

The Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR)



Policy Brief on

Understanding the Usage of Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in Zambia: The Case of Education, Health, Water and Sanitation Projects in Chishipula, Kapulanga, Chamboli and Simoonga Communities

Compiled by the JCTR Faith & Justice Programme, July 2019

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In Zambia, the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) was introduced in 1995 as “instrument” to facilitate the deliverance of public developmental goods and services directly to local communities. Despite the introduction of the Fund, the provision of and access to basic essential public services by local communities has remained poor in Zambia¹. It is in this regard that the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR) commissioned a study on ***“Understanding the Usage of Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in Zambia: The Case of Education, Health, Water and Sanitation Projects,”*** in February 2019 in a bid to enhance the performance of CDF.



Community access to Basic essential public services continues to be a challenge in most parts of Zambia, especially rural areas, despite the introduction of the CDF.

2.0 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The main objective of this Study was to establish how CDF is accessed and used in community projects in the areas of education, health and water and sanitation. The Study also paid attention to the allocation of CDF to these areas, the challenges encountered by local communities to access and benefiting from social services, the disbursement patterns of CDF by Government as well as the disparities in the allocation of CDF to social projects. This Study was conducted in four constituencies namely Lukasha Mongu Central, Livingstone Central and Wusakile located in the following Districts respectively; Kasama, Mongu, Livingstone and Kitwe. A total of one-hundred and five (105) respondents, drawn from civil society, academia, political parties, religious groupings, local authorities and the local communities, participated in this research

¹ For instance, access to quality and adequate education, health, water and sanitation has remained a key challenge to a large segment of the Zambian population (GRZ 2017). There is also need to enhance the quality service delivery in both the education and health sectors, in an equitable and inclusive manner, through infrastructure development (ibid: 96; 99).

3.0 THE PROBLEM

Ideally, Constituency Development Fund (CDF) is discretionary funding by the government of Zambia that is allocated to various electoral constituencies for micro-developmental purposes. The resources are supposed to be used for the establishment of capital investments which may include; road construction, upgrading of existing infrastructure with the aim of improving communal access to social services using the bottom up approach to social planning and administration. Although this facility promotes a multi-dimensional approach to development, provision and accessibility to cardinal public services such as education, health water and sanitation by local communities has remained inadequate and poor in most cases. The study has established that some of the factors that impede the ability of the CDF initiative to improve the lives of the local communities include persistent use of a top-down approach to development. This approach has failed to meet the desired outcomes because there is little or no community participation in matters that affect them. Another key factor is the influence of Members of Parliament (MPs) who use the CDF resources to benefit their constituencies in return for political support.

4.0 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

4.1 Study Design

An exploratory study design was used to understand the utilization of CDFs in Education, Health, Water and Sanitation projects in Zambia; A case study of Chishipula, Kapulanga, Simoonga and Chamboli wards because it aimed at achieving a well-grounded picture of the situation especially in the practical and policy arena. The exploratory design was cardinal for the research because it enabled the researcher to adequately obtain in depth views, opinions and perceptions from different sources of informants based on the instruments of data collection, namely the Interview Guide and Focus Group Discussions. In addition, it allowed for further probing and triangulation of submissions while conducting data collection.

4.2 Approach and Data Sources

Review of Secondary Literature: The review focused on reviewing policy documents, research reports and media articles on the topic of CDF in general as well as specifically to Zambia. In particular, the review focused on analysing the use of CDF for developmental purposes in general and specifically for social development purposes. **Primary Data Collection:** This part of the research design involved the collection of primary data from the field (targeted research sites) through Focused Group Discussions (FDGs) and one-to-one interviews (Key Informants). The data sourced was mainly in the form of views, opinions and perceptions.

4.3 Analysis

The Content Analysis is a widely used qualitative research technique that was employed throughout the analysis of all data that was collected during the research and this process was guided by the following steps;

- Building of a thematic coding frame based on the key research questions and objectives
- Selecting the relevant data from the collected materials (Rossman and Rallis, 1998: 171).
- Dividing the selected data into thematic units in readiness for thematic analysis (Greg, 2012).
- Interpreting and presenting the main findings (Lincoln and Guba, 1985)

5.0 KEY FINDINGS

5.1 CDF Allocation to Health, Education, Water and Sanitation Basis

Overall, the study established that in all the targeted research sites, CDF had been allocated to projects related to health, education, water and sanitation. However, the study could not ascertain the actual proportion of the total CDF released that was targeted to these projects. Most of the projects in the education sector were in the form of construction of schools, classrooms, school toilets and staff houses. With regards to health, majority of projects were in the form of construction of clinics, maternity wings and staff housing. For water and sanitation, most of the projects included sinking of boreholes and construction of ablution blocks at either health, education and trading, institutions and places, respectively. The study also revealed the future prospects for the financing of education, health, water and sanitation projects using CDF was largely dependent on how other competing local community development needs, such as roads, bridges and empowerment programmes would be financed.

5.2 The Three (3) Key Determinants of Access and Use of CDF by Local Communities

The Research revealed that community access and use of CDF financed projects in the areas of health, education, water and sanitation was determined by levels of knowledge, community mobilization and the relationship between the local authority and the community.

For instance, in Lukashya and Wusakile Constituencies, where the knowledge levels and access to basic information were relatively high, access and use of these projects appeared to be high while the opposite case was reflected in other two Constituencies, namely Livingstone Central and Mongu Central, where knowledge and access were low. In Constituencies where there was some extent of mobilization, particularly led by the Ward Development Committees, access and use of CDF projects, as in the case of Lukashya and Wusakile, appeared to be stronger than in Livingstone Central and Mongu Central, where mobilization was either weak or absent.



The study revealed that knowledge levels and access to basic information by communities were contributing factors to access and use of CDF financed projects.

The study showed that the level and nature of community-WDC, Councilor or Local Authority relations played a key role in determining access and benefits to CDF funded projects in areas of health, education, water and sanitation. For instance, strong relations were registered in Lukashya and Wusakile Constituencies than in Mongu Central and Livingstone Central.

5.3 Levels and Nature of Public Involvement and Accountability Mechanisms



This Study revealed that the levels and nature of public involvement and accountability mechanisms of CDF were either low or non-existent. In cases where local communities were engaged, this was merely in form of “consultations,” and not “involvement.”

In these situations, as revealed in the cases of Lukashya, Wusakile and Livingstone Central to some extent, local communities were included in the CDF process at the point of

requesting for proposals – which is only one of few out of the several phases of public involvement provided for under the CDF Act of 2018 and the 2016 CDF guidelines. More importantly, the study revealed that most of the Local Authorities did not widely publicise the availability of these resources nor did they ensure that feedback was

provided by communities regarding the disseminated information. Consequently, the management of this Fund has not been transparent and more importantly, inhibits the local communities from demanding accountability from the office bearers.


5.4 Monitoring, Evaluation and Sustainability Mechanisms

It was established that none of the targeted Constituencies had put in place effective monitoring, evaluation and sustainability mechanisms for the projects on health, education, water and sanitation that were funded by CDF. The administrators of the Fund, namely the Local Authorities, Councilors, WDCs and District Commissioners as well as local communities had contradictory opinions on this matter. In the view of the Local Authorities, it was the responsibility of the beneficiaries (local communities) to monitor and evaluate the implementation as well as take care of the CDF projects after completion. On the other hand, local communities felt that this was responsibility was for the local authority and sector ministries that had necessary resources and expertise to fulfil this obligation. However, it is important to note that both the CDF Act of 2018 and the 2016 Guidelines clearly stipulate that all the CDF projects shall be monitored by a Committee or its agents during the project implementation on a monthly basis or as often as necessary depending on the nature and stage of the projects. In addition, the Act also states that evaluation exercises shall be carried out by a Committee which may include officers from an appropriate Government department and the exercise shall be done on completion of the project but before the disbursement of the following year's funds. Also notably, the Act is silent with regards to who is responsible for the sustainability of CDF projects after completion.

5.5 Key Challenges Encountered by Local Communities in Accessing Social Services despite CDF

The major findings of the research in this regard is that there are major challenges that are affecting communities' access to social services despite the allocation of CDF. The first key challenge is the lack of provision of adequate information, such as calendar of disbursement, financial decisions, priority setting, project selection and responsibilities, about the CDF to the local communities.





The second challenge is the lack or weak consultation, participation and involvement of the local communities in the management and implementation of CDF projects. The third challenge is the lack or weak mechanisms for monitoring, evaluating and sustaining the CDF projects. This, consequently, contributes to the failure to ensure transparency and accountability in the management and administration of CDF. The other challenge is undue influence of local authority officials and members of Parliament in the management and administration of CDF. The fourth challenge relates to the late, inadequacies and inconsistencies in the release of the CDF allocation by Central Government to Constituencies. This has negatively affected the implementation of new projects or the completion of already existing incomplete projects.

5.6 Disbursement of CDF by Central Government

This research has revealed that although Central Government allocates a budget line to CDF in every annual budget and that the budget allocation has increased over a period of time, the disbursement of these funds has largely been characterized by inadequacy, partial releases, delays and inconsistencies. In all the selected Constituencies, technocrats reported partial and delayed releases as well as total non-releases particularly in the period 2014-2017. The main impact is that these Constituencies have either failed to finalise incomplete projects or embark on new ones.

5.7 Disparities in CDF Allocation to Local Projects in the Areas of Health, Education and Water and Sanitation

According to the findings of this research, disparities in CDF allocation to local projects in these areas were mainly conditioned by the approach used to select or approve projects and the amounts of CDF released in particular Constituencies. For instance, the Livingstone Municipal Council uses the “Constituency-based Approach” as opposed to the “Ward-based Approach” employed by the other three Constituencies. Yet the CDF Act of 2018 and the guidelines clearly stipulate that proposals for CDF should be derived from “Ward” submissions and that communities should be part and parcel of monitoring the implementation of these projects. With regards to released fund, Constituencies were forced to reduce the number of approved projects in line with the amounts of resources received. For instance, Government had, between the periods 2014-2017, only released K700, 000.00 out of the anticipated K1, 400,000.00 to the Constituencies targeted in the research.

6.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusion

Although the Study has revealed that from the past to present, CDF has, to a notable extent, been used to finance projects in these areas, the future prospects for financing these social sectors are threatened by the following factors. First, allocation of resources is faced with different competing local community development needs. Second, the failure by the administrators of the Fund to adhere to the legally laid down provisions. Third, the low levels of public knowledge and access to information about CDF. Fourth, the lack of public participation platforms to facilitate the monitoring, evaluation and sustainability of these project. Fifth, the consistent failure by Government to ensure that these resources are provided in a timely and adequate manner.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the Study and the conclusion drawn thereupon; the following recommendations have been put forward;

Intervention A

At Community Level, Led by the WDCs and with the Support/cooperation of Local Government Authorities, NGOs, the Ministries of Local Government and Community Development and Social Services

- Strengthen the WDCs as the main platforms for community engagement on CDF
- Develop a CDF social services community development charter
- Create community lobby and advocacy groups for the charter
- Establish local community inter-sector networks on social services
- Translate and simplify information on CDF in local languages – management, administration and use of CDF
- Build the capacities of the WDC Committees and representative councilors on CDF and social service provision

Intervention B

At District Level, Led by the Local Authorities with the Support/cooperation/assistance of WDCs, NGOs, the Ministries of Local Government, Media, Councilors MPs and Faith Based Organisations and Traditional Leaders

- Devise strategies on ensuring and monitoring that information on CDF is effectively disseminated to the local communities
- Design innovative and effective communication and information sharing mechanisms with local communities on CDF
- Develop tracking mechanism aimed at monitoring local community knowledge and participation in the CDF processes
- Facilitate or provide technical assistance in the development of monitoring and sustainability plans for the local communities
- Strengthen the systems of accountability and use of CDF

Intervention C

At National Level, Led by the Ministry of Local Government with the Support/cooperation/assistance, of the Ministry of Finance, Community Development and Social Services, Information and Broadcasting, WDCs, NGOs, House of Chiefs

- Prioritise social services delivery to local communities in national development processes
- Ring fence a percentage of CDF for social service provision
- Address the bureaucratic challenges on CDF resources
- Embark upon a nationwide popular education and awareness raising on CDF.
- Promote media in reporting, awareness raising and coverage on CDF
- Strengthen the capacities of local authorities in accounting and reporting on CDF
- Strengthen the systems of accountability and use of CDF
- Ensure that cases of abuse, misappropriation and misapplication are conclusively dealt with

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Vision:

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Mission Statement:

"From a faith inspired perspective the JCTR promotes justice for all in Zambia, especially for the poor, through research, education, advocacy and consultations".

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2019-07

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JCTR. (2010). Understanding the usage of Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in Zambia: Lusaka, Zambia. Jesuit Centre for Theological (JCTR) Reflection

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