

Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection



Promoting Faith and Justice

Enhancing Transparency, Accountability & Community Participation in the CDF Implementation



Policy Brief

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1.0 Executive Summary

Following the enhancement of the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) budgetary allocation from K1.6 million to K25.7 million in 2022, and subsequently to K28.3 million in 2023, civil society expressed concern at the lack of mechanisms for transparency, accountability and meaningful inclusion of community members in the CDF processes. In response, the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR) conducted a systematic Constituency Development Fund (CDF) monitoring exercise of the implementation of CDF in May 2023 in four select constituencies (Chisamba, Kasama Central, Masaiti and Livingstone Central) to advocate for improved transparency, accountability and community participation in the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) processes and subsequently safeguard this development tool from corruption, wastefulness, politicisation, elite capture, and derailing from the CDF's objectives. This brief highlights key findings, challenges and recommendations of JCTR's CDF monitoring exercise

2.0 Introduction

The monitoring exercise aimed to conduct oversight of the CDF processes by assessing the transparency, accountability, community participation and challenges in the implementation of CDF in different constituencies across the country. Focusing on the 2022 CDF implementation cycle, JCTR engaged with three major stakeholders including four Local Authorities, 51 Ward Development Committee (WDCs), and 1,560 community members from the targeted constituencies. The monitoring methodology used complementary approaches to collect independent data; a quantitative approach which included numerical values and relationships and the qualitative approach which focused on obtaining descriptive information from different levels of stakeholders. The dual method technique provided a more in-depth understanding of the implementation of CDF in these areas. JCTR identified, trained and deployed forty (40) monitors, ten in each constituency in May 2023 to collect data from the selected stakeholders on the transparency, accountability and community participation in the CDF processes using customised checklist forms.

Whilst cognizant of the positive impact of CDF in communities, JCTR identified several pertinent issues during this activity. Firstly, contract awarding processes remain a major transparency concern in CDF implementation. Many community members i.e 982 of 1560 (63%) and WDCs (75%) stated that they did not attend public bid opening or awarding ceremonies. Meanwhile, Local Authorities and WDCs experienced a myriad of challenges in producing and disseminating monitoring reports due to limited resources and capacity. Overall, the majority (59%) of community members opined that the CDF process is not fair and transparent.

Secondly, with low approval rates on CDF proposals, applications and late disbursement of funds, the provision of feedback on application outcomes is instrumental to enhancing the accountability of the Fund. Adequate and timely feedback on application outcomes to WDCs and community members is essential to CDF stakeholders' confidence in the implementation processes. However, only 47% of the WDCs indicated receiving feedback from the Local Authorities on rejected proposals and applications. For successful applicants, 63% of the

WDCs indicated that it took longer than three months to receive the funds from the time of the ministerial approval. A total of 63% of the community members felt that there was no accountability in CDF.

Lastly, although community members are the key stakeholders and main beneficiaries of CDF, only 33% participated in CDF meetings on the application or selection of community projects. This was largely due to financial challenges to meet transport and meal costs by 68% of the WDCs whilst mobilising community meetings and community members to monitor projects in their wards. All WDCs work on a voluntary basis as guided by the Local Government Act No. 2 of 2019.

2.1 Objectives Of Monitoring CDF

- To monitor transparency, accountability and community participation in the implementation of CDF in the selected constituencies of Zambia.
- To identify the challenges different stakeholders were facing in the Implementation CDF with respect to transparency, accountability and community participation.
- To provide recommendations that would enhance transparency, accountability and community participation in the implementation of CDF in Zambia.

3.0 Findings On Transparency In The Implementation of CDF

3.1.CDF Contract Award Process

- Three (3) of four (4) (75%) of the Local Authorities responded that there were public announcements of the contractors who had applied to implement projects. The adverts were in the form of public announcements using megaphones (25%) and posters (50%).
- 78% of the WDCs who participated in JCTR CDF monitoring exercise did not attend the public bid opening ceremony, while 22% of the WDCs responded that they had attended the public bid opening ceremony.
- 63% did not attend any CDF contract bid opening ceremonies, 9% attended CDF contract bid opening ceremonies, while 28% of the respondents shared that there were no CDF contract bid opening or contract awarding ceremonies in their communities (especially in the rural wards).

3.2. Appeal Systems for Rejected CDF Proposals and Applications

- The findings showed that half (2 of 4) of the Local Authorities respondents reported that there was an appeal system for rejected projects and proposals. Furthermore 25% (1 of 4) indicated that there was an appeal lodged on a rejected project.
- 59% of the 51 WDCs responded that there were no appeal systems for rejected community projects at the CDFC stage, while 39% stated there were appeal systems. The remaining 2% indicated that the absence of appeal systems was due to the absence of rejected projects.

3.3 CDF Implementation Record Keeping at the Local Authorities

- All four of the Local Authorities and the CDFCs that participated indicated that they had records on CDF implementation.
- 76% of the WDC respondents indicated that they had a record of proposals submitted to the CDFC in 2022, while the remaining 24% reported that they had no such records on the CDF community projects.

3.4 CDF Monitoring Report Dissemination

- 25% (1 out of 4) of the Local Authorities respondents reported that they shared either one or both of the monitoring progress reports with the WDCs.
- 76% of the WDC respondents indicated that they had not received the semi-annual progress monitoring reports (SAMPR) from the CDFC and 63% of the WDCs did not receive the annual progress monitoring reports (AMPR) annual monitoring progress report from the CDFC in 2022 on community projects.
- 86% had not seen any monitoring reports on CDF from the WDCs or CDFCs, whereas only 14% had seen or received these reports.

4.0 Findings On Accountability In The Implementation Of CDF

4.1 Submission of CDF Projects

- 50% (2 Local Authorities) responded that the empowerment project implementation commenced within a month of the ministerial approval (successful applicants receiving CDF money), while the other 50% responded that the empowerment project implementation commenced within two months from the time of the ministerial approval (successful applicants receiving the CDF money) in the 2022 cycle.

4.2 Approval Rate for the Empowerment Applications

- 51 WDCs submitted about 1,458 proposals (690 empowerment proposals on youth, 729 proposals on women and 39 proposals on PWDs) to the local authority. Out of these, 446 proposals were approved (160 youth, 267 women, 19 PWDs) translating to a 31% approval rate

Project Type	CDFC Approval	WDC Approval
Community-based projects	26%	26%
Youth, women, PWDs empowerment projects	30%	31%
Secondary boarding school bursaries	66%	76%
Skills development training bursaries	56%	68%

4.3 Providing Feedback on Rejected Proposals

- 50% (2 of 4) of the Local Authorities respondents reported that they provided feedback to the Ward Development Committees on rejected proposals and unsuccessful CDF applications.
- 25% (1 out of 4) of the Local Authorities indicated that they did not provide feedback on rejected proposals because the Constituency did not have any rejected proposal, while only 25% (1 out of 4) of Local Authorities indicated that they did not provide feedback on rejected proposals.

4.4 Providing Feedback on Rejected Community Proposals and Unsuccessful Applicants at the Ward Level

- 53% of the WDC respondents shared that feedback was not provided on rejected community projects, while only 41% of the WDC respondents indicated that feedback was provided to them by the CDFC on the rejected proposals.
- 6% of the WDC respondents shared that there were no rejected projects in their wards, therefore, they did not need feedback on rejected proposals

4.5 CDF Monitoring and Report Production

- 75% (3 of 4) of the Local Authorities indicated that either the 2022 Semi-Annual Monitoring Report (SAMR) or Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) for community projects were not available, while only 25% (¼) of the Local Authorities stated that these monitoring reports were available.
- Only 1 of 4 (25%) Local Authorities respondents noted that both the 2022 SAMPR and AMPR were available, while 3 of 4 (75%) noted unavailability of the reports, with each of them stating varying reasons for the non-production of the Monitoring Progress Reports (MPR).
- 100% (all four) of the Local Authorities respondents indicated that they monitored the implementation of the community projects in their districts. Furthermore, all the four Local Authorities said that there were challenges to monitoring and implementing the CDF projects effectively.
- 65% of the Ward Development Committee respondents indicated that they had monitored the implementation of community projects, while 35% stated that they did not monitor the community projects.

4.6 Skills Development Training Bursaries

- 37% of the WDC respondents reported that the monitoring committee at District level monitored the bursary programme, while the majority 63% indicated that they were not aware of any monitoring at the district level.

4.7 Community Members Participating in CDF Ward Monitoring

- 74% did not monitor the implementation of CDF projects in their communities, while only 26% of the community member respondents indicated that they had monitored the implementation of the community projects.

4.8 Producing the Monitoring CDF Reports

- All the WDCs were not producing and submitting the monthly monitoring reports (written)

4.9 The Annual Progress Reports

- Only 25% (1 out of 4) Local Authority respondents reported that the annual monitoring report was available, while the remaining 75% confirmed that it was unavailable.

4.10 Community Perception on Accountability in CDF implementation

- 63% of the community members who participated in the JCTR CDF monitoring exercise responded that the CDF implementation was not accountable, while only 37% of the respondents shared that the CDF implementation was accountable.

4.11 Community Members Participation in the Implementation of CDF in the Selected Constituencies

- 86% of the WDCs were struggling to provide such platforms to the community members, while only 14% indicated that they were managing to provide such platforms.
- 33% of the community member attended meetings, 44% did not attend community meetings on CDF, while 23% indicated that there were no community meetings on CDF held.
- 74% of the respondents indicated that they did not monitor CDF implementation in their communities, while only 26% of the community members interviewed responded that they had monitored community projects in their communities.

4.12 Awareness Levels on CDF Processes and Implementation among Communities

- 86% of the community members interviewed shared that they had heard about CDF, while only 14% shared that they had not heard about CDF.
- 60% of the community members had seen or heard an advert on applying for CDF, while only 40% stated that they did not see or hear an advert on applying for CDF

5.0 Challenges In The Implementation Of CDF

5.1 Local Authority

- 50% of the Local Authority respondents indicated a challenge of the quality of work by the contractors implementing the projects (not adhering to construction standards and specifications).
- 75% of the Local Authority respondents shared that they faced a challenge of delays in

completion of projects (projects not completed within the agreed time frames)

- 25% of the Local Authority respondents shared that they faced a challenge of high construction costs.
- 75% of the Local Authorities were facing challenges of producing CDF reports, (quarterly, semi-annual and annual), effectively monitoring projects and implementing CDF projects due human resource capacities (limited number of staff at the Local Authorities).

5.2 The Ward Development Committee

- 68% of the WDCs face a financial challenge to meet their obligations of mobilising community meetings, keeping records (stationery costs) and monitoring projects in their wards (transport and meal costs).
- 34% of the WDCs faced capacity challenges (monitoring skills, reporting skills and facilitation skills).
- 36% of the WDCs faced a time constraint (business, work, farming, family etc).
- WDCs shared the challenge of struggling to mobilise a ward monitoring
- Delays in the commencement of projects and empowerment programmes.
- Little advertisement on public bid opening meetings.

5.3 The Local Community

- 67% of community members not participating in community meetings on CDF and involvement in identifying community needs;
- 74% of community members not monitoring implementation of CDF projects
- Low Approval Rates

Project Type	CDFC Approval	WDC Approval
Community-based projects	26%	26%
Youth, women, PWDs empowerment projects	30%	31%
Secondary boarding school bursaries	66%	76%
Skills development training bursaries	56%	68%

5.4 CDFC with People Living with Disabilities

Project Type	Number
Chisamba	2
Masaiti	0
Livingstone	0
Kasama	0

5.5 CDFC Application and Approval Rates

Category	Application	Approval
Empowerments	About 9 in all the four constituencies	About 5 from the our constituencies
Bursaries	About 11 from all the four constituencies	About 7 from the our constituencies
Skill Development	About 7 from the our constituencies	About 7 from the our constituencies

6.0 Recommendations

Enhancing Transparency		
Challenge	Recommendation / Action	Responsibility
Lack of financial and adequate administrative support to WDCs	Provide transport or financial support for transport and refreshments	Local Authorities and MLGRD to ensure this through the CDF guidelines
WDCs not attending meetings where contractors who to undertake community projects applied are announced	Mandate WDCs to attend meetings where contractors who applied are announced (Local Authorities must provide means for the WDCs to attend meetings).	MLGRD to provide for this in the CDF guidelines
Low approvals rates for the community projects in both WDC and the CDFC	Increase civic education and awareness on CDF including developing IEC materials. This will enhance the quality of proposals and applications submitted.	MLGRD to provide a % allocation in the 5% admin cost that must be allocated to awareness raising activities.
Community members belonging to multiple cooperatives or applying to multiple constituencies	Develop a database	MLGRD to create data base on beneficiaries. MLGRD to provide guidance in the CDF guidelines on beneficiaries belonging to multiple groups

Enhancing Accountability		
Challenge	Recommendation / Action	Responsibility
Limited capacities of WDCs to effectively monitor community projects	Build capacities of WDCs in monitoring community projects and producing timely reports (Trainings)	Local Authorities and non-state actors (CSOs etc)
Local Authorities struggling to produce CDF quarterly, biannual and annual progress reports.	Employ more staff at the Local Authorities to manage CDF projects.	MLGRD to employ more staff at Local Authority (those managing the implementation of CDF)
Reports on decisions made on CDF after monitoring not being shared with community members	Simplify reports by producing abridged versions and translation to local dialect	Local Authorities
No deliberate platforms for Local Authorities to provide feedback to WDCs.	Create dialogue platforms between WDCs and Local Authorities to give feedback on rejected proposals	MLGRD to provide for guidance on WDCs and Local Authorities meeting (at least quarterly).
Low accountability perception on CDF among community members, leading to distrust of the CDF processes	Disseminate information to community members on the CDF progress (monitoring reports) and conduct robust civic education	Local Authorities

Enhancing Community Participation		
Challenge	Recommendation / Action	Responsibility
Limited information about CDF information among community members	Increase CDF advertisement (radio, posters and announcements)	MLGRD to provide guidance on % allocation from the 5% admin cost to be allocated to advertisement.
Numerous executive directives, leaving little room for approving community selected projects	Limit CDF budget ceiling for the executive directives. Revise the CDF Act on the composition of CDFC	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development to put a ceiling on the Executive directives per CDF budgetary allocation
Political influence in community project selection processes	Revise the CDF Act on the composition of CDFC	Ministry of Local Government, Non-State actors and the legislature (NAZ) to ensure the scope of the CDFC is expanded

Enhancing Community Participation

Challenge	Recommendation / Action	Responsibility
Lack of motivation for the WDCs to meet their mandate	Revise the LG Act No 2 of 2019 on the WDC role being voluntarily	National Assembly of Zambia, Non-State actors and MLGRD to ensure WDCs are financially incentivized.
Low participation by marginalised groups (people living with disabilities)	Develop deliberate interventions for the marginalised groups to participate	Local Authorities and MLGRD to ensure social inclusion to enhance participation of people living with disabilities.



Vision Statement

“A Just Zambian Society Guided by Faith, Where Everyone Enjoys the Fullness of Life.”

Mission Statement

“To Enhance Justice and Equality for All, Particularly the Poor and Vulnerable through the promotion of Christian Values, Empowerment, Care for the Environment and Provision of Policy Alternatives.”

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