individuals aged 29-39 constitute the largest proportion at 32.6% of the total, followed by those between 18-28 and 40-50 who were 6 (13%), and above 50 were 5 (10.8%).

In contrast, Ward Development Committees are predominantly comprised of individuals above 50, representing 9% of the total participants, with smaller percentages in the 40-50 age range (7percent) and 29-39 age range (2%). This distribution indicates a higher prevalence of older individuals within these committees, potentially reflecting traditional leadership structures or historical involvement in community development efforts.

Similarly, CDF Committees show a dominance of individuals aged 40-50, accounting for 13.04%of the total participants, followed by those in the 29-39 age range (6%) and above 50 (2%). This distribution suggests a notable presence of mid-career professionals within CDF Committees, possibly bringing a blend of experience and innovation to the decision-making process.

Level of education

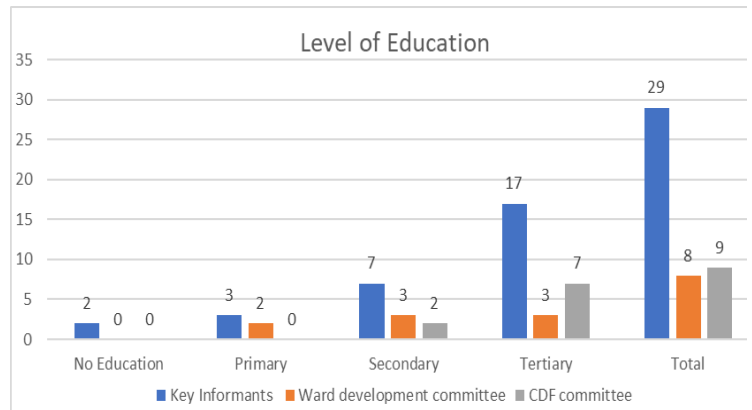


Figure 5: Level of education

Analyzing the distribution of educational levels within each group out of a total of 46 respondents reveals varying patterns among key informants, Ward Development Committee members, and CDF Committee members. Among key informants, 4.35% reported having no education, while 6.52% and 15.22% reported primary and secondary education respectively. Notably, the majority of key informants, comprising 36.96%, reported having tertiary education, reflecting a higher proportion of individuals with advanced educational backgrounds. In contrast, Ward Development Committee members showed a smaller representation of educational diversity, with no respondents reporting no education and only 4.35% each reporting primary and secondary education. Tertiary education was reported by 6.52% of Ward Development Committee members. Similarly, the CDF Committee also showed no representation of individuals with no education or primary education, with 4.35% reporting secondary education and 15.22% reporting tertiary education. These findings highlight differences in educational backgrounds across the three groups, with key informants exhibiting a higher prevalence of tertiary education compared to Ward Development Committee and CDF Committee members, indicating potential variations in expertise and perspectives within each group.

4.2 Community Involvement/Awareness/Challenges

Level of CDF sensitization and involvement of community members

Table 3: Level of CDF sensitization and involvement of community members

	Test Value = 0					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Do you sensitize or inform the community about what CDF is, its availability and its role in the community?	WDC 18.445	7	.001	3.375	2.94	3.81
	CDFC 12.702	8	.001	3.667	3.00	4.33
How actively do you involve the community in identifying, planning and execution of CDF projects?	WDC 13.748	7	.001	2.250	1.86	2.64
	CDFC 12.000	8	.001	2.000	1.62	2.38

The results of the one-sample test indicate a significant level of sensitization and involvement of community members (key informants) regarding Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in their community. With a test value of 0 and a significant p-value of .001 ($p < .001$), the mean difference in awareness is 3.375, 3.667, 2.250 and 2.000 respectively. Additionally, the 95% confidence interval of the difference ranges varying.

This suggests that, on average, WDCs and CDFC exhibit a high level of community sensitization and involvement regarding CDF. The fact that the mean difference is substantially greater than zero, combined with the narrow confidence interval, reinforces the confidence in the findings and suggests a consistent level of community engagement.

The significance of this community engagement cannot be overstated, as they serve as crucial sources of information and expertise in matters related to CDF projects. Their heightened active involvement likely stems from their active sensitization and involvement in community affairs.

CDF Awareness levels by community members

Table 4:CDF Awareness levels by community members

	t	df	Test Value = 0			
			Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
How familiar are you with the Constituency Development Fund (CDF)	30.000	28	.001	2.069	1.93	2.21
How aware are you of the use and disbursement of CDF in your community?	20.570	28	.001	2.345	2.11	2.58
How often do you get involved in identifying, selecting and implementing CDF projects in this community?	18.774	28	.001	2.069	1.84	2.29

The results of the one-sample test indicate a significant level of familiarity, awareness of use and disbursement among key informants regarding Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in their community. With a test value of 0 and a significant p-value of .000 ($p < .001$), the mean difference in awareness is 2.069percent, 2.345%and 2.069%respectively. Additionally, the 95%confidence interval of the difference ranges varying.

This suggests that, on average, key informants exhibit a high level of awareness regarding the utilization and allocation of CDF within their community. The fact that the mean difference is substantially greater than zero, combined with the narrow confidence interval, reinforces the confidence in the findings and suggests a consistent level of awareness among key informants.

The significance of this awareness among key informants cannot be overstated, as they serve as crucial

sources of information and expertise in matters related to CDF projects. Their heightened awareness likely stems from their active involvement in community affairs and their roles as conduits of information to other community members and stakeholders.

Table 5: Analysis of community involvement in identifying, and planning CDF projects by CDFC and WDCs

	Test Value = 0					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
How actively do you involve the community in identifying, planning and execution of CDF projects?	20.570	28	.001	2.00	1.62	2.38

The one-sample test results indicate a significant level of community involvement reported by members of the CDF Committee in identifying, planning, and executing Constituency Development Fund (CDF) projects within their community. With a test value of 0 and a significant p-value of .000 ($p < .001$), the mean difference in community involvement is 2.000. The 95%confidence interval of the difference ranges from 1.62 to 2.38.

These results suggest that, on average, members of the CDF Committee are highly active in involving the community in the various stages of CDF project implementation. The mean difference significantly exceeds the test value of 0, indicating a consistent pattern of active community engagement among committee members. Additionally, the narrow confidence interval further supports the reliability of these findings, indicating a high level of confidence in the reported level of community involvement.

The significant level of community involvement reported by the CDF Committee members is crucial for ensuring that projects are tailored to meet the specific needs and priorities of the community. By actively engaging community members in the identification, planning, and execution of projects, the committee can foster ownership, transparency, and accountability, ultimately leading to more effective and sustainable development outcomes.

Table 6: Analysis of community involvement in identifying, planning CDF projects by WDCs

One-Sample Test							
Test Value = 0							
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
How actively do you involve the community in identifying, planning and execution of CDF projects?		13.748	7	.000	2.250	1.86	2.64

The one-sample test results reveal a significant level of community involvement reported by members of the Ward Development Committee in identifying, planning, and executing Constituency Development Fund (CDF) projects within their community. With a test value of 0 and a significant p-value of .000 ($p < .001$), the mean difference in community involvement is 2.250. The 95% confidence interval of the difference ranges from 1.86 to 2.64.

These findings suggest that, on average, members of the Ward Development Committee are highly active in involving the community throughout the various stages of CDF project implementation. The mean difference significantly surpasses the test value of 0, indicating a consistent pattern of robust community engagement among committee members. Moreover, the narrow confidence interval further strengthens the reliability of these findings, suggesting a high level of confidence in the reported level of community involvement. The significant level of community involvement reported by the Ward Development Committee members is crucial for ensuring that projects align closely with the community's needs and priorities. By actively engaging community members in the identification, planning, and execution of projects, the committee can foster a sense of ownership, transparency, and accountability, ultimately leading to more effective and sustainable development outcomes.

4.3 Project Management Strategies

CDFC and WDCs Project Management and CDF Training

Table 7: Project Management and CDF Training

How often do you receive Project Management training.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all	17	100.0	100.0	100.0

The analysis of responses from the CDFC and WDC reveals that 100% of the committee members reported not receiving any Project Management or CDF training. This

finding underscores a potential gap in the skill set of CDFC and Ward Development Committee members, as effective project management is crucial for the successful planning, implementation, and monitoring of Constituency Development Fund (CDF) projects.

The absence of Project Management and CDF training among CDFC and Ward Development Committee members may lead to challenges in effectively managing CDF projects, including issues related to budgeting, scheduling, resource allocation, and risk management. Without proper training in project management principles and practices, committee members may struggle to ensure the efficient and timely completion of projects, potentially resulting in delays, cost overruns, and suboptimal project outcomes.

Trend analysis of the Utilization of CD in Chongwe (2020-2023)

Despite a total provision of K1,600,000 in the financial year ending December 2021, the Chongwe Constituency failed to fully utilize the allocated funds. In 2020, only eight projects were approved but not completed on time and scope out of the allocated K1,600,000, leaving a balance of K862,584 unutilized. Similarly, in 2021, only five projects were approved, resulting in K850,000 remaining unutilized for example the delayed completion of the Mwalubemba Clinic project in Chinkuli Ward, contracted to Geftech Construction and Suppliers Limited, exemplifies challenges in project execution. Despite a contract period of three months, the project remained incomplete as of September 2022.

Table 8: Trend Analysis of Chongwe CDF community projects

Year	CDF Amount Approved	Amount Used	Amount not used	Number of projects planned	Number of projects implemented	Number of Projects Complete	Number of projects not completed
2017 - 2020	1,600,000 (Not released)	0	0	Not indicated		0	2
2021	1,600,000	310,124	1,289,876	Not indicated		0	2
2022	25,739,911	10,849,100	15,904,710	Not indicated	16	11	5
2023	25,739,911	Not known	Not known	Not indicated	9	4	5

The table above depicts a trend in the utilization of CDF in the Chongwe constituency's education and health sectors based on the document review in the appendix. However, the statistics does not indicate how much was expressly earmarked for the education and health sectors. The data shows that, despite the availability of cash, there is a clear pattern of community project failure. According to data from 2022, funds intended for the construction of a 1x2 staff house at Mutamino Health Post at K730,979.45 in Chinkuli were misallocated and utilized to purchase a CDF vehicle.

Analysis of strategies used to from Chongwe

The observed underutilization of CDF funds and delays in project completion from 2020 to 2023 indicate shortcomings in current management strategies. From the reviews of Chongwe CDF documents as well as the Auditor Generals reports, it was clear that a number of community projects that had been started in the years before 2021 had been put on hold for a number of reasons. The increased funding to CDF and the subsequent implementation of some fiscal decentralization measures in the 2022 national budget provided the impetus to finish these previous initiatives. Inefficiencies in project planning, approval, funding and execution processes may have contributed to these challenges (Auditor General Report, 2020-2022).

In 2022, the management of community projects in Zambia implemented various strategies just like in 2020 and 2021 to facilitate the approval and execution of 4,168 projects across 156 constituencies, administered through 116 local authorities. One of the key strategies employed was a streamlined project selection process, wherein projects were chosen based on comprehensive assessments of community needs and alignment with national development priorities. This strategy aimed to ensure that resources were allocated to projects that would have the most significant impact on local development, (Auditor General CDF Report ,2022)

Another crucial strategy involved enhancing stakeholder engagement and participation throughout the project lifecycle. This approach entailed active involvement of community members, local authorities, NGOs, and other relevant stakeholders in project planning, decision-making, and monitoring. By fostering a collaborative approach, this strategy aimed to promote ownership of projects within the community and enhance their sustainability.

Resource allocation and management were also central strategies in the management of community projects in 2022. Efforts were made to allocate resources efficiently and transparently, with a focus on equitable distribution among constituencies. Additionally, robust oversight mechanisms were implemented to ensure that resources were utilized effectively, mitigating the risk of mismanagement or corruption.

In terms of infrastructure development, the construction of classroom blocks, health posts, crossing points, procurement of school desks, and drilling of boreholes were prioritized. These infrastructure projects were identified as critical for improving access to essential services and enhancing socio-economic development in local communities. By focusing on infrastructure development, the strategy aimed to address key challenges facing communities, such as inadequate educational facilities and limited access to healthcare and clean water.

Furthermore, community projects in 2022 emphasized the importance of sustainability and long-term impact.

Strategies were implemented to promote the sustainability of projects beyond their initial implementation phase, including capacity-building initiatives and community-led maintenance programs. By empowering communities to take ownership of projects and build their capacity to manage and maintain infrastructure, the strategy aimed to ensure the continued benefits of projects for years to come.

Equity and inclusivity were also key considerations in the management of community projects in 2022. Efforts were made to address the needs of marginalized and vulnerable groups, such as rural populations, women, children, and persons with disabilities. By prioritizing projects that benefited these groups, the strategy aimed to reduce disparities in access to essential services and promote inclusive development.

The observed underutilization of CDF funds and delays in project completion from 2020 to 2023 indicate shortcomings in current management strategies. From the reviews of Chongwe CDF documents as well as the Auditor Generals reports, it was clear that a number of community projects that had been started in the years before 2021 had been put on hold for a number of reasons. The increased funding to CDF and the subsequent implementation of some fiscal decentralization measures in the 2022 national budget provided the impetus to finish these previous initiatives. Inefficiencies in project planning, approval, funding and execution processes may have contributed to these challenges.

Table 9. Responses in various strategies used in managing CDF projects in Chongwe.

Theme	Verbatim Responses
Advertisement & Community Sensitization	R1 said to have been advertising through chongwe radio for the communities for them to submit community projects. R2 Sensitize the community on the goodness of CDF so that they can submit their proposals. R3 & R7 said. Sensitization of the community about CDF through posters and TV. R5 Sensitize the community about CDF through word of mouth and meetings. Though not much and adequate
Project Prioritization	R2 said Involving planners and buildings officers in advising what community project must be done. R6, R8 Engaging relevant stakeholders like teachers and health workers, and church. R10 sated going around zones to ask people and sensitize people about what they may want. We prioritize projects according to requests. R4. Projects are put in order of priority and community needs R17 underscored the practice of consulting with community members to understand their needs and preferences, followed by prioritizing projects based on these consultations.

Monitoring, Evaluation, & Budgeting	R3 stated inspecting contractors to ensure they are doing the right thing. R9 Reporting contractors not on site and doing the right thing to the council. R5 said Monitoring and evaluation of the project. Making Budget for the whole year than quarter. R2,R3, R7 and R8 indicated Visiting sites and talking to people on the ground.
Interdepartmental Coordination	R4 R9, R6 Indicated Interdepartmental and integration at the council. Use of 3 vehicles besides the CDF vehicle.
Adherence to Guidelines	R9 R17 R15 R13. We use the CDF guidelines. We use the full contract procurement system.
Capacity Building	R3, R4, R11,R10,R9, R13: stated there was no capacity building initiatives
Involvement of Local Councils	R18, R14 R11, R12 &R13 WDCs submit proposals to the Council and the council brings them to the CDF Committee for deliberation.

This table organizes the responses into themes, making it easier to understand the various strategies used in managing CDF projects in Chongwe constituency.

Advertisement & Community Sensitization:

- An emphasis on the importance of advertising to communities to encourage them to submit their projects. Chongwe constituency does this through various media platforms such TV, radio, posters and community meetings. Additionally, they highlighted the need for prioritization of these projects once submitted.

Project Prioritization:

- Chongwe constituency involves planners and building officers in the process, indicating their role in advising on which community projects should be undertaken. It also engages relevant stakeholders like teachers and health workers, and church in project prioritization.

Monitoring, Evaluation, & Budgeting

- The importance of monitoring and evaluating projects throughout their lifecycle was prominent. Several aspects like following project progress and contractor supervision, including ensuring that contractors are performing adequately, reporting on their progress, and engaging the community to encourage project monitoring are used. It was also discussed that the best M and E tools must be developed. Chongwe budgets yearly than quarterly on all community projects to avoid delays in disbursements of funds.

Interdepartmental Coordination:

- The need for coordination between different departments and integration of efforts at council offices was emphasized. CDF only has one vehicle which is not enough but Chongwe Town Council uses additional vehicles for project-related activities to cover large areas of the constituency.

Capacity Building

- Capacity building was sought not to be given a lot of attention, across the CDFC and WDCs. There were no training and capacity building initiatives among project implementers. The specific focus should be on developing a critical of the use and importance of CDF, project management, CDF Management Monitoring and financial management

Adherence to Guidelines:

- Adherence to CDF guidelines and the use of a full contract procurement system, ensuring that projects are executed according to established protocols and standards.

Involvement of Local Councils:

- The involvement of local councils was stated highlighting their role in proposal submission and deliberation at the CDF Committee level. Chongwe uses this mechanism because the CDFC has no office for the submission of project proposals.

Evaluation of the effectiveness of current strategies in managing community projects.

The strategies implemented in managing community projects in Chongwe, Zambia, appear to align with best practices and recommendations from relevant CDF guidelines although indicating other strategies not to have been used effectively. These strategies have worked well for chongwe constituency with the highest CDF burn rate at 74% in Lusaka province. Similar strategies have been used in constituencies with exceptional CDF burn rates like Bwacha 88%, Lufwanyama 97%, Lumezi 87%, Chembe 98%, Nakonde 92%, Solwezi West 81%, Chirundu 92% and Shangombo 93% (National Assembly, 2023).

The alignment with CDF principles indicates a foundational adherence to suggested procedures, which is likely to contribute to project success. This adherence could be a critical factor in obtaining high CDF burn rates since it confirms that projects are in line with national standards and priorities. The mention of some tactics not being employed effectively highlights the need for improvement and justifies why some community CDF projects are failing and enhances the need for a more nuanced understanding of whether specific techniques contribute to success and failure outcomes. This could entail delving deeper into the many types of strategies used, their implementation methods, and the contextual elements that influence their effectiveness.

The findings have major policy and practice implications. Understanding the causes of high CDF burn rates helps policymakers and implementors amplify these strategies. In conclusion, while the techniques used in Chongwe and similar constituencies have yielded positive outcomes, the suggestion that other tactics are not being

used successfully provides opportunities for additional improvement. Identifying and understanding these gaps can lead to the creation of a more robust framework for administering community CDF projects.

Analysis of key factors contributing to the failure of CDF projects in Zambia's education and health sectors.

The analysis of the Community Development Fund (CDF) projects in Zambia's education and health sectors from the document reviews (Auditor Generals reports, National Assembly, and other CDF reports) for the years 2020 to 2023 reveals several key factors contributing to their failure:

Failure to Spend CDF: The failure of Community Development Fund (CDF) projects in Zambia's education and health sectors in 2020 to 2023 can be attributed to various key factors. Firstly, despite the availability of funds and project approvals, local authorities encountered challenges in spending allocated funds efficiently. By the end of December 31, 2022 despite the increase in the fund only 40percent of approved projects were implemented, indicating a significant gap between allocations and actual spending. This failure to utilize funds effectively hindered project progress and delivery, (Auditor general CDF Report ,2022). In 2023 only 56.9percent of the CDF's total budget was utilized (Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, 2023)

Lack of capacity Building: the lack of capacity building among local authorities and implementing agencies contributed to project failures. Insufficient skills and capacity in planning, implementing, and monitoring projects led to delays, mismanagement of funds, and overall inefficiency. Additionally, poor project planning and management, including inaccurate cost estimation and unrealistic timelines, resulted in project delays and cost overruns.

Lack of transparency and accountability: Instances of corruption, embezzlement, or mismanagement of funds further undermined the success of development projects. Lack of transparency and accountability eroded public trust and diverted resources away from intended beneficiaries. Weak monitoring and evaluation mechanisms also played a role, as inadequate tracking of project progress hindered timely feedback and corrective actions. Despite guidelines mandating the submission of monitoring reports, fifteen local authorities failed to produce required reports by October 31, 2023. This failure to report on project progress and outcomes hindered accountability and transparency in project management.

Infrastructure and resource constraints: This bordered on issues such as limited transportation networks and shortages of skilled labor and materials, posed significant challenges to project implementation, particularly in remote or underserved areas. Furthermore, socioeconomic factors

like poverty, inequality, and cultural barriers impeded development efforts, leading to low community participation and difficulty in mobilizing local resources.

Misapplication of Funds and Deviations from Approved Projects: In 2022, disbursements totaling K7,312,795 were allocated to support designated activities and projects outlined in grant agreements within Zambia's Community Development Fund (CDF). These funds were intended to fuel progress and development in various communities across the country, particularly in crucial sectors like education and health. However, despite the clear delineation of project plans and objectives, some groups and cooperatives deviated from the agreed-upon projects without obtaining proper approval.

This misapplication of funds and deviation from project plans posed significant risks to the overall success of CDF projects. Firstly, it undermined the accountability mechanisms put in place to ensure that funds were used appropriately and effectively. Without adhering to the agreed-upon project plans, it becomes challenging to track the utilization of resources and evaluate project outcomes accurately. This lack of accountability erodes trust and confidence not only in the project implementers but also in the entire CDF framework.

Moreover, the misallocation of funds can have detrimental effects on the intended beneficiaries of these projects. Resources that were earmarked for essential activities, such as improving educational facilities or enhancing healthcare services, may have been diverted to unrelated endeavors. This diversion could result in delays or inadequacies in delivering vital services to communities, ultimately impacting their well-being and development.

Additionally, deviating from the agreed-upon projects without proper approval reflects a breakdown in governance and oversight mechanisms. It suggests weaknesses in monitoring and evaluation processes, as well as insufficient enforcement of project guidelines. Without robust oversight, there is a heightened risk of misuse of funds, corruption, and inefficiencies in project implementation, further exacerbating challenges already faced by communities.

Table 10: Responses on various factors that lead to CDF project failure in Chongwe.

Theme	Verbatim Responses
Delay in Funding & Disbursement	R1,R5,R7,R17: Delay in funding and disbursement of funds.
Lack of Project Management Skills	R3,R1, R14, R17: Not knowing how to manage CDF projects. Lack of knowledge among implementors of the project life cycle. Leadership of the implementors and their competencies and knowledge towards CDF projects.

Lack of Accountability & Transparency	R2, R3, R9: No transparency in the selection of contractors. We just see contractors coming and going on site. R8: Corruption in selection of contractors and misappropriation of funds.
Incompetency of Contractors	R8: Incompetency of Contractors and unseriousness of contractors. R15: Incompetence of contractors. R17: Withdraw of contractors without proper reasons. R19: Incompetency of Contractors. R13. Use of substandard materials
Political Interference/ Sabotage of Government Efforts	R1,R8,R16,R4, R17: Presidential and other directives on project choice and expenditure of CDF are becoming a practice. It needs to be reconsidered because it goes against the spirit of decentralization that CDF is meant to promote. Some politicians feel like CDF is their money R5: Sabotage government efforts. R14: Politicians from Opposition parties tend to fight projects to fight the government. R3, R12: Politicians with less leadership quality can't manage to develop a constituency.
Insufficient Funding/Allocation of the fund	R5,R7,R9: CDF should not be shared on equity, bigger constituencies like chongwe with a larger population density must be allocated more CDF. R15: Underfunding projects in the health sector. Some Projects are left behind and we are told money has finished. R4, R3, R15: Allocation towards the community projects must increase. R2: Limitations in funding towards Health and Education.
Lack of Community involvement and awareness of CDF	R11: No proper involvement and sensitization in the community. R13, R16: Limited involvement and sensitization. R1: Lack of much knowledge about CDF. They have heard of CDF but do not understand what it is exactly. R4: No much knowledge about CDF. R5: Sensitization... We are not doing enough to sensitize the community. R7: People are not well acquainted with the knowledge of these projects.
Lack of Proper Monitoring	R9: No proper supervision. R18: No proper monitoring of projects. R23: Lack of monitoring. WDCs don't have those powers. Weak M and E tools
Method of Work/Contract	R11, R13,R6: Use of labour-based contractors. Contractors do not feel ownership.
Leadership of MPs	R5, R9, R23: Lack of Leadership of MPs.

These responses offer insights into various factors faced in the failure of implementation of CDF projects, ranging from issues related to funding, accountability, and transparency to challenges with contractors, community involvement, and project management

Delay in Funding & Disbursement: Respondents pointed out delays in the release of funds as a significant obstacle in executing CDF projects. These delays can lead to project stagnation and increased costs, hampering project progress and stakeholder satisfaction.

Lack of Project Management Skills: Lack of knowledge among implementors of the project life cycle. Leadership of the implementors and their competencies and knowledge

towards CDF projects was reported to be one of the major cause of CDF project failure.

Lack of Accountability & Transparency: Transparency and accountability issues were raised, with concerns about discrepancies between reported and actual disbursements and corruption in selection of contractors. This lack of accountability can undermine trust in the CDF process, hindering community engagement and effective project implementation.

Incompetency of Contractors: The competency and commitment of contractors emerged as crucial factors affecting project outcomes. Complaints about delays, poor quality work, and even project abandonment were mentioned underscoring the importance of selecting reliable contractors for successful project execution.

Presidential and MP Directives/Sabotage of Government Efforts: Presidential and other directives on project choice and expenditure of CDF are becoming a practice. It needs to be reconsidered because it goes against the spirit of decentralization that CDF is meant to promote. It was noted that some politicians feel like CDF is their money while other respondents expressed concerns about political interference in CDF projects, particularly from opposition MPs who may have intentions to sabotage government efforts and treat CDF as though it were their own money.

Insufficient Funding/Allocation of the fund: Insufficient allocation towards community projects emerged as a significant challenge affecting the scope and quality of CDF projects. Limited financial resources can constrain the number of projects initiated and compromise project quality, hindering overall development efforts. Allocation towards the community projects must increase in order to boost the health and education sectors.

Lack of Community involvement and awareness of CDF: Inadequate community involvement and sensitization were identified as barriers to project success. Proper engagement with the community is essential for identifying local needs and ensuring project relevance. Communities do not feel part of these projects as there is still knowledge gap around the use of CDF which lead to project failure as there is no one to put contractors to task or even provide community labour support.

Lack of Proper Monitoring: An expression of concerns about the absence of adequate monitoring mechanisms for CDF projects was much pronounced. Effective monitoring crucial for detecting problems early which ensures project progress, and foster accountability.

Method of Work: The use of labour-based contractors was identified as a potential issue affecting project outcomes. Depending solely on labour-based methods may lead to inefficiencies and lower-quality work, impacting project success.

Addressing these underlying issues requires a

comprehensive approach, including capacity building, improved governance practices, enhanced transparency and accountability, and targeted interventions to address socioeconomic disparities. By tackling these challenges, future CDF projects in Zambia can enhance their effectiveness in promoting education and health outcomes at the community level.

Leadership of MP: Members of Parliament have a direct impact of project outcomes. The ability for a leader to be present and lead project committees is vital. Depending on the leadership qualities MPs are able to influence the approval of funds and projects on time.

Analysis of challenges faced by project committees in implementing CDF projects

Table 11. Responses on various challenges faced by implementing committees (CDFC and WDCs) in Chongwe.

Theme	Verbatim Responses
Contractor Issues	R1, R5, R7, R2. Difficult and slow contractors.
Limited Administrative Logistics	R2,R4,R3. We lack transportation. No enough transport to make us follow up projects. R5, R3R7: Vast chongwe geographical points
Limited Participation & Involvement	R5. Lack of committee members' participation in meetings. R6. Lack of involvement in the selection and implementation of projects. R3. Lack of motivation to work. Since we just volunteer R4. Members don't come for meetings because they feel they do the work for free. So, it's difficult to work.
Limited knowledge of project implantation and overall CDF	R17, R14, R13, R11: Mostly we ourselves don't understand project management and CDF in details. R17, R13: 2years and a half is not enough to successfully operate
Lack of Incentives & Recognition/ Lack of Budget for WDCs	R10, R11, R17, R14, R3, R15. No incentives for CDF Committee members. There are no wages and salaries, and we are told it's voluntary. Lack of Budget for WDCs R16, R 9: WDC has no budget for moving up and down to sensitize the community.
Operational Costs & Logistics	R17, R14, R13. No means to move and visit sites of operations in wards and Chongwe. We use our own money. R9, R10. No stationery and office, we use our own homes
Communication & Coordination	R12. No proper communication and coordination with the counsellors. R13. Poor road and network coverage. R14. Attendance of WDC members due to lack of commitment and communication

These responses highlight the various challenges CDFC and WDCs face, including issues with contractors, lack of funding and resources, motivation and participation, limited involvement, incentives and recognition,

operational costs and logistics, and communication and coordination.

Contractor Issues: Difficulties with contractors, indicate posing a challenge to be slow or inefficient. This suggests that contractor performance issues could lead to delays or subpar project outcomes, posing challenges for CDFC and WDCs in managing and implementing CDF projects.

Limited Administrative Logistics: Expression of concerns about the lack of transportation to make us follow up projects. Vast chongwe geographical points and limited administrative cots pose a challenge. This limitation inhibits CDFC's ability to effectively monitor and follow up on projects, as they may lack the means to travel to project sites or allocate resources as needed.

Limited Participation & Involvement: Several issues related to motivation and participation were mentioned. The respondent pointed out that WDC members may lack motivation due to volunteering, and this lack of motivation may lead to poor attendance at meetings. Without active participation, WDCs may struggle to effectively carry out their responsibilities.

Limited knowledge of project implantation and overall CDF/Limited tenure of Office: Several issues to do with lack of trainings as committee poses major challenges in implementing CDF projects. The tenure of CDFC and WDCs was limited and unsustainable. They were elected late into office and served less.

Limited Participation & Involvement: highlights of challenges related to participation and involvement in WDC activities. This includes issues such as low attendance at meetings and limited involvement in project selection and implementation, indicating potential difficulties in achieving community engagement and project ownership

Lack of Incentives & Recognition/ Lack of Budget for WDCs: An emphasis of the absence of incentives for WDC members, such as wages or salaries. This lack of recognition and compensation may affect members' motivation and commitment to their roles, impacting the overall effectiveness of WDCs in managing CDF projects.

WDCs' voluntary status is unsustainable and problematic. They play an important role in project selection, monitoring, and community awareness raising. WDCs receive applications, review them, and forward them to the Constituency Development Fund Committee; nevertheless, they receive no incentives. The majority of WDCs do not participate.

Operational Costs & Logistics: Challenges related to operational costs and logistics were mentioned, which included the lack of means to travel to project sites and the need for stationary and operational funds. Without adequate resources, WDCs may struggle to carry out essential activities, hindering project implementation.

Communication & Coordination: issues with

communication and coordination such as the lack of proper communication with counsellors and difficulties in sensitizing the community due to transportation limitations. Effective communication and coordination are essential for successful project implementation and community engagement.

These responses shed light on the various challenges faced by WDCs in managing and implementing CDF projects, encompassing issues related to contractor performance, funding and resources, motivation and participation, involvement, incentives and recognition, operational costs and logistics, and communication and coordination. Addressing these challenges is crucial for enhancing the effectiveness of WDCs and ensuring the successful implementation of CDF projects.

Addressing these capacity challenges requires a concerted effort to strengthen institutional and CDF frameworks, enhance transparency and accountability mechanisms, and build the capacity of local authorities responsible for project implementation. This may involve providing training and technical assistance to improve financial management practices, establishing robust monitoring and evaluation systems, and reinforcing adherence to regulatory requirements. By addressing these underlying issues, the capacity of implementing projects under the CDF can be enhanced, ensuring the efficient and effective utilization of resources for sustainable development outcomes.

These challenges collectively highlight the need for comprehensive oversight, capacity building, and enforcement of regulations within project committees tasked with implementing CDF initiatives. Addressing these issues requires a multifaceted approach, including improved monitoring mechanisms, enhanced financial management practices, and robust accountability measures. By identifying and addressing the root causes of these challenges, project committees can overcome obstacles and ensure the effective implementation of CDF projects for the benefit of communities and stakeholders.

Analysis of Optimum actionable strategies to increase the success rate of community CDF projects in the education and health sectors in Zambia.

Table 12. Responses on proposed actionable strategies to enhance the success rate of future CDF projects

Theme	Verbatim Responses
Needs-Based Allocation/Realignment Constituencies	R1,R4,R7. CDF should be issue/needs-based and consider population size. R2, R3. CDF must be given based on the needs of a constituency and ward. Bigger constituencies must be realigned to have equity in share.
Depoliticization of CDF	R3, R1, R5, R7. CDF should not be used as a political tool. R4. Depoliticize the fund.

Community Engagement & Sensitization	R5,R1, R6. Increase community engagement and sensitization. Engage independent (non political) organizations for sensitize the community together with politicians
Transparency & Accountability	R6, R16, R14. Transparency on details of contractors should be provided. R7. Let council involve WDCs in knowing the cost of projects and ensure transparency in project costing.
Capacity Building & Training	R8, R2. Proper training for CDFC and WDCs is necessary and should be enhanced R1, R4, Encourage and engagement in project management and CDF trainings for all implementing institutions including WDCs. R13. Training about CDF should be provided to committee members.
Collaboration with Government	R10, R13, R17, R10 Ministry of Health and Education must assist in procuring equipment from their budget. They must not leave everything to CDF for it is not sufficient. R11. CDF should have its own departmental office at the council to be run under a full independent unit. R14. CDF should be seen as a supplement to specific sectors like health and education. 15. Projects in the health and education sectors should be specified and prioritized.
Revision of CDF regulations and allocation towards community projects	R12, R1, R7. Requirements for CDF projects should be revised and simplified. More allocation must be provided to the health and education sectors.
Use of Local contractors/ Employment Opportunities	R2, R1, R4, R16. Youth trained from CDF in skills development should be employed as contractors for community projects within the constituency.

These responses highlight various strategies such as needs-based allocation, depoliticization, community engagement, transparency, capacity building, collaboration with government, revision of requirements, sector supplement, employment opportunities, financial planning, ownership, and empowerment that could enhance the success rate of future CDF projects in Zambia's education and health sectors.

Needs-Based Allocation: The necessity for CDF allocation to be based on the actual needs of communities rather than arbitrary criteria. By considering factors such as population size and localized requirements, resources can be directed towards addressing the most pressing issues within constituencies and wards, ensuring that CDF initiatives have a meaningful impact on community development. Bigger constituencies must be realigned to have equity in share for example according to Zamstats (2022), chongwe constituency has a population of 313,389 against Feira Constituency with only 35,933 which deprives communities of chongwe an equal share of CDF.

Depoliticization of CDF: There is a clear concern about the politicising CDF, stressing the importance of keeping the allocation and utilization of funds free from political influence. By depoliticizing the fund, decision-making processes can focus on addressing developmental needs impartially, fostering transparency, fairness, and

accountability in resource allocation.

Community Engagement & Sensitization: Emphasize the necessity of actively engaging and sensitizing communities about CDF projects by increasing community engagement and sensitization. Engage independent (non political) organizations for sensitize the community together with politicians. Increased community involvement ensures that projects align with local priorities, fostering a sense of ownership and accountability among community members. Effective engagement and sensitization efforts can enhance project effectiveness and sustainability.

Transparency & Accountability: Transparency and accountability was suggested as critical aspects of successful CDF management. Providing detailed information about contractors and project costs promotes transparency, while involving Ward Development Committees (WDCs) in project costing enhances accountability and oversight, reducing the risk of mismanagement or corruption.

Capacity Building & Training: Was recognized as a need CDFCs and WDCs to enhance their effectiveness in managing CDF projects. Proper training and team building ensures that committee members are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to carry out their responsibilities effectively. These teams must understand the use and existence of CDF as well as project management. For this to work effectively and efficiently, the CDFCs and WDCs must be composed of people capable of interpreting guidelines and proposals.

Collaboration with Government: There was an indication that collaboration with government ministries, particularly in sectors like health and education, is seen as vital for the successful implementation of CDF projects. By partnering with relevant authorities, CDF initiatives should be seen as can additional and mirage resources to expedite, and support ministries, leading to more impactful outcomes for communities.

Revision of Requirements: A suggestion to revise and simplifying the requirements for CDF projects to make the process more accessible and understandable for committee members. Additionally, providing training about CDF ensures that committee members are well-informed about their roles and responsibilities, facilitating smoother project implementation.

Sector Supplement & Prioritization: CDF should be viewed as a supplementary source of funding for specific sectors such as health and education. Prioritizing projects within these sectors ensures that resources are directed towards addressing critical needs, maximizing the impact of CDF investments on community development.

Use of Local contractors/ Employment Opportunities: A pitch to create employment opportunities for youth trained through CDF youth and skills development by employing them as contractors for community projects will create a symbiotic relation within the CDF framework. This

not only addresses unemployment issues but also utilizes local talent and resources for project implementation, fostering sustainable development within communities.

4.4 Discussion of Findings

In the Chongwe constituency, where primary data was collected, there was a general indication of CDF awareness and fair knowledge of its use; however, a probe revealed that people only hear about CDF but lack the much-needed understanding of what the grant is used for and how it benefits the community. According to research findings, CDF enabled communities to identify their most pressing problems, which were in some cases alleviated with the cooperation of community members; nevertheless, even after recognizing some of these requirements, little is done to solve them. This is demonstrated by the fact that when asked to describe the challenges Chalimbana Clinic and Bimbe School in Chongowe were having, inadequate and poor infrastructure and staff housing and the unavailability of water ranked first. At the time of the research the road to Chalimbana clinic which is one of the key health centers was in a bad state and the research found community volunteers mending it at their own cost. Classroom at Chainda and and Bimbe were insufficient with broken windows and doors. Measurements to build classroom blocks were taken and one year later nothing has been done.

Strategies in managing these projects.

To assess the effectiveness of the strategies outlined in managing community projects in Chongwe and a review of literature, it's crucial to consider their alignment with the goals of promoting community participation and prioritising project selection among others, ensures efficient resource allocation, and enhancing project sustainability. Additionally, insights from relevant literature provide context for understanding the potential impact and challenges associated with these strategies. The observation of some approaches that are not being used effectively emphasizes the need for change and explains why some community CDF programs are failing, as well as the need for a more nuanced understanding of whether specific techniques contribute to success or failure outcomes. This may include diving deeper into the many sorts of techniques used, their execution methods, and the contextual factors that influence their efficacy.

Streamlined Project Selection Process

The strategy of streamlining project selection based on comprehensive community needs assessments aligns with best practices in participatory development. Studies such as [Susiku \(2020\)](#) emphasize the importance of stakeholder involvement in project identification and planning for effective resource allocation. Further the local governance theory postulates that for grassroots development projects to

be successful, there should be a harmonious interaction between local governance structures, community involvement, and resource allocation (Brown, 2017). This suggests that a community-driven approach to project selection can lead to more relevant and impactful interventions.

Enhanced Stakeholder Engagement

Actively involving community members, local authorities, and other stakeholders throughout the project lifecycle is essential for promoting ownership and sustainability, as highlighted in the Chongwe strategies and literature. Phiri's (2016) underscores the importance of addressing factors like lack of awareness and poor attitudes toward participation, which can hinder effective stakeholder engagement. Stakeholder theory also advocates for the happiness of all those involved, with equal benefits sought. It calls for the representation of various individuals and groups who have an impact on the achievement of the set goals and believes that each stakeholder has varying levels of influence and interest with the sole goal of increasing stakeholder satisfaction (Agle & Wood, 1997). Effective communication and engagement strategies, as advocated in the Chongwe approach, can help overcome these challenges and enhance project outcomes.

Efficient Resource Allocation and Management

The emphasis on equitable resource distribution and robust oversight mechanisms in Chongwe's strategies reflects the importance of transparent and accountable resource management. Susiku's (2020) findings suggest that effective allocation of funds and monitoring mechanisms contribute to the utilization of CDF for public projects. The participatory model requires development planners, practitioners, and researchers to abandon the traditional top-down decision-making concept to define and address problems for the target community. From project identification, prioritizing, planning, implementation, evaluation, and monitoring, all stakeholders, including government and civil society, work with the local community. The participatory approach is justified by the fact that it offers individuals a sense of belonging to development efforts and programs, which can lead to increased acceptance of development projects (Davids, et al., 2005). Therefore, although with some instances of a lack of transparency in Chongwe's approach to project implementation literature suggests that transparent resource management practices are essential for project success.

Infrastructure Development and Sustainability

Prioritizing infrastructure projects that address essential service gaps aligns with the goal of promoting socio-economic development, as emphasized in both the Chongwe strategies and existing literature. Moreover, the focus on sustainability through capacity-building initiatives and community-led maintenance programs reflects a long-

term perspective essential for ensuring the continued benefits of projects, as noted in studies like Phiri (2016).

Equity and Inclusivity

Addressing the needs of marginalized groups is essential for promoting inclusive development, as highlighted in the Chongwe strategies and supported by literature. Phiri's (2016) study identifies factors such as poverty and inadequate information dissemination as barriers to participation among marginalized communities. Strategies that prioritize the needs of these groups can contribute to reducing disparities and promoting more equitable development outcomes. This resonates with the theory of Local Governance and Development. This theory postulates that for grassroots development projects to succeed, there should be a harmonious interaction between local governance structures, community involvement, and resource allocation (Brown, 2017).

The strategy of streamlining project selection process based on comprehensive community needs assessments aligns closely with the principles of local governance and development theory. By involving local communities in the identification and planning of projects, the approach ensures that development initiatives are rooted in locally identified priorities. This participatory approach fosters a sense of ownership and empowerment among community members, promoting effective resource allocation and utilization.

Furthermore, the emphasis on enhancing stakeholder engagement throughout the project lifecycle aligns with the theory's emphasis on community involvement. Actively involving community members, local authorities, and other stakeholders promotes collaboration and ensures that projects meet the diverse needs of the community.

Additionally, the focus on equitable resource allocation and robust oversight mechanisms reflects the theory's emphasis on transparent and accountable resource management by local governance structures. By ensuring that resources are allocated fairly and utilized effectively, the approach contributes to the achievement of development goals and fosters trust between communities and local authorities.

Key factors contributing to the failure of CDF projects in Zambia's education and health sectors.

The failure of CDF projects in Zambia's education and health sectors, as outlined in the provided analysis, can be attributed to various key factors such as delayed funding, lack of accountability and transparency, incompetency of contractors, political interference, insufficient funding, lack of community involvement, lack of proper monitoring, lack of knowledge and sensitization, inappropriate methods of work, misallocation of funds, and misapplication of funds. These factors contribute to project delays, mismanagement, and ultimately, failure to achieve desired outcomes as

observed by (Kafunda, 2017).

Drawing from existing literature, particularly the works of Munns and Bjeirmi (1996), Thomas & Fernandez (2008), Papke-Shields et al. (2010), Ika (2009), and Taherdoost & Keshavarzsaleh (2015), several insights can be gleaned regarding the management and success criteria of projects:

Project Management Practices:

Munns and Bjeirmi emphasizes the importance of effective project management in controlling project operations to achieve objectives in a coordinated and cost-effective manner. This suggests that inadequate project management practices, such as poor planning, monitoring, and control, can lead to project failures.

Project Success Criteria:

Keup (2021) identifies three main success criteria for projects: cost, scope, and time. Projects are considered successful if they are completed within budget, meet the specified scope, and are delivered on time. Failures in CDF projects in Zambia, such as delayed funding, misallocation of funds, and inappropriate project management, directly impact these success criteria. As observed in the findings above most projects from 2020 to 2023 in the health and education sectors were completed beyond the timeframe with a few out of cost and scope.

Risk Management:

Taherdoost and Keshavarzsaleh (2015) highlight the importance of assessing and managing project risks to prevent significant losses and project failure. The lack of effective monitoring, inadequate project planning, and misallocation of funds in CDF projects indicate a failure in risk management practices, leading to project failures.

Stakeholder Engagement and Transparency:

Thomas and Fernandez (2008) emphasize the role of stakeholder engagement and transparency in project success. Lack of community involvement, political interference, and transparency issues in CDF projects in Zambia hinder effective stakeholder engagement and erode trust, contributing to project failures.

Capacity Building:

Successful project management requires a combination of hard and soft managerial skills (Taherdoost & Keshavarzsaleh, 2015). While technical project management skills are essential, soft skills such as communication, leadership, and stakeholder management are equally important. Failures in CDF projects, such as incompetency of contractors and lack of community involvement, may stem from deficiencies in both hard and soft skills among project stakeholders. The discussion on the failure of Constituency Development Fund (CDF) projects in Zambia's education and health sectors and its correlation with various key factors, as outlined in the provided analysis, resonates with several theories of local governance, stakeholder engagement, and participatory development

approaches. Firstly, the Theory of Local Governance and Development underscores the significance of harmonious interaction between local governance structures, community involvement, and resource allocation for the success of grassroots development projects. In the case of CDF projects, factors such as delayed funding, lack of accountability, and political interference highlight deficiencies in local governance and resource management, impeding project success. Additionally, Stakeholder Theory emphasizes the importance of stakeholder engagement and representation in project management. The failure of CDF projects to involve and address the needs of various stakeholders, including communities, government, and NGOs, underscores shortcomings in stakeholder engagement practices. Furthermore, the Participatory Approach Theory advocates for local decision-making and community involvement in development efforts. The failure of CDF projects to effectively engage communities and prioritize local needs suggests a departure from participatory development principles, hindering project acceptance and sustainability. These theories provide valuable insights into the systemic challenges underlying the failure of CDF projects and underscore the need for improved governance, stakeholder engagement, and participatory approaches to enhance the effectiveness and impact of community development initiatives in Zambia.

Challenges faced by project committees in implementing CDF projects

The challenges faced by project committees in implementing Community Development Fund (CDF) projects, as highlighted in the provided analysis, encompass a range of issues including transparency and accountability, capacity constraints, lack of funding and resources, motivation and participation, limited involvement, incentives and recognition, operational costs and logistics, and communication and coordination. These challenges are consistent with broader literature on project management and community development. Here's a discussion of these challenges in relation to existing literature:

Transparency and Accountability

The lack of transparency and accountability in the utilization of CDF funds, as observed in the failure to address unutilized funds and hold responsible parties accountable, aligns with literature emphasizing the importance of these aspects in project management (Thomas & Fernandez, 2008; Taherdoost & Keshavarzsaleh, 2015). Transparency ensures that stakeholders have access to information about fund utilization, while accountability holds individuals and institutions responsible for their actions, promoting trust and credibility in project implementation.

Capacity Constraints

Capacity constraints faced by project committees,

including issues with funding, resources, and operational costs, resonate with literature highlighting the importance of institutional capacity in project management (Munns & Bjeirmi, 1996; Keup, 2021). Building institutional capacity involves providing adequate resources, training, and support to enable effective project implementation and management, addressing challenges related to resource constraints and operational limitations.

Motivation and Participation

Challenges related to motivation and participation among project committee members reflect the significance of stakeholder engagement and commitment in project success (Thomas & Fernandez, 2008; Taherdoost & Keshavarzsaleh, 2015). Motivated and engaged stakeholders are essential for driving project activities, fostering community participation, and ensuring project sustainability.

Incentives and Recognition

The absence of incentives and recognition for project committee members underscores the importance of incentivizing participation and acknowledging contributions in project management (Thomas & Fernandez, 2008). Providing incentives and recognition can enhance motivation, commitment, and accountability among stakeholders, fostering a culture of ownership and responsibility in project implementation.

Communication and Coordination

Challenges with communication and coordination within project committees highlight the critical role of effective communication and coordination mechanisms in project management (Munns & Bjeirmi, 1996; Taherdoost & Keshavarzsaleh, 2015). Clear communication channels and coordination mechanisms facilitate collaboration, information sharing, and decision-making, contributing to project success and stakeholder satisfaction. The challenges faced by project committees in implementing Community Development Fund (CDF) projects in Zambia, as highlighted in the analysis, align with various theories of local governance, stakeholder engagement, and participatory development approaches. Firstly, the Theory of Local Governance and Development underscores the importance of harmonious interaction between local governance structures, community involvement, and resource allocation for project success. The challenges such as transparency and accountability issues within project committees reflect a departure from this theory's principles, as effective local governance requires transparency and accountability to ensure the proper utilization of resources and stakeholder representation. Furthermore, the Stakeholder Theory emphasizes the significance of stakeholders' involvement and their satisfaction in achieving project objectives. Challenges related to motivation, participation, incentives, and recognition among project committee members highlight the importance of engaging

stakeholders effectively to foster a sense of ownership and commitment to project success. These challenges suggest a gap in aligning project management practices with stakeholder interests and needs, hindering effective project implementation.

Moreover, the Civic Culture Theory stresses the importance of fostering political participation, accountability, and trust in government to promote stable democracy. Transparency and accountability issues within project committees directly undermine citizens' trust in government institutions and the effectiveness of democratic processes. The failure to address these challenges can erode public confidence and hinder community participation in development initiatives. Additionally, the Dispatching Model/Theory emphasizes the significance of efficient task scheduling and resource allocation in project management. Delays in project funding allocation and operational logistics, as observed in CDF projects, reflect inefficiencies in task scheduling and resource management, highlighting the need for improved coordination and planning mechanisms within project committees.

Proposed actionable strategies to enhance the success rate of future CDF projects in Zambia's education and health sectors

Needs-Based Allocation: Allocating CDF funds based on the actual needs of communities ensures that resources are directed towards addressing the most pressing issues, maximizing the impact of investments on community development (Keup, 2021).

Depoliticization of CDF: Keeping the allocation and utilization of funds free from political influence fosters transparency, fairness, and accountability in resource allocation, ensuring that decisions are driven by developmental needs rather than political agendas (Thomas & Fernandez, 2008).

Community Engagement & Sensitization: Actively engaging and sensitizing communities about CDF projects promotes ownership, accountability, and sustainability, aligning projects with local priorities and enhancing their effectiveness (Munns & Bjeirmi, 1996).

Transparency & Accountability: Enhancing transparency and accountability mechanisms within the CDF framework ensures that stakeholders have access to information about project progress and expenditures, fostering trust and credibility in project implementation (Taherdoost & Keshavarzsaleh, 2015).

Capacity Building & Training: Providing training and capacity building initiatives for project committees equips stakeholders with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively manage and implement CDF projects, enhancing their efficiency and impact (Thomas & Fernandez, 2008).

Collaboration with Government: Collaborating with

government ministries and relevant authorities leverages additional resources, expertise, and support, enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of CDF initiatives (Munns & Bjeirmi, 1996). The CDF is a government program that provides funds to Members of Parliament (MPs) for the implementation of development projects in their respective constituencies. By involving citizens in the identification, planning, and implementation of development projects in their communities, the program aims to promote participatory democracy and citizen empowerment.

Revision of Requirements: Revising and simplifying the requirements for CDF projects improves accessibility and understanding for committee members, facilitating smoother project implementation and reducing barriers to participation (Keup, 2021).

Sector Supplement & Prioritization: Prioritizing projects within critical sectors like health and education ensures that resources are directed towards addressing fundamental needs, maximizing the impact of CDF investments on community well-being and development (Thomas & Fernandez, 2008).

Use of Local contractors/ Employment Opportunities: CDF guidelines (2022) provides skills development with constituencies. Youth trained in such skills must be engaged as contractors for community projects. Creating employment opportunities for youth through CDF programs not only addresses unemployment but also utilizes local talent and resources for project implementation, fostering community empowerment and sustainable development (Munns & Bjeirmi, 1996).

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

The failure rate as determined by trend analysis indicates a potentially problematic downward trajectory that could impede progress in the critical fields of health and education. Even with the increase in the CDF allocation, the continuation of this negative trend suggests a slowdown in the development of these areas and therefore depict a waste of government efforts and resources. If this trend continues unchecked, it predicts a future marked by slow advancements, which would ultimately make the use of government resources and efforts ineffective.

The primary objective of this study was to critically analyse the factors leading to the failure of CDF projects in Zambia, particularly in the education and health sectors. The investigation was rooted in a conceptual framework that emphasized community involvement, beneficiary awareness, resource allocation, and governance systems as pivotal factors impacting project success or failure.

Through a mixed-methods approach, the study revealed that several intertwined factors contribute significantly to the high rate of project failures. First, community

involvement and beneficiary awareness as well knowledge about purpose of CDF among community members and WDCs were found to be notably low, which correlates with the observed inefficiencies in project outcomes. This lack of engagement and awareness among the beneficiaries often resulted in misaligned project objectives and poor adoption of the projects, underpinning the necessity for more robust community engagement strategies.

Moreover, the study highlighted critical deficiencies in resource allocation and governance systems. In many cases, resources were either misallocated, underutilized or insufficiently allocated, compounding the challenges faced during project implementation. This was further exacerbated by weak governance systems, where accountability and transparency were often lacking, leading to a distrust in the management and execution of the projects. Incompetency of contractors, the absence of project managers, sabotaging government efforts as well as presidential or MP pronouncements were evident as causes of project failures.

Drawing on the theoretical insights from the study's conceptual framework, including the participatory approach and stakeholder theory, it becomes evident that successful CDF project implementation in Zambia requires a concerted effort to enhance community engagement, improve transparency and accountability in resource allocation, and strengthen governance mechanisms. These steps are crucial not only for aligning projects with the genuine needs of the community but also for ensuring their successful completion and sustainability.

To this effect, addressing these systemic issues holistically is vital for reversing the current trend of CDF project failures. By fostering a more inclusive approach to project planning, enhancing the clarity and visibility of resource flows, and bolstering the governance framework overseeing these projects, there is a strong potential to significantly improve the success rate of CDF initiatives in Zambia's education and health sectors. This approach not only aligns with best practices in project management but also resonates well with the broader goals of social and economic development within the framework of Zambian public policy.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on research findings and conclusion for this study, along with insights from relevant literature, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Enhance Capacity Building Initiatives:
 - Implement comprehensive training programs for project committees to improve their skills in project planning, financial management, monitoring, and evaluation.
 - Provide technical assistance and mentorship to build the capacity of local authorities and implementing

agencies in effective project management practices.

- Government agencies responsible for community development, in collaboration with educational institutions and NGOs, should implement comprehensive training programs for project committees.
2. Strengthen project Leadership, Transparency and Accountability Mechanisms:
 - Establish a CDF unit at the local council to focus only on CDF initiative as the fund is becoming complex each year. This will enable effective monitoring of the fund.
 - Establish robust monitoring and reporting systems to track project progress, expenditures, and outcomes, ensuring transparency in fund utilization.
 - Employ Monitoring and Evaluation officers who will engage with independent M & E to track and evaluate project progress.
 - Implement clear guidelines and procedures for fund allocation and utilization, coupled with stringent oversight mechanisms to hold stakeholders accountable for their actions.
 - Employ project managers at every council to take lead of projects from initiation stage.
 3. Promote Community Participation and Stakeholder Engagement:
 - Facilitate meaningful engagement of local communities, authorities, and other stakeholders throughout the project lifecycle.
 - Foster a culture of ownership and empowerment by involving communities in decision-making processes, project planning, and implementation.
 - Conduct impactful knowledge sharing with the community around CDF, this can be done by independent agencies like the church, civil societies as well the private sector to leverage resources and expertise for project implementation.
 - Prioritize infrastructure projects that address essential service gaps and promote long-term socio-economic development.
 - Implement capacity-building programs and community-led maintenance initiatives to ensure the sustainability of projects beyond their initial implementation phase.
 - Empower youths who are trained in CDF skills development as contractors for community projects.
 4. Enhance Financial Management Practices:
 - Implement stringent financial controls, including regular audits and compliance with regulatory requirements, to prevent mismanagement and corruption.
 - Establish mechanisms for the timely acquittal of funds and recovery of unutilized resources to optimize resource allocation and project effectiveness.
 5. Address Specific Challenges Faced by Project Committees:
 - For all projects to succeed, providing adequate funding and resources to address operational costs, logistics, and capacity constraints faced by project committees is a major milestone to prioritise.
 - Introduce incentives (salaries and allowances) and recognition schemes to motivate and incentivize both CDFCs and WDCs to enhance their commitment and participation.
 - WDCs and CDFC tenure of office should align with the tenure of office for MPs to ensure sustainability and effective management of the fund.
 6. Review and Adapt Strategies Based on Lessons Learned:
 - Continuously monitor and evaluate the outcomes of implemented strategies to identify areas for improvement.
 - Regularly review project management practices and adapt strategies based on lessons learned and evolving community needs.
 7. Ensure Political Neutrality and Depoliticization:
 - Safeguard the CDF from political sabotage and presidential pronouncements as it defeats the decentralization agenda on which CDF was founded and ensure that project allocation and implementation are driven by developmental needs rather than political agendas.
 - Promote impartiality and fairness in decision-making processes to build trust and credibility among stakeholders.
 8. Facilitate Knowledge Sharing and Learning:
 - Encourage knowledge sharing and exchange of best practices among project committees, local authorities, and other stakeholders across constituencies. This can be done through provincial workshops among CDF implementers
 - Foster a culture of continuous learning and improvement to enhance the effectiveness of CDF projects over time.
 9. Realignment of Vast constituencies
 - Some constituencies are too vast in geographical and population density to receive equal amounts with small constituencies.
 - Dividing CDF by population density will enhance utilization and equity.
 - Or realignment of larger constituencies like chongwe

to ensure equal demand as population size determines the levels of infrastructure and developmental demand.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

The study was supposed to cover 6 constituencies with a thorough primary data collection which might have benefited from a broader geographical coverage, considering variations in project success and failures across different constituencies. However, this was not done due to limited time and budget as the research was self-funded by the researcher.

Further at the time of the research the CDFC and the WDCs were out of office as their 2years and half tenure of office had elapsed and elections were not done for new officers. This posed a challenge to conduct interviews because of them cited not being in office anymore but only acting.

5.4 Further Research

Future research should aim to include a wider array of constituencies to capture a more diverse set of experiences and outcomes with CDF projects.

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Declaration of Competing Interests

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