

Analysing The Scope of Community Participation In The Decentralised Constituency Development Fund: A Comparative Study of Mongu Central Constituency And Nalolo Constituency In Western Province, Zambia

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Abstract: This study analysed the scope of community participation in the decentralised Constituency Development Fund: A comparative study of Mongu Central Constituency and Nalolo Constituency in the Western Province of Zambia. The study was anchored on three objectives as follows: (1) To describe the scope of community participation in the decentralised CDF in Mongu Central Constituency and Nalolo Constituency, and (2) To compare and establish the differences in community participation in the decentralised CDF between an urban constituency; Mongu Central, and a rural constituency, Nalolo, (3) To make recommendations on how best people can participate in the decentralised CDF in urban Mongu Central Constituency and the rural Nalolo Constituency. The study involved a total of 844 participants, 44 of whom were purposively sampled and 800 participated through focus group discussions of 10 participants each. The study revealed that in as much as community members were aware of the decentralised CDF and were also aware of the community projects being funded under the decentralised CDF, the scope of community participation in the decentralised CDF in both Mongu Central Constituency and Nalolo Constituency was low. It was therefore, recommended that the best way for people to participate in the decentralised CDF was through involving them in the selection of CDF-funded projects and programmes, fairness in the management of CDF, removing political influence in the selection of beneficiaries, and empowering communities with information on the CDF through community meetings. Based on the findings, the study recommended that the Government of Zambia should build the participatory capacity of both the community stakeholders and decision-makers so as to enhance the levels of community participation in the decentralised CDF by clearly explaining the objectives behind the decision to link CDF to the Decentralisation Policy.

Key words: *Community, participation, constituency development fund*

1. Introduction

The Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) defines a constituency as one of the official areas of a country that elects someone to represent it in a parliament or legislature. There are currently 156 parliamentary constituencies in Zambia, and the citizens within these

electoral districts are entitled to elect a Member of Parliament to the country's National Assembly, to represent their interests (<https://www.elections.org.zm/verc/files/> accessed on 21/05/2023).

According to Policy Monitoring Research Centre (PMRC), the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) can be defined as a policy tool and development initiative where public funds are dedicated to specific political subdivisions. It aims to bypass often inefficient local structures to deliver goods and services directly to constituencies (2014:1). Chibomba further defines CDF as a type of decentralised government funding that is supposed to deliver goods and services directly to constituents by providing additional funds for local community development, outside line ministries (2013:6). According to Silimina, since 1995, the government has given funds to electoral districts through the CDF programme. The money is intended for local infrastructure and services such as roads, schools, clinics, courts, canals, bridges and community boreholes. The government, on this score, has boosted the amount of money available for distribution. The 2022 national budget increased CDF from K1.6 million to K25.7 million for each of Zambia's 156 electoral constituencies (<http://www.times.co.zm/?p=111494> accessed on 21/05/2023).

Furthermore, Kakungu posits that the Constituency Development Fund was established in 1995, to allow the government to allocate funds on a yearly basis to all constituencies through the Member of Parliament. The purpose of the fund is to empower local communities by providing a fund for health, education, and other initiatives. CDFs are increasingly significant tools for politicised and decentralised resource allocation (2013:4). Additionally, Transparency International Zambia (TIZ) asserts that CDF was originally introduced as a means to encourage local development in rural and urban communities across the country. Guidelines were developed for the utilisation of CDF, the latest prior to the current ones having been produced in 2006 (www.tizambia.org.zm/blog/2022/08/30/constituency-development-fund-issues-brief/ accessed on 21/05/2023).

In this line, therefore, National Assembly of Zambia (NAZ) states that The Constituency Development Fund Act, 2018, was enacted by the National Assembly to provide for the management, disbursement, utilisation and accountability of the CDF, and under the Constitution, to establish Development Fund Committees in constituencies and provide for their constituencies and provide for their composition and functions (2018:2). During the launch of the National Decentralisation Policy and commissioning of the Zambia Devolution Support Programme in Chongwe, President Hakainde Hichilema said the decentralisation of the CDF was a fulfilment of the government's promise to take government services to the grass roots and that the decentralisation agenda will, therefore, be extended to all the 116 districts and 156 constituencies across Zambia without segregation. Accordingly, this bottom-up approach is meant to empower provinces, districts, and communities, in accordance with the different circumstances which need to be addressed. The idea behind decentralising CDF is to ensure that citizens partake in decisions that affect their lives and take advantage of opportunities provided to them

(https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=pfbidOGbrtMV65Nu866ZFoKUK3qGGYWUydiAobLD7QuMjyEFpxa4LyHXbExUvYnskWnBXI&id=100044182102075&mibextid=Nif5oz accessed on 07/06/2023).

2. Background information

In October 2021, Government announced an increased allocation to the CDF of K25.7 million per annum for each of the 156 constituencies, irrespective of whether they were rural or urban. This has in turn brought the Decentralisation Policy into focus, viewed as the re-awakening of tools that will take development to all constituencies in a more participatory manner. The need to foster a shared sense of purpose and ownership is at the core of the expanded scope of the CDF. That is why the Policy Monitoring Research Centre (PMRC) explains that the main aim of the review was to bring the 2006 CDF Guidelines in line with the decentralisation process and the National Development Agenda and also increase accountability among the stakeholders (2022: 1).

The Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) makes a point that the Constituency Development Fund is intended for micro-community development projects that are visibly beneficial and involve the active participation of ordinary community members. Emphasis is placed on achieving benefits at the community level. Thus, CDF is a tool to facilitate local community development. This is against the backdrop that most development interventions under the national process appeared to have had minimal direct impact on most of the local and poor communities of Zambia. Therefore, CDF has been identified as a major tool to take resources closer to the communities (2022: 3-5).

Further, Loloji states that Parliament approved CDF in 1995 to finance micro-community projects for poverty reduction. It was perceived as a strategic instrument to address the inefficiency and ineffectiveness of local government structures in delivering goods and services directly to local communities (2014:10). That is why Casey et al., assert that the objective of the CDF is to provide Members of Parliament (MP) and their constituency communities an opportunity to make choices and implement projects that maximise their welfare in line with their needs and preferences. With another core objective of the CDF being that one of financing projects that address the needs and preferences of the community and that promote local development. As such, the Government of the Republic of Zambia has prioritised decentralisation as a major driver for attaining development, reducing poverty and supporting job creation through community engagement and participation at the local level (2022:4). Therefore, PMRC points out that a discussion of CDF is best understood against a background of decentralisation, which is aimed at devolving authority to the local people through community participation (2014:1).

This study has been conceived out of the decision by the Government of Zambia to link the disbursement and management of CDF to the Decentralisation Policy, with the aim of guaranteeing equitable distribution of resources and empower local communities. Smith points out that Decentralisation is designed to reflect local unique circumstances in development policy-making and implementation. Furthermore, decentralisation is also intended to aid poverty reduction through participation and should, therefore, help spur development through decentralising decision-making to local communities (2007: 102 – 103). Decentralisation, in this regard, according to Chibomba, makes policies more responsive to local needs, provides mechanism that are responsive to varying local circumstances thereby compelling local politicians and bureaucrats to be more responsive and accountable to local communities (2013:4).

To this end, the Ministry of Finance and National Planning (MFNP) notes in the Eighth National Development Plan (8NDP) that the 2004 Decentralisation Policy was reviewed in 2013 to provide a clear direction on the mode of decentralisation with identified functions to be devolved. The Constitution of the Republic of Zambia Amendment Act No.2 of 2016 under Articles 162 and 163 further strengthened decentralisation through devolution. In addition, the Local Government Act No.2 of 2019 was enacted to provide a platform for citizen participation at sub-district level through the Ward Development Committees (WDCs) (2022:33).

But Casey et al., argue that the Government of Zambia has not clearly and widely communicated the objectives and vision behind the decentralisation of the CDF. Such helps to create a shared sense of purpose among citizens in support of the programme, manage citizen expectations, and ensure that citizens understand how they can participate in the CDF. Part of this messaging should be one of learning and innovation: explain how the government will pilot different approaches to CDF implementation, learn from these successes and failures, and implement the lessons learned incrementally to improve CDF effectiveness overtime (2021: 4).

3. Description of Mongu and Nalolo constituencies

3.1 Mongu Central Constituency

Mongu Central Constituency is one of the parliamentary constituencies in Mongu district of the Western Province of Zambia. According to the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) voters' register for 2022, Mongu Central has a voting population of 51,870, with 22,060 being male and 29,810 being female. Mongu Central Constituency has a total of 16 wards namely, Imwiko, Kaande, Kama, Kambule, Kanyonyo, Katongo, Lealui Lower, Lealui Upper, Lewanika, Lumbo, Mabumbu, Mulambwa, Namushakende, Yeta, Ilute, and Namasho, with an area covering 6,360 square kilometres, and a population density of 20.26 per square kilometre (<https://www.elections.org.zm/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/REGISTERED-VOTERS-BY-GENDER-AND -CONSTITUENCY.pdf> accessed on 30/05/2023).

3.2 Nalolo Constituency

Nalolo Constituency is one of the parliamentary constituencies in Nalolo district in the Western Province of Zambia. It has a total of eight (8) wards namely; Kambai, Kataba, Lyamakumba, Makoka, Muoyo, Nanjuca, Shekela and Silwana. Nalolo Constituency, according to the latest Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) voters' register has a voting population of 23,436, with 9,182 being male and 14,254 being female, and covers a total area of 4,869 square kilometres, and with a population density of 11.41 people per square kilometre (<https://www.elections.org.zm/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/REGISTERED-VOTERS-BY-GENDER-AND -CONSTITUENCY.pdf> accessed on 30/05/2023).

4. Statement of the problem

Chibomba citing Smith (2007:102) states that Decentralisation is designed to reflect local unique circumstances in development policy-making and implementation, ensuring that policies are more responsive to community needs, provides mechanism that are responsive to varying local circumstances thereby compelling local politicians and bureaucrats to be more responsive and accountable to local communities (2013:9). JCTR however observes that in practice, community participation is often only consultative in nature (2019:7). To this end, Phiri states that despite Carreira et al., advancing the view that community participation is one of the major mainstays of democracy, and it ultimately influences the goals of public policy, by contrast, CDF Committees (CDFC), and especially the constituency Member of Parliament, tend to retain disproportionate influence over the selection and prioritisation of projects (2016:9). Lack of knowledge, manipulation of decision-making on the CDF by political elites, and inadequate adherence to the laid down guidelines may hinder the access to and prudent use of CDF in community projects in general.

Although other researchers have written about the importance of community participation in CDF, they just discussed one constituency at the most, hence still scant information regarding a study done in a comparative manner, specifically between a rural and urban

constituency meant to divulge the scope of community participation in the decentralised CDF, and how it has been received by the people in both urban and rural areas. Therefore, this study aims at closing this gap by analysing community participation in the decentralised Constituency Development Fund by comparing predominantly urban Mongu Central Constituency and predominantly rural Nalolo Constituency in Western Province.

5. Research objectives

- i.** To describe the scope of community participation in the decentralised CDF in Mongu Central Constituency and Nalolo Constituency.
- ii.** To compare and establish the differences of community participation in the decentralised CDF between an urban constituency; Mongu Central, and a rural constituency, Nalolo;
- iii.** To make recommendations on how best people can participate in the decentralised CDF in urban Mongu Central Constituency and the rural Nalolo Constituency.

6. Theoretical Framework

Makungu states that Communication is a vital management component to any organisation. Whether the purpose is to educate target publics, update employees on new policies, or to listen to the attitudes of employees or other publics, effective communication is an integral issue in effective management. To be successful, organisations should have comprehensive policies and strategies for communicating with their constituencies and stakeholders, as well as the community at large. Ineffective communication may increase the chances of misunderstandings, damage relationships, break trust, and increase anger and hostility (2022:4).

This study, therefore, is anchored on the Participatory Communication Theory which sees people as the controlling actors or participants for development. The proposition of this theory revolves around people's participation in the development process. In this regard, people will have self-appreciation instead of self-depreciation, because according to the Participatory Communication Model, development is meant to liberate people. The Participatory Communication Model sees people as the nucleus of development since in this model, development means lifting up the spirits of a local community to take pride in its own culture, intellect and environment.

According to Mefalopulos et al., by the 1950s, experiences with participatory communication first appeared when Brazilian adult educator Paulo Freire worked with adult literacy campaigners among the poor peasants in North-eastern Brazil. Freire's original literacy work empowered landless peasants to formulate their own demands for a better life and to liberate themselves from oppressive conditions. From this experience, Freire grew into one of the most influential proponents of participatory communication theory and practice. Central to this line of thinking was to let the stakeholders get involved in the development process and to determine the outcome, rather than imposing an outcome already decided by external actors (2009:10).

Most recently, participatory approaches to communication have reinforced emphasis on structural and social change. The Rockefeller process led to a definition of communication for social change as a process of public and private dialogue through which people themselves define who they are, what they need and how to get what they need in order to improve their own lives. It utilises dialogue that leads to collective problem identification, decision-making, and community-based implementation of solutions to development issues (www.communicationforsocialchange.org viewed on 30/05/2023 at 01:17).

Furthermore, Makungu illustrates that the participatory communication model emphasises on the local community rather than the nation-state, on dialogue rather than monologue, and on emancipation rather than alienation. Participation, in this case, involves the redistribution of power. It aims at redistributing the elites' power so that a community can become a full-fledged democratic one. As such, it directly threatens those whose position and/or very existence depends upon power and its exercise over others. Today, participation, along with concerns for voice, empowerment, and poverty orientation, is at the core of much development work, particularly in governance issues (2022:5).

7. Literature Review

7.1 Scope of community participation in the decentralised CDF in a Constituency

There have been efforts made by different scholars to divulge the scope of participation of citizens in national developmental projects. For instance, Chelungisi investigated factors that hinder effective participation of members of the community in activities of CDF projects in the education sector in Kabuchai Constituency, Kenya, by conceptualising collaborative governance as including the participation of public agencies and the community, which results into successful implementation of projects, in this case CDF. However, based on qualitative interviews of a focus group involving participants with experience and knowledge of CDF in the target area, the study established low levels of participation of the community in the CDF decision-making processes. Among the likely achievable solutions is increasing participation capacity for both the government institution and community. This should be coupled with increasing awareness of community members and clearly communicating the goals, objectives, and the roles, and expectations of the public in the participation process (2021: v). This study by Chelungisi is vital to the current study because it sheds more light on what impedes citizens to participate in national affairs.

In reference to the above arguments, empirical evidence shows that well-formulated Community-Driven Development (CDD) programmes tend to be inclusive of the vulnerable and the poor, create positive social capital, and offer them higher voice with the government and at the community level (Casey, 2018). To the contrary, a study on community participation in CDF project identification in Mwense Constituency of Mwense district in Zambia, established that the extent of community participation of CDF project identification was simply by informing communities on what is planned. The study also established that councillors and the area Member of Parliament were the ones identifying CDF projects in the constituency (2019:1-14). This information is vital to the current study because it highlights the status on the involvement of key stakeholders in decision-making.

Additionally, more empirical evidence has been generated to ascertain the involvement of key stakeholders in CDF. Phiri examined the nature and level of community participation in CDF projects in Lusaka City, particularly Kanyama Constituency. The study found that community participation took on different forms at different stages of the CDF project processes. The nature of community participation for the majority of local communities in CDF projects is generally limited to consultation and use of unskilled labour. Local communities are generally not actively involved in project identification, implementation and monitoring processes. The study found that the factors accounting for this level of community participation in CDF projects included lack of awareness and knowledge of CDF, lack of awareness about the right and opportunities for participation, inadequate information dissemination, poverty and poor community attitudes towards participation (2016:v). The aforementioned narrative defeat the view that CDF has potential to yield community development if it is properly utilised (Lewanika, 2019). Therefore, it can be argued that to some extent, communities have no adequate knowledge on CDF hence leading to lack of participation. Therefore, the nature of community participation for the majority of the local community is that implementation of CDF projects is generally limited to consultation and use of unskilled labour (Lewanika, 2019).

Despite the above scenario, the bone of contention still remains that proper formulation and correct implementation of the decentralisation policy vis-a-vis CDF utilisation should aid poverty reduction through participation (Chibomba, 2013). This should therefore, help spur development through decentralising decision-making to local communities.

Decentralisation, according to Smith, makes policies more responsive to local needs, provides a mechanism that is responsive to varying local circumstances thereby improving allocative efficiency and makes local politicians and bureaucrats more responsive and accountable to local communities (2007:102-103). This is supported by Omia in a cross-sectional exploratory study of community participation in CDF projects in Kangemi Ward, in Kenya's Westlands Constituency, specifically focused on examining the level of awareness and knowledge of CDF operations and policies by community members, determining the mode of participation in CDF projects by community members and examining the views of community members on constraints to active participation in CDF projects. This study established that although there is a general high awareness of CDF among community members, particular knowledge of CDF details with regard to costs and amounts disbursed for specific projects is generally low among the community. This has an effect in stifling the voices of the people, limiting people's rights to demand accountability, inclusion and participation in the CDF projects. Moreover, community participation in monitoring and evaluation of the CDF projects has been hindered by low knowledge and awareness on the CDF regulations and operations (2011: viii).

In line with Miano's submission that CDF is a decentralised strategy that was established to increase community participation in development projects, a study carried out to find out the factors influencing community participation in CDF-funded projects in Mathira Constituency in Kenya's Nyeri County, established that due to the community participation model being used in the constituency and particularly the methods used for information sharing for awareness creation, there is low-level community participation in CDF-funded projects. Apart from the low levels of awareness of CDF-funded projects, political factors, level of education and demographic characteristics are among the variables cited as factors influencing the low levels of community participation in CDF projects (2016:1).

On this score, Mohammed posits that participation and decentralisation are mutually beneficial because on one hand, effective decentralisation necessitates some local participation and on the other hand, local participation is said to enhance decentralisation outcomes (2016:232).

Holistically, the above studies show that people rarely participate in CDF to the expected standard. Studies have also shown that although civic leaders tend to neglect people when it comes to utilisation of CDF, consultative processes that include people on the grass roots remain the best approach hence this study to bring to light the narrative about Mongu Central Constituency and Nalolo Constituency where CDF is concerned.

7.2 Community participation in the decentralised CDF between an urban and rural constituency

Substantive amount of literature suggests that CDF was originally introduced in Zambia as a means to encourage local development in rural and urban communities across the country (TIZ, 2023). The view by TIZ denotes that the original scope of the CDF was to cover local projects at the community level.

The above could be the reason why the United Party for National Development (UPND) increased the CDF allocation from K1.6 million to K25.7 and then to K28.3 million within 3 years of their reign. Community participation in the increased CDF is well supported by

Minister of Local Government and Rural Development, Garry Nkombo who stated that through CDF, local communities were now able, and were being empowered to determine their own development path by identifying and prioritising projects according to their needs or requirements. This is a key factor in ensuring inclusive development via decentralisation in line with the New Dawn government's vision to empower communities to determine their development agenda through CDF.

Scholars have also demonstrated mixed feelings regarding CDF distribution. For instance, a study titled Zambia's Constituency Development Fund: Policy considerations by Casey et al., questions whether all constituencies should receive equal funds or CDF allocations across constituencies should be done depending on local needs. A needs-based allocation could prove more equitable than a one-size-fits-all approach and more effective in promoting development. Population or other socio-economic variables could be used as a proxy for the need to distribute these funds. The Zambia Living Conditions and Monitoring Survey could provide important data to base a needs-based assessment on (2021:10).

The above arguments are backed by Economic Association of Zambia (EAZ) (2022) whose views indicate that the poorer areas should be prioritised when allocating national funds just by borrowing the best practice in Kenya where CDF regulations specify that the fund should comprise not less than 2.5% of national revenue, 75% of which is equally distributed among all constituencies. The remaining 25% is then allocated to poorer areas in greater need of development, focusing on principles of equity and redistribution. But Zambia allocates equal amounts to all constituencies regardless of population or geographical size or indeed poverty levels in the constituencies. The Economic Association of Zambia (EAZ) has called for this to be revisited, highlighting the need for meaningful, spatial allocation of the CDF (2022:16-21).

Whereas CDF represents a community-based development approach and one of the ingenious decentralisation innovations of the government, the case study by Chelungisi on decentralisation and community participation in the CDF initiative in the predominantly rural Kabuchai Constituency, Kenya, established low levels of community participation in CDF decision-making processes. This is attributed to several individual specific social factors and institutional-based structural factors, which hinder the effective participation of the community in CDF decision-making processes. The structural factors include supporting resources, participation capacity, and transparency and integrity. The social factors include education attainment, culture, income levels, age and gender. The low participation hinders the success of CDF projects, since similar to most policies, CDF is a wicked problem, which requires solutions that are holistic and inclusive, by embracing the tone of stakeholders (2021:1).

Equally, Matipa in a study assessing the extent of community participation in CDF project identification in Mwense Constituency, situated in rural Mwense district in Zambia, also established that there were low levels of community participation in CDF project identification as communities are simply informed on what is planned (2019:1-14). However, a similar study by Phiri on community participation in CDF projects in Lusaka City, but this time in predominantly urban Kanyama Constituency, also found that the nature of community participation for the majority of local communities in CDF projects is generally limited to consultation and use of unskilled labour. Local communities are generally not actively involved in project identification, implementation and monitoring processes (2016: v). Lewanika also agrees in a study on the impact of CDF on community development in rural Nalolo Constituency that the communities have no adequate knowledge on CDF hence leading to lack of participation (2019:1).

The above studies are imperative to the current study in that they were aimed at bringing to light community participation in the CDF. However, there is still scant information about Mongu Central and Nalolo constituencies as none of the cited studies holistically handled

scope of participation, challenges faced by community members where CDF is concerned and best strategies to increase community participation in the CDF.

7.3 How people participate in the decentralised CDF in a Constituency

In terms of people participating in the decentralised CDF in a constituency, there is a view that capacity building and increased awareness should be the best approach. This is demonstrated by a study conducted in Kenya by Chelungisi on decentralisation and community participation, particularly focusing on the CDF initiative in Kabuchai Constituency. The study revealed that levels of participation of the community in CDF decision-making processes can be enhanced by increasing participation capacity for both the government institution and community. This should be coupled by increasing awareness of community members and clearly communicating the goals, objectives, and the roles, and expectations of the public in the participation process (2021:4). Similarly, Casey et al., states that one lesson derived from other countries' Community-Driven Development (CDD) projects, a highly decentralised and participatory approach to local development, which devolves financial and operational control over public goods to communities, is the importance and challenge of ensuring that communities have real voices in this process, since community participation and decision-making in socio-economic development at the local level is a key aim of the CDF. In this case, experimentation would be useful in building local capacity to implement the participatory approach (2021:12).

The study about Kenya is vital in that it was trying to find mechanisms on how to increase community participation in decision-making. However, findings about Kenya may not be applicable to Zambia, Mongu and Nalolo constituencies to be specific, because of the different governance systems, CDF allocation, the population, geographical location and the needs of the people.

The need to undertake the current study also hinges on the need to foster a shared sense of purpose and ownership arising from the expanded scope of the CDF. To this effect, PMRC (2022) states that following the government's October 2021 announcement about the increased allocation of the CDF up to K25.7 million per annum for each of the 156 constituencies, an undertaking aimed at taking development closer to the people through various empowerment initiatives, a lot of hype has been generated about the CDF and its role in national development. This is well-articulated in a policy brief on Zambia's CDF, which emphasises on the need to give more voice to local communities in the implementation of decentralised CDF projects (Casey et al., 2021:9).

The reason to give more voice to the local community is supported by Williams et al., (2022) who observed that CDF has been successful in constituencies where the following best practices have been observed: the MP does not interfere with the decisions of the Constituency Development Fund Committee (CDFC), the CDFC members are competent professionals from various fields, there is commitment and unity among CDFC members, there is high awareness among members of the public, there is good communication between members of the local communities, there is high level of public participation through frequent open meetings and access to CDF information and records, and the CDFC remains open to the public and readily supplies CDF information upon request.

Contrary to the above, the study on revised CDF Guidelines and its alignment to the Decentralisation Policy found that MPs and the Minister have been allocated powers in the nomination of members to the CDFC (TIZ, 2022). This essentially means that decisions made by this body will to a large extent be influenced by the members of parliament. Whereas the CDF Act 2018 remains silent on how the community could participate, the guidelines have expanded on that but fell short of stressing how this could be done in the absence of adequate capacity building and awareness-raising programmes. To this end, TIZ is of the view that there will be a need for

administrative budgets that will allow for the local authority's creation of spaces for Zone participation for effective output. Awareness-raising on how communities can effectively participate in the development of Development Plans, Integrated Development Plan (IDP), or any other development framework that would reflect real community priority needs will be cardinal and sustainable.

Empirical evidence also suggests that following the announcement of the increased CDF in Zambia's 2022 Budget, it is imperative to determine and communicate government objectives of the CDF expansion and decentralisation clearly and widely to citizens in order to help create a sense of purpose among citizens in support of the programme, manage citizen expectations, and ensure that citizens understand how they can participate in the CDF. Additionally, the tenets of good governance should be employed decisively; decentralisation should be demonstrated, which in turn will influence self – actualisation; and the use of local resources should be encouraged so that communities are self-sustaining (PMRC, 2022:10).

In a study linking CDF to democracy, JCTR notes that the bulwark of decentralisation is making citizens become protagonists of their own development and democracy agenda. Even though Zambia is a representative democracy, the CDF in principle creates a platform for ordinary people to directly influence the kind and quality of their democracy through being protagonists of their development destinies. Clearly, CDF is an avenue for direct democracy in Zambia as people must directly manage their development at the lowest levels. This is because democracy is not an end in itself, but a mere means to achieving public participation in governance, quality social and economic service delivery, good governance, transparency and accountability, common good, enlarging the civic space and constitutional democracy (2023:1).

The above substantive arguments are cardinal to the current study in that they are trying to bring Decentralisation Policy into focus. This is viewed as the re-awakening of tools that will take development to all constituencies in a more participatory manner. Additionally, discussion of CDF is best understood against a background of decentralisation, which is aimed at devolving authority to the local people. This study, therefore, aims to analyse the scope of community participation in the decentralised CDF by drawing a comparison between a rural and urban constituency, to gain insight into the pace of community stakeholders' adoption of the government innovation of decentralising the disbursement of CDF and the levels of community stakeholders' participation in the implementation of CDF-funded projects in predominantly urban Mongu Central Constituency and predominantly rural Nalolo Constituency.

7.4 Research Gap

Most of the literature reviewed in respect of this study indicates that while the researchers similarly focused on assessing, exploring or analysing the impact of community participation in CDF projects in a single constituency, the question of whether these were urban-based or rural-based constituencies was not fully considered. None of the studies reviewed were undertaken by way of a comparative study on the scope of community participation in the decentralised CDF between an urban and rural constituency, despite most of them establishing that there were low levels of community participation in the CDF projects in most of the constituencies that were a subject of their research. Further, there was a notable lack of literature from any particular comparative study undertaken to analyse the scope of community participation in CDF between an urban and rural constituency. This study had to review literature from distinct studies conducted in either an urban or rural constituency to draw a comparison on the levels of community participation in the decentralised CDF. Therefore, to close the notable gaps in other studies that have been reviewed, this research study analysing the scope of community

participation in the CDF projects by comparing predominantly urban Mongu Central Constituency and predominantly rural Nalolo Constituency is necessary and justifiable.

8. Research Methodology

8.1 Research Design

This is a comparative case to analyse the scope of community participation in the decentralised Constituency Development Fund in Mongu Central Constituency and Nalolo Constituency. This research design is supported by Yin who defines a case study as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident, and in which multiple sources of evidence are used (2018:18-20).

8.2 Research Method

This study used qualitative research method on the basis that it enables the researcher to closely interface with the study participants. A qualitative research approach enables the researcher to get as much data from the participants and interact with them in their natural settings, thereby observing and drawing conclusions out of the responses to be given.

8.3 Study Population

According to ZAMSTAT, Mongu Central Constituency has a total population of 148,972 divided between 70,209 males and 78,763 females. Then Nalolo Constituency, on the other hand, has a total population of 73,645 divided between 35,502 males and 38,143 females (2022:29). Therefore, for this research, the study population of the constituents is 222,617.

In addition, there are some participants who were sampled purposively in both constituencies because of the special roles they play in the implementation and monitoring of CDF. The added 26 participants for Mongu Constituency were as follows: one (1) official each from four community-based civil society organisations; Young Women Christian Association (YWCA), Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR), Youth Activist Organisation (YAO), and Civil Society for Poverty Reduction (CSPR), two (2) officials from the Mongu Municipal Council (Mayor and Town Clerk), one (1) official from the Mongu Central National Assembly Office, sixteen (16) officials from the 16 wards in Mongu Central Constituency, implying that there will be a representative from every Ward Development Committee, one (1) official from Caritas Mongu Catholic Diocesan Office, and one (1) official each from Oblate Radio Liseli and Radio Lyambai.

Similarly, 18 participants were purposively sampled for Nalolo Constituency. The added 18 participants were as follows: one (1) official each from four community-based civil society organisations; Young Women Christian Association (YWCA), Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR), Youth Activist Organisation (YAO), and Civil Society for Poverty Reduction (CSPR), two (2) officials from the Nalolo District Council (Council Chairperson and Council Secretary), one (1) official from the Nalolo National Assembly Office, eight (8) officials from the 8 wards in Nalolo Constituency, implying that there will be a representative from every Ward Development Committee, one (1) official from Caritas Mongu Catholic Diocesan Office, and one (1) official each from Oblate Radio Liseli and Radio Lyambai.

The rationale behind the inclusion of the purposively sampled participants is that Mongu Municipal Council and Nalolo District Council coordinate with civil society organisations in Mongu District and Nalolo District to monitor the disbursement and utilisation of decentralised CDF in Mongu Central Constituency and Nalolo Constituency, particularly in the respective Wards. Following the alignment of the CDF to the Decentralisation Policy, local authorities such as the Mongu Municipal Council and Nalolo District Council have attained enhanced powers in the management and disbursement of the expanded and decentralised CDF, and therefore they are instrumental in this study.

Furthermore, the Ward Development Committees were also relevant to this study as they were the link between the local authorities and the communities in the disbursement and administration of the decentralised CDF. On the other hand, it can be justified that the National Assembly Constituency Office were equally instrumental to this study to ascertain the role that the Member of Parliament plays in the administration and communication over the disbursement of the decentralised CDF in Mongu Central Constituency and Nalolo Constituency. Officials from the Roman Catholic Church in Mongu Diocese, where both Mongu Central Constituency and Nalolo Constituency fall, were part of this study because of the role faith-based organisations play in the fight against extreme poverty from a social justice perspective. Community radio stations were also important in this study because they facilitate the flow of information between the government leaders and the community in the utilisation and access to the decentralised and expanded CDF in Mongu Central Constituency and Nalolo Constituency.

Therefore, the total target population for this study was $222,617 + 26 + 18 = \underline{222,661}$.

8.4 Study Sample and sampling procedure

In this study, the sample size in respect of both Mongu Central Constituency and Nalolo Constituency was calculated using the Taro Yamane Formula. The sample size for Mongu Constituency was **399** while the sample size for Nalolo Constituency was **398**.

Therefore, in this study to comparatively Analyse the Scope of Community Participation in the disbursement of Decentralised CDF in Mongu Central Constituency and Nalolo Constituency, the sample size for Mongu Constituency was $399 + 26 = 425$ while for Nalolo Constituency it was $398 + 18 = 416$. In total the sample size for this research study was 841.

For the purposes of this study, purposive sampling techniques were employed for the 26 purposively-selected participants for Mongu Central Constituency and 18 purposively-selected participants for Nalolo Constituency. Malambo posits that behind the qualitative research is the idea to purposively select participants or sites that will best help the researcher understand the problem and research question (2022:22).

8.5 Instruments for Data collection

According to Kombo et al., research instruments are the tools that the researcher uses to collect data. For the purposes of this study, the researcher employed two modes of data collection instruments, which were in form of a focus group discussions (FGD) guide and a semi-structured interview guide (2006:7). These, according to Malambo, were the instruments to gather primary data from the participants. Primary data, in this case, is information obtained directly from first-hand sources by means of focus group discussions in

respect of the 797 community participants and semi-structured interviews for the 44 purposively-sampled participants (2022:22). This meant conducting 80 Focus Group Discussions and 44 semi-structured interviews.

8.6 Method of Data analysis

The Method of Data analysis in respect of this study was justified from the perspective of Creswell who defines Data analysis as the process of summarising the collected primary data, so that more meaningful information could be obtained from the study using the appropriate tools. In this study, data was analysed using thematic approach. This involved scrutinising the participants' verbal responses which were codified as emerging themes of the study. Using this form of data analysis, the researcher thoroughly went through the collected data and identified information that was relevant to the research questions and objectives (2014:13). Learning from Malambo, after summarising the findings from the focus group discussions and interview questions, main themes were synthesized and interpreted. Once the final overall portraits of the crude data from different areas were compiled, the data was qualitatively interpreted and discussed.

9. Presentation and Discussion of the Research Findings

9.1 Introduction

The presentation and discussion of the research findings was done in line with the three research objectives as follows:

- i.** To describe the scope of community participation in the decentralised CDF in Mongu Central Constituency and Nalolo Constituency.
- ii.** To compare and establish the differences of community participation in the decentralised CDF between an urban constituency; Mongu Central, and a rural constituency, Nalolo;
- iii.** To make recommendations on how best people can participate in the decentralised CDF in urban Mongu Central Constituency and the rural Nalolo Constituency.

In line with the research ethical considerations, Codes A to M were assigned to represent the names of all the purposively sampled participants, who included representatives from civil society organisations, community radio stations, ward development committees, National Assembly Constituency Offices, as well as Mongu Municipal Council and Nalolo District Council. Then numbers 1 to 80 represent the names of the individual focus group discussions undertaken as part of the study.

9.2 Demographic characteristics of study participants

The study began by analysing the demographic characteristics of the respondents to provide a comprehensive overview of the sample population. Understanding these characteristics is crucial in contextualising their responses and the effectiveness of the communication strategies to be employed in enhancing the scope of community participation in the decentralised CDF in Mongu Central Constituency and Nalolo Constituency.

9.2.1 Sex of Respondents: Mongu Central Constituency

The sex of the sample population of 426 respondents in respect of Mongu Central Constituency was evenly distributed with more female respondents at 325 (76.3%) compared to 101 males (23.7%). An analysis of this data suggests that more women from a socio-economic perspective are interested in matters around the management of the decentralised CDF in Mongu Central Constituency, hence their willingness to participate in the study.

9.2.2 Sex of Respondents: Nalolo Constituency

As was the case with Mongu Central Constituency, there were more female respondents in Nalolo Constituency at 308 (73.7%), compared to male respondents who were 110 (26.3%). An analysis of this data suggests that more women from a socio-economic perspective are interested in matters around the management of the decentralised CDF in Nalolo Constituency, hence their willingness to participate in the study. Therefore, any communication interventions relating to the management of the decentralised CDF should take this demographic characteristic into account.

9.3 Scope of community participation in the decentralised CDF

The Government's decision to link the disbursement and management of CDF to the Decentralisation Policy, with the aim of guaranteeing equitable distribution of resources and empower local communities, in line with the Participatory Development Theory, was designed to reflect local unique circumstances in development policy-making and implementation. Furthermore, it was intended to aid poverty reduction through participation and, therefore, help spur development through decentralising decision-making to local communities. Decentralisation, in this regard, makes policies more responsive to local needs, provides mechanism that are responsive to varying local circumstances thereby compelling local politicians and bureaucrats to be more responsive and accountable to local communities. In light of the foregoing, the study discusses the key issues that emerged on the scope of community participation in the decentralised CDF in Mongu Central Constituency and Nalolo Constituency in Zambia's Western Province.

9.3.1 Low levels of community participation in the decentralised CDF

The study revealed that the scope of communities' participation in the decentralised CDF, especially at ward level was low because according to the participants some officials were not available to engage the community and provide the necessary information at ward level through community meetings; the complicated procedure to apply for the CDF; the Councils working alone; communities' failure to develop an ownership attitude towards the decentralised CDF, especially when public meetings were called, and primarily because of the power the MP yields by sitting on the CDF Committee to approve projects, and grants and loans to would-be beneficiaries of the decentralised CDF. This finding, from a Participatory Development Theory point of view, is supported by Makungu (2022) who illustrates that the participatory communication model emphasises on the local community rather than the nation-state, on dialogue rather than monologue, and on emancipation rather than alienation.

Participation, in this case, involves the redistribution of power. It aims at redistributing the elites' power so that a community can become a full-fledged democratic one. As such, it directly threatens those whose position and/or very existence depends upon power and its exercise over others. Today, participation, along with concerns for voice, empowerment, and poverty orientation, is at the core of much development work, particularly in governance issues.

The above finding can be linked to a study in Kenya's Kabuchai Constituency where Chelungisi (2021) investigated factors that hinder effective participation of members of the community in activities of CDF projects in the education sector. Based on qualitative interviews of a focus group involving participants with experience and knowledge of CDF in the target area, the study established low levels of participation of the community in the CDF decision-making processes. The community participants felt the likely achievable solution was increasing participation capacity for both the government institution and community, coupled with increasing awareness

of community members and clearly communicating the goals, objectives, the roles, and expectations of the public in the participation process.

According to Makungu (2022) communication is a vital management component to any organisation. Whether the purpose is to educate target publics, update employees on new policies, or to listen to the attitudes of employees or other publics, effective communication is an integral issue in effective management. To be successful, organisations should have comprehensive policies and strategies for communicating with their constituencies and stakeholders, as well as the community at large. Ineffective communication may increase the chances of misunderstandings, damage relationships, break trust, and increase anger and hostility.

This finding is in tandem with a study by Matipa (2019) on community participation in CDF project identification in Mwense Constituency of Mwense district in Zambia, which established that the extent of community participation of CDF project identification was simply by informing communities on what is planned. However, the above finding was contrary to the empirical evidence by Casey (2018) which shows that well-formulated Community-Driven Development (CDD) programmes tend to be inclusive of the vulnerable and the poor, create positive social capital, and offer them higher voice with the government and at the community level. According to an analysis of Brazilian adult educator Paulo Freire's work with adult literacy campaigners among the poor peasants in North-eastern Brazil, Mefalopulos et al (2009) posits that participatory communication theory and practice emphasises on letting the stakeholders get involved in the development process and to determine the outcome, rather than imposing an outcome already decided by external actors.

Further, this finding supports the argument by Lewanika (2019) that communities have no adequate knowledge on CDF hence leading to lack of participation, since the nature of community participation for the majority of the local community was that implementation of CDF projects was generally limited to consultation and use of unskilled labour (Lewanika, 2019). The finding also justifies the observation by Chibomba (2013) that proper formulation and correct implementation of the decentralisation policy vis-a-vis CDF utilisation should aid poverty reduction through participation thereby helping to spur development through decentralising decision-making to local communities.

9.3.2 Communities not participating in the selection of CDF-funded projects and programmes

The study revealed that in as much as the Government of Zambia had decided to link the Decentralisation Policy to the CDF in order to empower local communities take charge of their own development, and that the majority of the community participants were aware of the decentralised CDF, and were further aware of the projects and programmes that were being undertaken in their communities funded by the decentralised CDF, they were not participating in the selection of these projects and programmes as prescribed by the Participatory Development Theory. It is further justified a study anchored on the Participatory Communication Theory by Makungu (2022), which sees people as the controlling actors or participants for development.

The above proposition of this theory revolves around people's participation in the development process. In this regard, people will have self-appreciation instead of self-depreciation, because according to the Participatory Communication Model, development is meant to liberate people. The Participatory Communication Model sees people as the nucleus of development since in this model, development means lifting up the spirits of a local community to take pride in its own culture, intellect and environment.

Some participants attributed this to corruption in the procurement processes, political influence, and failure by the leaders to sensitise communities on the decentralised CDF at ward level. Other participants complained that CDF was being accessed by only those who belong to the ruling UPND party while others said the selection of projects and programmes was being done by the Councils alone in a non-transparent manner devoid of community involvement.

This finding is in tandem with a study by Phiri (2016) which examined the nature and level of community participation in CDF projects in Lusaka City, particularly Kanyama Constituency. The study found that community participation took on different forms at different stages of the CDF project processes. The nature of community participation for the majority of local communities in CDF projects was generally limited to consultation and use of unskilled labour. Local communities were generally not actively involved in project identification, implementation and monitoring processes. The study found that the factors accounting for this level of community participation in CDF projects included lack of awareness and knowledge of CDF, lack of awareness about the right and opportunities for participation, inadequate information dissemination, poverty and poor community attitudes towards participation.

9.3.3 Inadequate community sensitisation on the decentralised CDF

Despite the Rockefeller Process of Participatory Development Theory reinforcing that participatory approaches to communication should emphasise on structural and social change, and defines communication for social change as a process of public and private dialogue, through which people define who they are, what they need and how to get what they need in order to improve their own lives, and further utilises dialogue that leads to collective problem identification, decision-making, and community-based implementation of solutions to development issues (www.communicationforsocialchange.org viewed on 30/05/2023 at 01:17), the study revealed that there was inadequate community sensitisation on the decentralised CDF. Where it was done, the leaders focused more on partisan politics than on matters of development related to the decentralised CDF.

The participants attributed this to the challenge on the part of the Council officials, who whenever were called to these community meetings to provide the necessary information to the members of the community and various stakeholders, including the media, they were almost unavailable. Some participants cited a research that was done by Transparency International Zambia, which found that Mongu was one of the districts that had failed in that area, in terms of the meetings where they had to explain certain things to members of the community.

Other respondents blamed this situation on the failure by MPs to go into the wards to sensitise people on the decentralised CDF. However, some participants said leaders tasked with the management of the decentralised CDF prefer using radio stations to sensitise communities when face-to-face community meetings were proving to be the best. They said during community meetings, people can walk to these meetings and can be given an opportunity to engage their leaders. The participants said sensitisation meetings could be an opportunity for people to identify what should be done. One participant said community sensitisation meetings on the decentralised CDF could allow communities to air out their views.

The respondents' observations conform to Omia's cross-sectional exploratory study of community participation in CDF projects in Kangemi Ward, in Kenya's Westlands Constituency, specifically focused on examining the level of awareness and knowledge of CDF operations and policies by community members, determining the mode of participation in CDF projects by community members and

examining the views of community members on constraints to active participation in CDF projects. This study established that although there was a general high awareness of CDF among community members, particular knowledge of CDF details with regard to costs and amounts disbursed for specific projects was generally low among the community members. This has an effect in stifling the voices of the people, limiting people's rights to demand accountability, inclusion and participation in the CDF projects. Moreover, community participation in monitoring and evaluation of the CDF projects has been hindered by low knowledge and awareness on the CDF regulations and operations (2011: viii).

9.3.4 Lack of community meetings by MPs specifically on the decentralised CDF

The study revealed that the MPs, especially in Mongu Central Constituency, were not conducting community meetings specifically on the decentralised CDF, and where this was being done, for instance in Nalolo Constituency, most of the communities, according to the participants, had not been visited by the MP since being elected into office. Some participants complained that their MPs had not returned to the wards since winning elections, while others said the only meeting they remember attending where the decentralised CDF was briefly discussed with their MP was called to celebrate 100 years of the creation of the National Assembly of Zambia. Another participant said there was a situation in Mongu Central Constituency where communities complaining with the way projects were being done reach out to the MP and he refers them to the Council.

This finding resonates with a study by Chelungisi (2021) which established that increasing awareness of community members and clearly communicating the goals, objectives, and the roles, and expectations of the public in the participation process in the decentralised CDF, increases chances of CDF projects' success.

9.3.5 Councils and MPs through CDFCs ignoring community proposals submitted through WDCs on the decentralised CDF

Community participation in the increased CDF is well supported by the Minister of Local Government and Rural Development, Garry Nkombo who stated that through CDF, local communities were now able, and were being empowered to determine their own development path by identifying and prioritising projects according to their needs or requirements. This was a key factor in ensuring inclusive development via decentralisation in line with the New Dawn government's vision to empower communities to determine their development agenda through CDF. However, this study found that local authorities and the MPs through the CDFCs were ignoring community proposals submitted through the WDCs on the decentralised CDF, leading to the selection of projects and programmes funded under the CDF that do not widely reflect the community aspirations. One participant said the local authorities were the secretariat of CDF and as such they manage its implementation. Another participant said the CDFCs decide which projects and programmes to be funded under the decentralised CDF upon recommendation by the WDCs. However, a community participant complained that the WDCs do not handle any money as they just took the application forms to the Council.

Some participants suggested that when an allocation of the decentralised CDF was received from Lusaka, the WDCs should be called to the offices together with the councillors so that they are involved in how the money will be allocated in the wards. One participant complained that the current situation was such that in as much as the WDCs were the stepping stone between the community and local government, that was not the reality on the ground. Local government, they complained, uses people on paper but there was nothing the community was benefiting. Some participants complained that whenever they submitted applications to benefit from skills bursaries funded from the decentralised CDF to the Council through the councillor, their applications were never considered. One participant confirmed that they sit on the CDF Committee which approves projects, select beneficiaries under empowerment fund (Grants and

Loans) on behalf of the MP. Some participants said people should participate in the decentralised CDF through their respective wards. That after the full council meetings, officials should go into each ward and ask the people what they want instead of a one-size-fits-all approach where leaders choose who they want to benefit from CDF. In one case, it was reported that the WDC members were the ones benefiting from the decentralised CDF at the expense of the community members.

This finding is in line with Miano's submission that CDF was a decentralised strategy established to increase community participation in development projects. A study carried out to find out the factors influencing community participation in CDF-funded projects in Mathira Constituency in Kenya's Nyeri County, established that due to the community participation model being used in the constituency and particularly the methods used for information sharing for awareness creation, there was low-level community participation in CDF-funded projects (2016:1).

Further this finding does agree with Matipa's study on community participation in CDF project identification in Mwense Constituency of Mwense district in Zambia, which established that the extent of community participation of CDF project identification was simply by informing communities on what was planned, and that councillors and the area Member of Parliament were the ones identifying CDF projects in the constituency (2019:1-14).

9.3.6 Councils influencing elections of WDC members by communities

Despite the CDF Guidelines stipulating that community members should elect members of the WDCs through a democratic process, the study found that this was not the case on the ground, especially in Mongu Central Constituency. Some participants said instead of being given a chance to vote for members of their WDC and being geared to do so, the Council said there was not going to be any voting and the chairperson was selected among the six who were aspiring for the position by the Council.

This finding is supported by a study by JCTR (2023) linking CDF to democracy, which notes that the bulwark of decentralisation was making citizens become protagonists of their own development and democracy agenda. That even though Zambia was a representative democracy, the CDF in principle creates a platform for ordinary people to directly influence the kind and quality of their democracy through being protagonists of their development destinies. Clearly, CDF is an avenue for direct democracy in Zambia as people must directly manage their development at the lowest levels. This was because democracy was not an end in itself, but a mere means to achieving public participation in governance, quality social and economic service delivery, good governance, transparency and accountability, common good, enlarging the civic space and constitutional democracy.

9.3.7 Limited collaboration between the Councils and CSOs in the management of the decentralised CDF at ward level

While it is generally acknowledged that civil society organisations through their advocacy role enhance communities' participation in development programmes such as those funded under the decentralised CDF, this study noted limited collaboration between the Councils and CSOs in the management of the decentralised CDF in both Mongu Central Constituency and Nalolo Constituency. Some participants said the Mongu Municipal Council, specifically, has never engaged any civil society organisation following the decentralisation of the CDF. Another participant said Nalolo District Council engages civil society organisations in the decentralised CDF as a mere community stakeholder. Most community participants from both constituencies said they had never attended a meeting either organised by the Council or any civil society organisation on the decentralised CDF. According to one participant, owing to this limited collaboration

between the local authorities and the civil society organisations on the decentralised CDF, there was very little presence of CSOs in the wards of Mongu Central Constituency and Nalolo Constituency vis-a-vis the decentralised CDF.

This finding conforms to a submission by PMRC (2022) on the need to foster a shared sense of purpose and ownership arising from the expanded scope of the CDF, as it is an undertaking aimed at taking development closer to the people through various empowerment initiatives. This is also well-articulated by Casey et al.,(2021) in a policy brief on Zambia's CDF, which emphasises on the need to give more voice to local communities in the implementation of decentralised CDF projects.

9.3.8 Political influence in the identification of community beneficiaries from the decentralised CDF

Despite the government allocating the decentralised CDF to all the 156 parliamentary constituencies in an equitable and non-biased manner, this study on the scope of community participation in the decentralised CDF in Mongu Central Constituency and Nalolo Constituency found that there was political influence, especially from the ruling party leaders, in the selection of community beneficiaries from the decentralised CDF in both constituencies. Participants said while communities would want certain projects to be done, those from the ruling party will have a certain interest because they value certain projects. Using their political influence, they push for certain projects to be approved by the Council. Some participants said the decentralised CDF must be detached from politics because some political cadres who had no capacity to deliver were benefiting from projects to make desks.

Further, some participants complained that there was a partisan approach in the selection of people to benefit from CDF and those who were identified to be from other political parties were left out. One participant added that the decentralised CDF was being accessed by only those who belong to the UPND party because they knew when it was disbursed. Another participant confirmed that he had benefited from the decentralised CDF in his capacity as a ruling party youth chairman in his ward.

This finding justifies the position of Smith (2007) who states that decentralisation, makes policies more responsive to local needs, provides a mechanism that is responsive to varying local circumstances thereby improving allocative efficiency and makes local politicians and bureaucrats more responsive and accountable to local communities. Additionally, this finding is in tandem with a policy brief by PMRC (2022) stating that the tenets of good governance should be employed decisively; decentralisation should be demonstrated, which in turn will influence self – actualisation; and the use of local resources should be encouraged so that communities are self-sustaining in the decentralised CDF.

9.3.9 Corruption in the procurement of projects funded under the decentralised CDF

Although the CDF Guidelines and the Public Finance Management Act, emphasises on the need for prudent and accountable utilisation of funds provided under the decentralised CDF, this study revealed there was corruption in the procurement of projects funded under the decentralised CDF in both Mongu Central Constituency and Nalolo Constituency. Participants said people in the construction sector were the ones facing problems because of inside bidding. It was reported the decentralised CDF wasn't benefiting the local communities but those from outside. Some participants complained that some Council officials would award a tender to someone from the local communities, expecting a kick-back in return. They said if they refused to pay the kick-back, they would not get any project funded under the decentralised CDF. One participant said the challenge in the communities' participation in the decentralised CDF was the public procurement process associated with a risk of corruption due to the various entities one had to go through in order to fulfil the

procurement requirements. Another participant said the other challenge was that officials manage the decentralised CDF in a secretive manner, away from the media. This makes it difficult to track people who have benefited from the CDF so that they could give testimony in order to encourage other people to apply.

This finding resonates with JCTR (2023) who argue that democracy is not an end in itself, but a mere means to achieving public participation in governance, quality social and economic service delivery, good governance, transparency and accountability, common good, enlarging the civic space and constitutional democracy.

10. Comparing and establishing the differences of community participation in the decentralised CDF between Mongu Central Constituency and Nalolo Constituency

A comparison of the scope of community participation in the decentralised CDF between Mongu Central Constituency and Nalolo Constituency found that the scope of community participation in the decentralised CDF in both constituencies was low. However, the study established that there were minor differences in terms of the scope of community participation in the decentralised CDF, the selection of contractors to undertake projects funded by the decentralised CDF, and how WDC members are benefiting from the decentralised, including the utilisation of the CDF funds and the election of WDC members.

Participants said in Mongu Central Constituency, the MP always refers them to the Council whenever they reach out to him over the decentralised CDF but in Nalolo Constituency, the MP was able to engage the communities, although the only concern was that there were certain communities which he prefers to visit, and in other areas, they were complaining that ever since he got into power he had never visited them.

Some community participants in Mongu Central Constituency complained that whenever there was a project funded under the decentralised CDF, only people from outside benefit at the expense of the local people. They said this was against what the President said that if a project was in a particular area only locals should be considered for jobs. However, community participants in Nalolo Constituency said young people who were trained through skills bursaries from the decentralised CDF had benefited as local contractors, which was not the case before. These youths built at Mukukutu and Lunga schools as local contractors. The participants said desks had been supplied by local contractors who had been trained under CDF.

Another community participant said while CDF for Nalolo Constituency was sufficient the projects being done were very few. She wondered why Mongu Central Constituency, an urban constituency where the demand was very high, should do more projects compared to Nalolo Constituency, a rural constituency. Some participants in Mongu Central Constituency said the Council did not allow them to vote for the WDC members but one participant from Nalolo Constituency said the WDC members were elected by members of the community at a community meeting.

In Mongu Central Constituency, one participant, a WDC member, personally benefited from the decentralised CDF but another participant from Nalolo Constituency, also a WDC member, said he had never benefited from the decentralised CDF.

This finding is in tandem with a study by Casey et al.,(2021) titled Zambia's Constituency Development Fund: Policy considerations, which questions whether all constituencies should receive equal funds or CDF allocations across constituencies should be done

depending on local needs. A needs-based allocation could prove more equitable than a one-size-fits-all approach and more effective in promoting development. Population or other socio-economic variables could be used as a proxy for the need to distribute these funds. The Zambia Living Conditions and Monitoring Survey could provide important data to base a needs-based assessment on.

11. How best people can participate in the decentralised CDF

The researcher asked the respondents who participated in the study analysing the scope of community participation in the decentralised CDF in both Mongu Central Constituency and Nalolo Constituency, to suggest how best people can participate in the decentralised CDF. One participant suggested that the government had provided smooth ground for people to participate in the decentralised CDF. However, the people should develop an ownership attitude because they lack interest in public meetings when called upon. Another participant said the best way was if people could be able to walk into Council offices, and especially CDF Committees and WDCs, who should be available at the time to provide information. This participant complained that at the time people wanted information about the decentralised CDF, people occupying positions of responsibility were busy.

Some participants said the best way for people to participate in the decentralised CDF was if it could be detached from the politicians and be managed in a non-partisan manner at all costs. Others suggested that since the decentralised CDF was usually released quarterly, there should be quarterly updates for accountability purposes. Another respondent proposed that there should be an audit and monitoring of how the money was being accessed. Right now we just hear about CDF but don't know where it goes and how it is spent. Not even how it is retrieved. Some suggested that the decentralised CDF should be used to create jobs among the unemployed youth at ward level. Furthermore, one participant said the communities should have the power to select their own projects while some suggested that communities should be able to sit down and calculate what the CDF had done in terms of tangible developments. One participant said people should be initiating their need in their localities other than thinking for them in terms of access to the decentralised CDF.

For the people to participate in the decentralised CDF, another participant suggested that whenever there were meetings on the CDF, community members should be informed so that they could also contribute their opinion. Some respondents demanded that there should be fairness in the management of the decentralised CDF. Others complained that they were not participating in the decentralised CDF because their leaders do not organise them so that they could also benefit from the community development fund. One participant urged others to feel that the CDF was something that was meant for them and they should participate by reaping the benefits. However, another participant said the people's opinion should be prioritised and the government should go with what the people want from the decentralised CDF. This, some said, instead of Council officials submitting on their behalf, they should be accorded the freedom to choose CDF-funded projects for themselves. Some suggested that people should participate through their respective wards and that after each full Council meeting, the officials should go into each ward and ask the people what they wanted, instead of a one-size-fits-all. They said consulting people was important instead of officials deciding and doing things on their own.

These suggestions are in line with Gow et al., who in agreeing with Chelungisi (2021) pointed out that decentralisation and increased participation of beneficiaries increases the chances of CDF projects succeeding. The suggestions are also in tandem with a study by Casey (2018) where it was established that well-formulated Community-Driven Development (CDD) programmes tend to be inclusive of the vulnerable and the poor, create positive social capital, and offer them higher voice with the government and at the community level. According to this study, CDD was a highly decentralised and participatory approach to local development, which devolves

financial and operational control over public goods to communities. It emphasises the importance and challenge of ensuring that communities have real voices in this process, since community participation and decision-making in socio-economic development at the local level was a key aim of the CDF.

12. Conclusion

The study revealed that even though the Government of Zambia, in line with the Participatory Development Theory, decided to link the disbursement and management of CDF to the Decentralisation Policy so as to guarantee equitable distribution of resources and empower local communities, and the Local Government Act No.2 of 2019 was enacted to provide a platform for citizen participation at sub-district level through the Ward Development Committees, the scope of community participation in the decentralised CDF was low in Mongu Central Constituency and Nalolo Constituency. This calls for the Government of Zambia to clearly and widely communicate the objectives and vision behind the decentralisation of the CDF. It is hoped that such would help create a shared sense of purpose among citizens in support of the programme, manage citizen expectations, and ensure that citizens understand how they can participate in the CDF. Part of this messaging should be one of learning and innovation: explain how the government will pilot different approaches to CDF implementation, learn from these successes and failures, and implement the lessons learned incrementally to improve CDF effectiveness overtime.

13. Recommendations

- i. The Government of Zambia should ensure that they build the participatory capacity of both the community stakeholders and decision-makers so as to enhance the levels of community participation in the decentralised CDF by clearly explaining the objectives behind the decision to link CDF to the Decentralisation Policy.
- ii. Communities should be left to select projects and programmes funded under the decentralised CDF and vote for members of the WDCs without any decision-making body influencing their choices.
- iii. Members of Parliament should be urged to conduct community meetings on the decentralised CDF in the wards whenever the National Assembly was on recess so as to lead the community sensitisation over the decentralised CDF.
- iv. Punitive measures should be taken against officials involved in corrupt procurements in relation to the decentralised CDF.
- v. The identification of beneficiaries of the decentralised CDF should be detached from politics but allow for a democratic process to take the lead through a fair and transparent approach.
- vi. There should be increased collaboration between the traditional leaders, church leaders, local authorities and civil society organisations in the management of the decentralised CDF in order to allow for community advocacy, thereby increase community participation.
- vii. The MP working in collaboration with the councils and the CDFCs should not be allowed to override the submissions from the communities made through the WDCs while the power they wield through the CDFC should be checked.

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