

# **Examining Project Cycle Management in The Community Projects Under The Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in Zambia: Case Study of Chipata District**

**Lewis Mwape**

Student, Kesmonds International University

**LEAD SUPERVISOR:** PROF. DR. ATANGA DESMOND FUNWIE  
**CO-SUPERVISOR:** PROF. PELEKELO KABUNDULA

## **Abstract**

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of the application of Project Cycle Management (PCM) principles within Constituency Development Fund (CDF) under Community Projects in Chipata, Zambia. Utilizing PCM methodologies such as the Logical Framework Approach (LFA), Gantt chart scheduling, Results-Based Management (RBM), and stakeholder analysis matrices, the research investigates the extent to which these tools enhance project identification, planning, implementation, and evaluation processes. The study adopts a mixed-methods design, combining quantitative data from project performance metrics with qualitative insights from key informant interviews and focus group discussions. The findings reveal critical deficiencies in governance structures, risk management practices, and community engagement processes. Specifically, inadequate integration of community structures into the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) frameworks and risk control mechanisms have led to project delays, cost escalations, and reduced quality of outcomes.

To address these challenges, the study proposes a model that leverages PCM tools such as risk registers, critical path analysis (CPA), and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for continuous progress tracking and decision-making. Emphasis is placed on strengthening governance through single-point accountability systems, capacity-building programs for Ward Development Committees (WDCs) and Constituency Development Fund Committees and embedding stakeholder feedback loops in project planning cycles. This model offers a replicable framework to enhance transparency, optimize resource allocation, and ensure project alignment with community priorities. The research contributes to the growing discourse on PCM's role in decentralized project management and provides actionable recommendations for policy reform and operational improvement in community projects under CDF.

## **CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION**

### **1.0 Overview**

The introductory chapter of this dissertation provides a thorough foundation for the investigation into Project Cycle Management (PCM) within Community Projects under the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in Chipata, Zambia. Focusing on the case study of Chipata District. Commencing with an exploration of the historical origins of the Constituency Development Fund (CDF), the chapter subsequently outlines and articulates the contextual background information; research problem, purpose of the study; delineates research objectives; research questions, significance of the study, delimitation of the study; limitation of the study and operational definition of terms. Finally, the chapter outlines the dissertation's structure and offers a succinct summary.

### **1.1 Background Information**

Following Zambia's attainment of independence in 1964, she embarked on a series of decentralization endeavours, ostensibly aimed at fostering socio-economic development. As articulated by Dresang (1975:92), the post-colonial Zambian state inherited a disjointed administrative apparatus typified by a multitude of semi-autonomous government departments operating with minimal central oversight. This decentralized administrative landscape presented a formidable obstacle, compelling the government to undertake the arduous task of metamorphosing this inherited structure into a dynamic local governance framework conducive to sustainable public participation (Chikulo 2009).

After Zambia's independence, governmental initiatives were swiftly enacted to overhaul existing administrative frameworks, with the overarching goal of bolstering local governance structures and fostering heightened public engagement in developmental endeavours. Hampwaye (2008:348) underscores this evolution, noting that, "Since its independence in 1964, the Zambian government has undertaken various measures to decentralize. These efforts encompass a blend of decentralization types, including deconcentration, delegation, and devolution."

In 1994, the Zambian Parliament witnessed a motion concerning the budgetary allotment for constituency projects. The motion advocated for "a provision of not less than 'K500,000,000 (US\$ 100,000) in real terms, for development projects directly decided upon by the people in each constituency and that such funds be disbursed through district councils" (National Assembly of Zambia 1994:1053). Subsequently, the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) was sanctioned by Parliament in 1995, with the primary objective of implementing community-based projects geared towards bolstering the socioeconomic well-being of constituents (GRZ 2006:1). Positioned within Zambia's broader decentralization initiative, the CDF serves as a public fund tailored to address grassroots developmental needs. Established by the government, its mandate encompasses poverty alleviation and the equitable distribution of development resources nationwide, with a specific focus on directing a portion of annual government revenue to constituencies for prioritized development projects, as determined by constituency members.

As highlighted by Chileshe (2012), the CDF represents one of the most substantial annual transfers allocated to the 156 constituencies. Initially set at approximately US\$ 13,000 per constituency in 2006,

the budgetary allocation for the CDF escalated to around US\$ 200,000 per constituency by 2012 (National Assembly of Zambia 2012). Eligibility for CDF disbursements extends to all districts in Zambia since 1995 (Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, 2006).

The CDF emerged as an innovative mechanism "to combat poverty at the grassroots level by financing development projects through elected Members of Parliament" (Kaduuli 2008). Chinsinga (2009:10-11) underscores its role in reinforcing the constituency service function of parliamentarians, enabling them to align with community developmental expectations through the implementation of small-scale, patronage-driven projects. As articulated by Francis et al (2009: 5), the CDF aims to empower communities by providing resources for development projects that align with their needs and preferences, thereby facilitating bottom-up development. Beyond poverty reduction, the fund endeavours to enhance participatory decision-making processes, promote good governance, and foster transparency and accountability (Francis et al 2009: 11).

Constituency Development Funds (CDFs) represent a localized mechanism of governance and policy implementation within the context of decentralized development paradigms.

Within this framework, Members of Parliament (MPs) and local government entities are designated as principal agents responsible for delivering social services to communities. Proponents argue that this approach can effectively enhance the quality of life within localities, thereby fostering sustainable livelihoods.

According to the Centre for International Development (2005), Constituency Development Funds (CDFs) constitute a policy framework aimed at addressing immediate social exigencies within local communities, operational across nearly twenty-three (23) nations. Among these, in Africa, countries such as Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Kenya, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Namibia, and Southern Sudan have adopted CDFs. In Asia, nations including Bhutan, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Mongolia, and India have implemented similar initiatives. Additionally, countries such as Honduras, Jamaica, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, and the Solomon Islands have also embraced CDFs. Across these jurisdictions, CDFs serve as mechanisms for locally-driven development funding, facilitating direct allocation of resources from central government to electoral constituencies for infrastructural projects. However, the structure and operation of CDFs vary both between and within countries, encompassing distinctions in funding quantum, allocation principles, and utilization protocols.

For instance, in Malawi, CDFs are designed to address immediate, short-term developmental needs within communities while ensuring equitable rural development nationwide. In Kenya, the rationale for CDFs centres on fostering development and mitigating poverty at the constituency level. Uganda's CDFs aim to tackle poverty at the grassroots level, complementing existing national poverty alleviation strategies. In Jamaica, the emphasis lies on fostering human and infrastructural development at the community and constituency levels, empowering Members of Parliament to address constituents' articulated needs and priorities, thereby enhancing local governance.

Similarly, in Zambia, CDFs are positioned to offer MPs and their constituencies the autonomy to select and implement projects that optimize community welfare in alignment with local preferences and needs.



Established to support MPs in project implementation due to financial constraints, CDFs empower incumbents to manage funds within stipulated guidelines.

Notably, in the absence of specific legislation, the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development introduced Guidelines on the Utilization and Management of Constituency Development Funds in 2006 to provide a framework for CDF administration.

Project eligibility under CDFs is contingent upon developmental criteria and the potential benefits to various stakeholders within the district. Noteworthy is the critical role of project selection in ensuring the success of developmental endeavours. Preliminary project selection is overseen by the Constituency Development Committee (CDC) and local communities, adhering to guidelines outlined by the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (2006). While CDF guidelines offer flexibility in project eligibility, adherence to qualifying conditions deemed essential by local communities justifies fund utilization for designated projects and programs.

Recognizing the pivotal role of the CDF in promoting local development, its institutionalization was enshrined in the Constitution of Zambia [Amendment] Act No. 2 of 2016, under Article 162. Consequently, the Constituency Development Fund Act No. 11 of 2018 was enacted to delineate guidelines for the management, allocation, utilization, and accountability of the Fund. **Act No. 11 of 2018** of the Laws of Zambia states:

*“An Act to provide for the management, disbursement, utilisation and accountability of the Constituency Development Fund established under the Constitution; establish Constituency Development Fund Committees in constituencies and provide for their composition and functions; and provide for matters connected with, or incidental to, the foregoing”*

These legal provisions serve as a fundamental framework facilitating robust community engagement in decision-making processes concerning local socio-economic development initiatives and addressing pertinent challenges affecting community well-being.

Recent years have witnessed significant increases in the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) allocation in Zambia, providing more financial resources for community-driven development projects throughout the country.

In 2021, the United Party of National Development (UPND)’s New Dawn Administration under the leadership of His Excellency, President of the Republic of Zambia, Mr. Hakainde Hichilema demonstrated its strong commitment to community-driven development by increasing funds for all 156 Zambian constituencies by 16 times, thus allocating K27 million.

This allocation represents a notable milestone, which represents the most significant funding for community-determined expenditures since the establishment of the Fund in 1995.

The government has also introduced reforms to the CDF to ensure timely and accountable disbursements that truly target issues affecting communities. This includes the expansion of CDF Committees which allow community projects to be identified at ward level; Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) to cover major development gaps in Zambia’s districts; and the devolution of project approvals to ensure that projects can be approved at the provincial level by Provincial Administrations across the country to reduce

bottlenecks. The 2024 budget has further increased CDF spending to K30.8 million per constituency from K1million in 2021 and 25.7 million in 2023.

### **1.1.1 Constituency Development Fund (CDF) Components**

According to Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MoLRD) CDF Revised guideline (2022), the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) has three (3) components namely; Community Projects, Youth, Women and Community Empowerment and Secondary Boarding School and Skills Development Bursaries.

#### **1.1.1.1 Community Projects**

Community Projects epitomize grassroots development initiatives, meticulously identified and spearheaded by local communities within their respective Wards, aimed at uplifting the quality of life for the broader community. Specifically:

- a) These projects exemplify community-driven endeavours where the collective needs and aspirations of residents are actively engaged, aligned, and addressed in consonance with the Ward Development Plan, Integrated Development Plan, and National Development Plan, or any applicable local development framework. Such participatory planning ensures that projects resonate with the community's socio-economic fabric and foster a sense of ownership.
- b) Community Projects serve as the vanguard in confronting and ameliorating challenges stemming from inadequate infrastructure, encompassing a spectrum of essential amenities such as potable water supply systems, sanitation facilities, educational infrastructure, healthcare facilities, law enforcement infrastructure, transportation networks, market infrastructure, river crossing points, irrigation systems, and agricultural infrastructure, among others. Appendix A provides an exhaustive inventory of such projects, reflecting the multifaceted approach adopted to address pressing community needs comprehensively.

#### **1.1.1.2 Youth, Women and Community Empowerment**

The empowerment component of the CDF embodies an ethos of inclusivity and equity, prioritizing the upliftment of marginalized segments, including youth, women, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable cohorts within the community fabric. Empowerment initiatives are underpinned by a multifaceted strategy aimed at fostering economic independence, social inclusion, and self-sufficiency among beneficiaries. Empowerment beneficiaries are endowed with seed funding in the form of grants, strategically allocated to Organized Groups, Clubs, and Cooperatives, fostering a culture of collective endeavour and cooperative enterprise. Additionally, empowerment loans are extended to both cooperatives and individuals with burgeoning small and medium-scale enterprises, nurturing entrepreneurship and catalysing economic growth within the constituency.

Given the demographic significance of youth as the torchbearers of future progress, empowerment programs are meticulously tailored to address a gamut of challenges impeding their socio-economic advancement. These challenges range from barriers to education and skill acquisition to limited access to financial resources, employment opportunities, and avenues for holistic empowerment. Concurrently, empowering women and other marginalized groups contributes synergistically to mitigating vulnerability and augmenting the socio-economic resilience of the community at large.





To ensure the holistic development and sustenance of empowered individuals and enterprises, the component advocates for the provision of comprehensive support services encompassing apprenticeship, mentorship, and bespoke business development programs. Technical expertise and guidance are sourced from a diverse array of stakeholders, including the Technical Education Vocational Entrepreneurship Training Authority (TEVETA), Non- Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Chamber of Commerce, and esteemed industry mavens within the constituency, fostering a collaborative ecosystem conducive to entrepreneurial success and sustainable livelihoods.

### ***1.1.1.3 Secondary Boarding School and Skills Development Bursaries***

The Secondary Boarding School and Skills Development Bursaries constitute a vital conduit for equitable access to secondary education and vocational training opportunities, particularly targeting vulnerable learners within the constituency. This component serves as a fulcrum for human capital development and the promotion of entrepreneurial acumen at the grassroots level.

With a steadfast commitment to inclusivity and meritocracy, the bursary program endeavours to dismantle barriers to educational attainment and skill acquisition, thereby fostering a conducive environment for personal growth, professional advancement, and community upliftment.

By facilitating access to secondary boarding schools and accredited skills training institutions offering technical, vocational, and entrepreneurship programs, the bursary initiative seeks to catalyze transformative change and unlock the latent potential of individuals hailing from marginalized backgrounds.

The overarching goal of the Secondary Boarding School and Skills Development Bursaries transcends mere academic attainment; it endeavours to nurture a cadre of skilled, empowered individuals equipped with the requisite competencies to navigate the complexities of the modern economy and spearhead sustainable development initiatives within their communities. Through targeted investment in education and skills development, the CDF underscores its unwavering commitment to fostering a future-ready workforce and engendering socio- economic prosperity at the grassroots level (CDF Guideline, 2022).

### **1.1.2 Importance of Project Cycle Management in Community Projects**

The importance of Project Cycle Management in a CDF scheme cannot be overemphasized because it helps to ensure that the various stages of a project are managed effectively in order to achieve success. Given the localized approach of CDF, projects are usually undertaken at community level. Due to limited experience in project identification, initiation, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation there is usually a tendency to rush into implementation without fully understanding or planning the various stages of a project.

As George Stanley Kinyata (PhD) and Nafiu Lukman Abiodun (PhD) rightly noted in their article entitled, *The Impact of Community Participation on Projects' Success in Africa: A Bottom-Up Approach*; published in *International Journal of Research in Sociology and Anthropology (IJRSA)* (Volume 6, Issue 3, 2020, PP 01-08, that “Community based development initiatives improve the match between what a community needs and what it obtains from development projects”. Recently, the World Bank evaluation of projects indicated that those projects that have bottom-up approach have succeeded and are rated satisfactory and sustainable (Olukotun, 2017 and Stanley, 2003). Other scholars have pointed out that it is better to mobilize the society rather than leading it, because once the self- confidence in the people germinates, it will not take a long time for the flowers of development to blossom (Chirenje et al., 2013).

In the same Journal, George Stanley Kinyata (PhD) and Nafiu Lukman Abiodun (PhD...2022), pointed out that, “Community participation in project development is about ordinary citizens assessing needs and participating in project planning and budgeting, implementation and monitoring. This improves public resource management and reduces corruption. Thus, making civil servants and political leaders accountable to the people. The exemption of weak and powerless citizens from decision making is one of the causes of poverty, most especially in Uganda because it denies them their rights and creates unequal power relationship. Many countries except some countries like Uganda have addressed this problem by introducing a number of mechanisms to enhance community participatory budgeting at local levels”. The problem identified by the duo are endemic in many societies especially in local communities in Zambia both in urban and rural areas. Project Cycle Management (PCM) emphasizes control of projects at all stages including project identification, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and project close. The project life cycle has significant importance in assuring the delivery of a quality project on time with budgeted cost and minimal risk.

The PCM helps better manage a project, which is crucial in assuring successful results for a given task especially Community Projects under CDF would benefit greatly by using PCM project management methodology. The importance of Project Cycle Management includes:

### **Structure a Project**

Better structuring of a project helps in better monitoring and better results. With a project life cycle, one can divide the project into several stages, making the structure easier to understand and monitor. This is important in that Contractors for Community Projects would know which task to perform, and the Community Members and Council management would know when to expect completion of a sub-task of the project, which enhances the project’s overall efficiency. Structuring a project serves as the cornerstone of effective Project Cycle Management, offering numerous benefits that extend well beyond initial planning stages.

A structured approach entails breaking down the project into manageable phases, each with its own set of tasks, deliverables, and milestones. This delineation not only provides a clear roadmap for project progression but also facilitates better monitoring and control throughout the project lifecycle.

One of the primary advantages of structuring a project lies in its ability to enhance efficiency and productivity. By dividing the project into stages, teams can focus on completing specific tasks and objectives within defined timeframes, minimizing the risk of scope creep or project drift. This focused approach fosters a sense of clarity and direction among project stakeholders, enabling them to prioritize activities and allocate resources effectively to drive progress.

Furthermore, a well-structured project framework promotes accountability and transparency, essential elements for fostering trust and collaboration within project teams and across stakeholder groups. Each stage of the project is associated with clearly defined responsibilities and deliverables, ensuring that all team members understand their roles and contributions to the overall project objectives. This transparency not only encourages a culture of accountability but also facilitates effective communication and coordination, reducing the likelihood of misunderstandings or conflicts arising during project execution.



Additionally, structured project management enables organizations to better manage risks and uncertainties inherent in complex projects. By systematically breaking down the project into phases, teams can identify potential risks and dependencies early on, allowing for proactive risk mitigation strategies to be implemented. This proactive approach minimizes the likelihood of costly delays or disruptions later in the project lifecycle, enhancing overall project resilience and adaptability in the face of changing circumstances.

Structuring a project is essential for laying the groundwork for successful Project Cycle Management. It provides a clear framework for planning, executing, and monitoring project activities, promoting efficiency, accountability, and risk management throughout the project lifecycle. By adopting a structured approach, organizations can enhance their ability to deliver projects on time, within budget, and to the satisfaction of all stakeholders involved.

## **Better Communication**

Better communication is paramount in PCM as it serves as the lifeblood of any project, enabling seamless coordination, collaboration, and understanding among stakeholders. PCM emphasizes the significance of clear and effective communication throughout the project lifecycle to ensure that all parties involved are aligned with project goals and expectations.

First and foremost, improved communication fosters a shared understanding of project objectives and requirements among community members, contractors, and project management teams. By facilitating open dialogue and information sharing, PCM ensures that stakeholders are aware of the project's scope, timelines, and deliverables. This shared understanding helps to prevent misunderstandings or discrepancies that may arise due to differing interpretations, thereby enhancing project cohesion and focus.

Furthermore, better communication within PCM enables stakeholders to address challenges and resolve issues in a timely manner. By establishing channels for feedback and discussion, PCM empowers stakeholders to voice concerns, share insights, and propose solutions as soon as they arise. This proactive approach to communication minimizes the risk of conflicts or delays escalating, allowing project teams to course-correct and adapt to changing circumstances swiftly.

Moreover, effective communication in PCM promotes stakeholder engagement and buy-in, which are essential for project success. By keeping stakeholders informed and involved throughout the project lifecycle, PCM cultivates a sense of ownership and accountability among community members, contractors, and project management teams. This sense of ownership motivates stakeholders to actively contribute to the project's progress and take responsibility for its outcomes, fostering a collaborative and supportive project environment.

Better communication is a cornerstone of PCM as it facilitates understanding, problem-solving, and stakeholder engagement. By emphasizing transparent and open dialogue, PCM ensures that all stakeholders are aligned with project objectives and empowered to contribute to its success. Ultimately, effective communication within PCM leads to improved project outcomes, enhanced stakeholder satisfaction, and sustainable community development.





## **Helps in Tracking Progress**

Effective progress tracking is paramount in ensuring the successful execution of projects, and Project Cycle Management (PCM) plays a pivotal role in this aspect. By breaking down tasks and finalizing schedules and costs in advance, PCM provides a structured framework for evaluating project progress against predefined benchmarks. This allows project managers to assess the competitiveness of project work and identify areas where adjustments in pace or cost-saving measures are necessary. Through continuous monitoring and evaluation, PCM enables timely interventions to keep the project on track and within budgetary constraints.

Moreover, progress tracking facilitated by PCM not only ensures adherence to the project timeline but also facilitates efficient resource utilization. By closely monitoring task completion and expenditure, project managers can identify potential bottlenecks or areas of resource inefficiency and take corrective actions accordingly. This proactive approach minimizes the risk of resource shortages or overruns, thereby optimizing resource allocation throughout the project life cycle. Additionally, by tracking progress against predetermined milestones, PCM enables stakeholders to measure the project's overall effectiveness and identify opportunities for improvement.

Furthermore, PCM's emphasis on effective project life cycle management has significant implications for project outcomes and organizational efficiency. Historically, projects that lacked a structured life cycle management approach often exceeded their budgeted costs and failed to identify and mitigate risks effectively. In contrast, PCM ensures that projects are not only completed within the specified time frame but also within allocated resources and costs. This not only enhances accountability and transparency but also generates savings for project authorities, thereby maximizing return on investment. Overall, the meticulous progress tracking facilitated by PCM is instrumental in ensuring the successful delivery of projects while optimizing resource utilization and mitigating risks.

## **Helps in Better Project Management**

Effective project management is crucial for the successful execution of any endeavour, and the Project Cycle Management (PCM) methodology plays a pivotal role in ensuring that projects are efficiently managed from inception to completion. One of the primary benefits of PCM lies in its ability to address various facets of project management, including time, cost, resources, and effort allocation.

By adopting a structured approach embedded within the project life cycle, PCM enables project managers to meticulously identify, plan, and strategize each aspect of the project, thereby optimizing resource utilization and minimizing unnecessary expenditures.

Furthermore, PCM empowers project management teams to exercise greater control and oversight throughout the project's duration. With predetermined tasks and predefined deadlines, project managers can closely monitor progress against established milestones, facilitating timely interventions when deviations occur. This proactive approach not only helps in adhering to project timelines but also indirectly contributes to effective cost management by mitigating the risks of delays and budget overruns.



Moreover, PCM fosters enhanced collaboration and synergy among stakeholders involved in the project. By providing a structured framework for communication and coordination, PCM ensures that contractors, community members, and project management teams are aligned in their objectives and efforts. This alignment not only enhances efficiency but also cultivates a sense of shared ownership and accountability for project outcomes. Additionally, PCM facilitates continuous learning and improvement by enabling project managers to assess performance against predefined criteria, identify areas for enhancement, and implement corrective measures as necessary. In essence, PCM serves as a cornerstone for effective project management, enabling organizations to navigate complex projects with confidence and achieve their objectives efficiently and effectively.

## **Helps in Cost Controlling**

Cost controlling is a critical aspect of project management, and a structured approach to project completion plays a pivotal role in this regard. By adhering to the planned timeline and efficiently utilizing allocated resources, project cost can be effectively managed. This is particularly significant in industries where budget constraints are tight and any deviation from the planned expenditure can have significant repercussions. With project completion milestones aligned with resource allocation, project managers can closely monitor expenditure at each stage, ensuring that costs remain within the predefined limits.

Furthermore, the project life cycle framework serves as a strategic tool for cost management by enabling project managers to identify and address cost variances early on.

By breaking down the project into distinct phases, each with its associated budget and timeline, project managers can track expenses against the planned budget more effectively. Any discrepancies or overruns can be promptly identified and addressed, allowing for corrective measures to be implemented before they escalate into larger financial issues. This proactive approach not only helps in controlling costs but also enhances overall project financial stability and viability.

Moreover, effective cost controlling through structured project management extends beyond the immediate project budget. By completing tasks as planned and within allocated resources, the project life cycle ensures that resources are utilized efficiently, minimizing wastage and maximizing return on investment. This disciplined approach to resource management not only optimizes cost-effectiveness but also enhances the project's sustainability by conserving valuable resources for future endeavours. Thus, by integrating cost control mechanisms into the project life cycle, organizations can mitigate financial risks, improve budgetary predictability, and ultimately enhance their competitiveness in the marketplace.

This study aims to investigate the complexity of Project Cycle Management (PCM) within the Community Projects funded by the Community Development Fund (CDF). It is imperative to emphasize that CDF Community Projects serve as a key mechanism for promoting local development initiatives, reducing socio-economic disparities and empowering communities to actively participate in their own development processes, including project planning, implementation, monitoring and closure. These projects are mainly centered on the development of community infrastructure, including initiatives such as classroom blocks, clinics, wells, bridges, mother's annexes and various other public services.

On the contrary, project cycle management (PCM) is a project management approach adapted to the diversity of projects throughout all stages of their life cycle. Built on years of development expertise,

PCM is characterized by meticulous planning, organization, coordination and control throughout the project's journey, from development to implementation, completion and evaluation. It is a structured methodology that aims to deliver projects efficiently and effectively, ensuring compliance with the expectations of predefined objectives and stakeholders by delivering the required results within the set timelines, budget constraints and quality benchmarks.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

The implementation of Constituency Development Funds (CDF) by the government serves as a decentralized mechanism aimed at empowering constituents to initiate projects geared towards poverty alleviation and enhancing their standard of living (Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, 2006). The constituency development fund (CDF) is guided by CDF guidelines, providing a structured approach to fund management to ensure efficient utilization for community development. Despite this initiative, managing the entire project cycle in Zambia's community development presents significant challenges, affecting resource utilization, timely implementation, and planned outcomes achievement. Bureaucratic inefficiency, lack of transparency, limited community participation, and inadequate local capacity hinder effective planning, execution, monitoring, and evaluation of projects, thus limiting their development impact. Addressing these challenges is crucial to improving overall project management and maximizing their contribution to local development in Zambia.

Notwithstanding the concerted efforts to enhance local development through the implementation of Constituency Development Funds (CDF), Zambia faces persistent obstacles in effectively managing community projects within this framework. These challenges are multifaceted, encompassing administrative complexities, institutional limitations, and socio-economic factors that impede the smooth execution of projects. Moreover, the absence of robust mechanisms for community engagement and participation exacerbates these challenges, leading to a disconnect between project priorities and the actual needs of the constituents. As a result, there is a pressing need to reassess current practices, identify areas for improvement, and implement targeted interventions to streamline project management processes and optimize resource utilization for sustainable development outcomes.

Furthermore, the impact of ineffective project cycle management extends beyond the immediate scope of individual initiatives, perpetuating a cycle of underdevelopment and disenchantment among local communities. Inadequate oversight, coupled with limited accountability mechanisms, undermines public trust in the management of public funds and erodes confidence in the government's ability to address pressing socio-economic challenges.

This underscores the urgency of undertaking comprehensive research to unravel the complexities surrounding project cycle management under CDF projects in Zambia.

Therefore, this research endeavours to delve into the intricacies of Project Cycle Management in community projects under CDF projects in Zambia. By examining existing frameworks, identifying bottlenecks, and exploring potential solutions, this study seeks to contribute to the enhancement of efficiency and effectiveness in the implementation of these projects, thereby maximizing their developmental impact, ensuring that projects are delivered within the expected cost, quality and time. It must also be noted that Community Projects currently suffer poor quality of products (outputs) and

bloated budgets and are delivered far beyond project estimated duration (timeframe)

### **1.3 Objectives**

#### ***1.3.0 General Objective***

To analyse Project Cycle Management (PCM) practices within Community Projects funded by the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in Zambia, with the aim of enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of project implementation and maximizing developmental impact.

#### ***1.3.1 Specific objectives***

- 1) Determine the extent to which Project Cycle Management (PCM) principles and methodologies are employed in the management of Community Projects under CDF
- 2) To evaluate the effectiveness of Community Project Governance Structures at all levels (community, district, and province) in ensuring efficient project management.
- 3) To establish the main challenges and bottlenecks encountered in the PCM process within CDF-funded Community Projects.
- 4) To suggest potential strategies and solutions for overcoming identified challenges and improving PCM practices to enhance project outcomes.
- 5) To develop a model for addressing the identified gaps, challenges, and bottlenecks in the PCM process by examining Community Projects governance and the extent of application of PCM tools

### **1.4 Research Questions**

- i. To what extent are Project Cycle Management (PCM) principles and methodologies implemented in the management of Community Projects funded by the Constituency Development Fund (CDF)?
- ii. How effective are the governance structures at the community, district, and provincial levels in ensuring efficient project management within CDF-funded Community Projects?
- iii. What are the primary challenges and bottlenecks encountered in the PCM process within CDF-funded Community Projects?
- iv. What potential strategies and solutions can be suggested for overcoming the identified challenges and improving PCM practices to enhance project outcomes?
- v. How can a model be developed to address the identified gaps, challenges, and bottlenecks in the PCM process by examining Community Projects governance and the application of PCM tools?

### **1.5 Hypotheses**

1. H0: There is no significant difference in the application of PCM principles and methodologies across Community Projects funded by the CDF.

H1: There is a significant difference in the application of PCM principles and methodologies across Community Projects funded by the CDF.

2. H0: Community Project Governance Structures do not significantly impact the efficiency of

project management within CDF-funded projects.

H1: Community Project Governance Structures significantly impact the efficiency of project management within CDF-funded projects.

3. H0: The main challenges and bottlenecks encountered in the PCM process within CDF- funded Community Projects are not significantly influenced by project governance structures.

H1: The main challenges and bottlenecks encountered in the PCM process within CDF- funded Community Projects are significantly influenced by project governance structures.

4. H0: There is no significant relationship between the identification of challenges in the PCM process and the suggested strategies for improvement within CDF-funded projects.

H1: There is a significant relationship between the identification of challenges in the PCM process and the suggested strategies for improvement within CDF-funded projects.

5. H0: The development of a model to address identified gaps, challenges, and bottlenecks in the PCM process is not significantly influenced by the examination of Community Projects governance and the extent of application of PCM tools within the CDF framework.

H1: The development of a model to address identified gaps, challenges, and bottlenecks in the PCM process is significantly influenced by the examination of Community Projects governance and the extent of application of PCM tools within the CDF framework.

### **1.6 Significance of the study**

The study of Project Cycle Management (PCM) within Community Projects funded by the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in Zambia is crucial for advancing localized development initiatives and optimizing the utilization of limited resources. By delving into the intricacies of PCM practices, this research aims to enhance transparency, accountability, and community participation throughout the project lifecycle and more important to enhance project delivery with planned cost, quality and time. Moreover, by identifying and addressing challenges such as bureaucratic inefficiencies and capacity limitations, the study seeks to empower communities and build institutional capacity, ultimately contributing to more effective and sustainable development outcomes. Through its findings and recommendations, this study not only informs policy formulation but also enriches academic discourse, thereby fostering continuous improvement in project management practices within the realm of community development in Zambia.

### **1.7 Scope of the study**

This study examines the dynamics of Project Cycle Management (PCM) within community projects facilitated by the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in Chipata. Zambia.

**Description:** Chipata is a city and the administrative center of the Eastern Province of Zambia and Chipata District. It was declared the 5th city of the country by President Edgar Lungu on 24 February 2017.

**Constituencies:** Chipata Central Constituency and Luangeni Constituency.





**Borders:** Chipata is located near the border with Malawi and lies on the Great East Road, which connects the capitals Lilongwe and Lusaka.

**Population (2022 Census):** The total population of Zambia as at 8th September, 2022 was at 327,059 with 159,643 being males and 167,416 being females. There were more females (167,416) than males (159,643). The rural areas had more people.

**Rural population:** The rural areas of Chipata district have more elderly people than the national average and also fewer working-age males. The age group of 50 years and over constitutes a relatively large portion of the population in the rural areas in Chipata district.

**Social Economic Status:** The city's economy is based on trade, commerce, and services. It has a modern market, a central hospital, shopping malls, a university, colleges, and schools. Developed areas include Kalongwezi, Moth, and Little Bombay. The city has a four-star hotel, a golf course, an airport, and a "welcome arch".

The implementation of community projects under CDF in Chipata City Council involves the following steps:

1. **Project Identification:** Community members, councillors, and council officials identify potential projects that align with the CDF guidelines and community needs.
2. **Project Proposal Development:** Project proposals are developed, outlining project objectives, scope, budget, and implementation timelines.
3. **CDF Committee Approval:** The Chipata City Council CDF Committee reviews and approves project proposals.
4. **Funding Allocation:** CDF funds are allocated to approve projects.
5. **Project Implementation:** Projects are implemented by contractors, community groups, or council teams.
6. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Projects are monitored and evaluated to ensure progress, quality, and impact.
7. **Project Completion and Handover:** Completed projects are handed over to the community or relevant authorities.
8. **Sustainability and Maintenance:** Communities and council officials ensure project sustainability and maintenance.

**Some of the community projects implemented under CDF in Chipata City Council include:**

- ✓ Construction of classroom blocks, health facilities, and water supply systems
- ✓ Road construction and rehabilitation
- ✓ Purchase of equipment and vehicles for community use
- ✓ Community empowerment and skills training programs
- ✓ Support for vulnerable groups, such as orphans and people with disabilities

These projects aim to improve the quality of life, promote economic development, and enhance social services in Chipata City and surrounding communities.

## **1.8 Limitation of the study**

One limitation of this study was its narrow geographical focus on Chipata city, Zambia, specifically the two constituencies of Chipata Central and Luangeni Constituencies. While this focus allowed for an in-depth examination of PCM practices within a specific context, it limited the generalizability of findings to other regions or constituencies within Zambia. Additionally, the study's timeframe and resource constraints may have restricted the depth of data collection and analysis, potentially overlooking nuanced variations in PCM dynamics over time or across different communities. Furthermore, language and cultural barriers, as well as researcher bias, could have inadvertently affected the interpretation of data and formulation of conclusions. It was important to acknowledge these limitations to contextualize the study's findings accurately.

## **1.9 Operational definitions**

**1.9.1 Project Cycle Management (PCM):** The systematic approach to planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating projects throughout their lifecycle, encompassing activities such as needs assessment, project design, resource allocation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

**1.9.2 Constituency Development Fund (CDF):** A decentralized mechanism established by the government of Zambia to empower constituents to initiate and manage development projects aimed at poverty alleviation and improving living standards within their communities.

**1.9.3 Community Projects:** Initiatives undertaken within communities, typically funded by the Constituency Development Fund (CDF), to address local development needs, such as infrastructure improvement, social services provision, and economic empowerment programs.

**1.9.4 Governance Structures:** Organizational frameworks and mechanisms at the community, district, and provincial levels responsible for overseeing the planning, implementation, and management of community projects funded by the Constituency Development Fund (CDF).

**1.9.5 Challenges and Bottlenecks:** Obstacles, barriers, and limitations encountered during the project cycle management process within CDF-funded community projects, which hinder effective implementation, resource utilization, and achievement of desired outcomes.

**1.9.6 Strategies and Solutions:** Approaches, interventions, and recommendations proposed to address identified challenges and bottlenecks in project cycle management, aiming to enhance efficiency, effectiveness, and developmental impact of community projects under the Constituency Development Fund (CDF).

**1.9.7 Model:** A conceptual framework or guideline developed based on research findings and best practices, aimed at optimizing project cycle management practices, addressing gaps, challenges, and bottlenecks, and improving overall project outcomes within the context of CDF-funded community projects.

## **1.10 Chapter Summary**

The chapter provides an overview of the research context, focusing on the implementation of Constituency Development Fund (CDF) projects in Zambia and the challenges associated with project

cycle management (PCM). It outlines the objectives of the study, including the analysis of PCM practices, evaluation of governance structures, identification of challenges, and development of solutions. The research questions and hypotheses are formulated to guide the investigation, followed by a discussion of the significance, scope, and limitations of the study. Finally, operational definitions are provided to clarify key terms used throughout the research.

## **CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The Literature Review serves as a critical component of research, providing a comprehensive overview of existing knowledge, theories, frameworks, and empirical studies relevant to the research topic. In this chapter, the focus is on examining literature related to Project Cycle Management (PCM), community development initiatives, and the management of Constituency Development Fund (CDF) projects in Zambia. By synthesizing and analyzing existing literature, this section aims to establish a theoretical foundation, identify gaps in current understanding, and inform the research methodology and objectives.

Project Cycle Management (PCM) is a systematic approach to managing projects, encompassing five phases: project identification, project preparation, project implementation, project monitoring and evaluation, and project closure (European Commission, 2004). PCM aims to ensure effective planning, implementation, and evaluation of projects to achieve desired outcomes and impact.

Community Development Fund (CDF) is a funding mechanism established to support community development projects, aiming to improve the quality of life for local communities (CDF, 2022). CDF-funded projects are implemented by community groups, non-governmental organizations, and local government entities, focusing on various sectors such as education, healthcare, infrastructure, and economic development.

Effective PCM is crucial for the success of CDF-funded community projects, as it enables project managers to plan, execute, and evaluate projects efficiently, ensuring the achievement of project goals and objectives (Kwak, 2008). However, community projects often face challenges in implementing PCM due to limited institutional capacity, inadequate resources, and insufficient expertise (UNDP, 2018). Previous studies have examined PCM in various contexts, highlighting its importance in ensuring project success (Ika, 2012; Muller, 2017). However, there is a need for more research on PCM in the context of CDF-funded community projects, particularly in understanding the challenges and opportunities for effective PCM implementation.

This literature chapter aims to review existing research on PCM, its application in community projects, and the challenges and opportunities for effective PCM implementation in CDF-funded projects. The chapter will provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of knowledge, identifying gaps and areas for further research, and informing the development of effective PCM strategies for CDF-funded community projects.

This literature review will explore a wide range of theoretical perspectives, including decentralization theory, community development theories, social capital theory, empowerment theory, institutional theory, development communication theory, adaptive management theory, resource dependency theory, public

choice theory, and systems theory. These theoretical frameworks provide conceptual lenses through which to analyze the dynamics of PCM and community development initiatives within the context of CDF-funded projects.

Additionally, this chapter will examine the historical context of decentralization efforts in post-colonial Zambia, tracing the evolution of CDFs and analyzing comparative implementations across nations. It will delve into the institutional framework governing CDFs, including the legal framework, operational structure, and key stakeholders involved in project management. Furthermore, the chapter will review existing PCM frameworks and practices, identify challenges and bottlenecks, and assess the potential impact of enhanced PCM on project outcomes.

Moreover, this literature review will explore the goals and objectives of CDF-funded community development initiatives, including infrastructure development, empowerment programs, and education initiatives. It will analyze the role of community participation and ownership in project implementation, examine the case study of Chipata District, Zambia, and highlight challenges and opportunities in CDF implementation.

By synthesizing diverse literature sources and theoretical perspectives, this chapter aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of PCM, community development initiatives, and CDF management in Zambia. It will lay the groundwork for the subsequent chapters by identifying research gaps, informing the research methodology, and guiding the exploration of key variables and concepts relevant to the study.

Apparently, Literature has been approached from articles point of view in which each objective has been reviewed based on relevant articles.

The Study therefore has focused on reviewing each objective in terms what are the findings. This gives a good foundation for discussion of findings.

## **Objective: 1 Determine the extent to which Project Cycle Management (PCM) principles and methodologies are employed in the management of Community Projects under CDF**

In Cameroon, Helvatas, a Swiss Association for International Co-operation, works towards the elimination of the causes of marginalization and promotes solidarity with the poor in the south and the east Cameroon. In an attempt to support local authorities (councils) in Cameroon, Helvatas published Project Cycle Management guidelines entitled *LEARNING AND EXPERIENCE SHARING SERIES NO 3*. According to this Publication, Project cycle Management (PCM) was defined as “an approach that is now being broadly applied in development and divides project management in a number of distinct phases, each having a specific function in the project”.

Project Cycle Management (PCM) could be a powerful tool to transform CDF Community Projects in Chipata City Council in Zambia and possibly could be used in all constituencies in the country. In Cameroon, Helvetas Cameroon has applied PCM approach in supporting Municipal Councils in the Western Highlands of Cameroon in realizing development projects within its Council Support Programme (CSP) and Programme for Sustainable Water Supply and Sanitation Services (PWS), (Helvetas Cameroon publication, No 3, 2007).



In the same PCM Guides, Helvetas Cameroon noted that:

*“PCM is a multi-stakeholder process and groups all concerned persons and institutions in order to achieve common objectives with the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders being well defined. The overall goal is to contribute to an effective local development system with active and accountable partnership between stakeholders. Helvetas Cameroon, as the facilitator and catalyst of the process, has gained much experience that has enabled the production of this document”.*

The objectives which this Thesis is anchored on are very similar to the processes Helvetas Cameroon undertook to improve the effectiveness, responsiveness of local authorities in the selected regions. According to Helvetas Cameroon PCM Guidelines (*LEARNING AND EXPERIENCE SHARING SERIES NO 3.*) published in 2007, PCM Platforms were created in the target Local Authorities. In this PCM platform approach all supported partner councils simultaneously undertake the process. The council assumes the role of contracting authority and is assisted by private sector service providers. Each project was conceived, planned and implemented in partnership between the council and the beneficiary communities. For each project Helvetas signs a specific agreement with the concerned partner council. Representatives of the beneficiary communities also append their signatures on the agreement. The agreements include results-based payments on agreed outcomes. Contracts are also signed between the council and service providers (contractor and supervisor). The various government services played the enabling role as required by the laws. The councils simultaneously undertake the PCM process and periodic platforms bring together all these stakeholders to share experiences.

**In the Case Study: Community and Environmental Mapping in Simeto Valley** by Andrew Figueiredo, Florence Zheng, Joanne Nellas, and George Van in October 28, 2020, it was observed that:

*"To propose accurate actions, you need to know the community deeply, from the perception and opinion of those who live, share and experience it" - Ives Rocha, in Saija et al. 2017.*

Christian Blind Mission (CBM) also produced a Toolbox for Participation in project cycle management. In this Toolbox, CBM demonstrated that, *“any project involves undertaking several activities to accomplish pre-determined objectives bringing out tangible outcomes using specified resources. These activities need to be planned, organised, and appraised so that the project can be implemented successfully.”* (2024 CBM Christoffel-Blindenmission).

The Toolbox also provide that in order to reach all people, the entire cycle of a project needs to be inclusive and this can only be achieved by strengthening the focus on the participation of Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs). The Toolbox introduced what was called Community Based Inclusive Development (CBID). According to CBM Toolbox, Community Based Inclusive Development (CBID) is a way of working that ensures persons with disabilities are respected and included in their communities on an equal basis in all areas of life. Therefore, CBID is CBM’s approach to enable disability-inclusive development and localise the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) as well as 2030-Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals.

The CBM Toolbox for participation in the Project Cycle Management by persons with disabilities could be applied in the stakeholder participation in the Community Projects under the CDF and create a good project





management environment.

The Helvetas Cameroon PCM Guidelines (LEARNING AND EXPERIENCE SHARING SERIES NO 3.) provided another interesting case on participation of stakeholders. The Guidelines emphasized that the participation of stakeholders in all stages of the project cycle is a crucial factor for project success.

The Guidelines highlighted that:

*“Participation will enhance the ownership and hence the sustainability of project benefits. It will equally ensure that maximal use is made of the knowledge and experiences of all actors involved; hence the effectiveness and efficiency of the project will be increased. The local partner organisation (the council) is undoubtedly the major stakeholder. Project support from an external support agency should thus be directed to the priorities and needs identified by the partner (demand driven approach). The project that is finally defined constitutes however the outcome of a negotiation process between all stakeholders that should be characterized by transparency and clarity. It is important that councils and communities concerned develop ownership of their projects. Strengthening councils in participatory planning methods, project identification and realization is a real move towards effective, decentralized local development and poverty reduction, enhanced by a very clear and transparent information policy between all stakeholders”.* **Helvetas Cameroon, 2007.**

Integrated Project Cycle Management (PCM) focuses on the management of development interventions or projects that minimize cost and time and maximize project output and capacity building. According to Helvetas Cameroon Guides, PCM was broken down in six stages:

## **SIX STAGES WHICH WERE TYPICALLY IDENTIFIED IN THE PROJECT CYCLE**

- I. Identification:** generation of the initial project idea and preliminary design
- II. Preparation:** detailed design of the project addressing technical and operational aspects.
- III. Appraisal:** analysis of the project from technical, financial, economic, gender, social, institutional, and environmental perspectives.
- IV. Proposal preparation, approval and financing:** writing the project proposal, securing approval for implementation and arranging sources of finance.
- V. Implementation and monitoring:** implementation of project activities, with on-going checks on progress and feedback; and
- VI. Evaluation:** periodic review of project with feedback for next project cycle. The Project Cycle

**TEARFUND ROOT 5, PROJECT CYCLE PHASES****Phase 1: Understanding the situation – page 9**

*Before designing a project, we need to have a good understanding of the situation and the context. First, we gather information using a range of data collection tools, including focus groups, surveys and observations. It is important to identify the stakeholders involved. Next, we need to analyze the data gathered so that it can inform our decision-making. We can do this using tools such as a problem tree.*

**Phase 2: Project design – page 47**

*This section focuses on how to use two key project design tools – Theory of Change and logframe – to ensure that your project meets the needs identified during your problem analysis. At this stage, it is also essential to consider the project budget and risk, as they will influence the scope of your project.*

**Phase 3: Approval and governance – page 83**

*The approval and governance stage focuses on ensuring that the necessary agreements are in place before you begin the detailed preparations for your project. This includes securing funding, deciding how the project will be governed, and agreeing roles and responsibilities.*

**Phase 4: Preparation – page 91**

*You will have already begun some of the planning for your project, but in this section of the guide you will learn about the detailed plans that need to be in place for your project to begin. This includes: scope and time planning, financial planning, logistics and M&E planning.*

**Phase 5: Implementing and monitoring – page 107**

*This is the point in the project when the plans become a reality and the activities take place. Monitoring is included in this section because there are several elements that need to be kept track of during implementation, including the project indicators, finances and identified risks.*

**Phase 6: Evaluation – page 123**

*To find out if we have made a positive contribution to change, we must evaluate our work. This section focuses on when and how to commission evaluations, how to develop a good terms of reference document (ToR), what to include in an evaluation report and how to share the findings.*

**Phase 7: Project closure – page 133**

*When the activities and evaluation are complete it can be easy to think that all the work is done. However, some activities need to be done during closure, including capturing learning for the future, communicating with beneficiaries and celebrating success.*

**Why do we need to understand the situation?**

*“We may already have ideas about what the problems and needs of the local community are. However, it is important that we don’t design projects based on these preconceived ideas or jump to solutions before we have really understood a situation. We need to ask communities what their problems, needs, resources, talents, and skills are, and to understand the wider context. It is important to do this each time we are starting a new project even if we have worked with a community for a long time, as the context is always changing. This deep understanding will enable us to use our time and resources wisely, and to design projects that meet the real needs of the community, build on what is working well already and bring about positive change. Talking to communities also starts the process of participation and engages them in the project from the early stages. Start thinking about how you will fund the project and do not raise community expectations if you are not sure it will be possible to get funding”!*

**(TEARFUND SITUATION ANALYSIS APPROACH)**



**TEARFUND, Roots 5, PROJECT CYCLE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES, 2nd edition, (Jane Davies and Anna Ling), 2023.**

**Objective 2: To evaluate the effectiveness of Community Project Governance Structures at all levels (community, district, and province) in ensuring efficient project management.**

The Oxford dictionary defines ‘governance’ as "the act, manner or function of governing." Concepts such as “supremacy”, “domination”, “power”, “authority”, and “control” are used to describe governance. Governing is defined in part as "regulating the proceedings of an entity." According to Newman (2001, p. 34) governance relates to accountabilities and responsibilities of management. It is the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented and thus refers to the rules, processes and behaviour that affect the way in which powers are exercised.

In a Paper published, ResearchGate, entitled, Project Governance: A Municipal Leadership Challenge. Van der Walddt, (G. 2010) writes:

“On an institutional or departmental level, Hobday (2000, p. 872) and Turner and Keegan, (2001, p. 256) argue that the governance function includes the provision of strategic leadership, monitoring, oversight, and accountability. Lewis (2003) and Reid and Bourn (2004, p. 235) concur and highlight the governance function in an institutional setting as organisational arrangements for coordination, management interventions, accountability and responsibilities, as well as the establishment of policies.

Van der Walddt, (G. 2010) continued to underscore that: *“Public institutions, including municipalities, should have governance structures in place to provide mechanisms for directing and controlling it to ensure that all aspects of the institution comply with the requirements of various legislative frameworks (Thiry and Deguire, 2007, p. 651; Renz, 2007, p. 233). In a project management context, governance typically deals with issues such as the establishment and operation of best practice for the allocation and management of information, infrastructure and resources; the allocation of responsibilities for managing projects and the relevant decision-making powers associated with it; the establishment and enforcing of policies, procedures and practices implemented to ensure that the institution derives maximum benefit from its strategy-aligned projects; and the utilisation of performance standards for monitoring, oversight and control (see Partington, 1996, p. 15; Chien, 2004, p. 429; Bresnen, Goussevskaia and Swan, 2004, p. 1538)”*.

*Meredith and Mantel (2000, pp. 139-141) and Reid and Bourn (2004) specifically highlight two aspects that need to be considered when an institution establishes a project. Firstly, a decision must be made on whether to proceed with the project and how to integrate the project with the existing organisational structures and systems, and secondly, how to design, monitor and control the project”*.

From the perspective of Community Projects under CDF both of municipalities and central government decisions in managing CDF involve ‘governance. This one of the objectives this theses will deal with.

Ata ul Musawir , Saipol Bari Abd-Karim and Mohd Suhaimi Mohd-Danuri authored an article which was published in the International Journal of Project Management (Elsevier, Jan, 2020) on Project Governance. The finds were based on the literature review. They started by defining the governance, In their findings they wrote:

“The word “governance” was derived from the Latin word “gubernare” which translates to “steering” (Müller, 2009). Governance as a term became popularly used in social sciences research only about two decades ago (Chang, 2015). Although the term can take on several meanings across various contexts (Blakeegg, Williams, Magnussen, & Glasspool, 2008), *it broadly refers to the direction and control of activities within a specific domain, e.g. national governance, institutional governance, public governance, corporate governance, IT governance etc.* In the context of organizations, Müller (2009) describes governance as a self-regulatory system wherein the regulator is a part of the organization being regulated.”

This study has been centred on examining Project Cycle Management in the Community Projects under CDF. One of the objectives is to evaluate the effectiveness of governance structures operating in realm of Constituency Development Fund. We can therefore safely say that when governance is applied to the domain of projects, it is referred to as project governance.

The trio thus observed that: *“There is a tendency in the literature to conflate project governance with project management (PMI, 2016; Too & Weaver, 2014). Project management involves the execution and control of day-to-day project operations at the project level (Biesenthal & Wilden, 2014)”*.

In contrast, project governance operates at a higher level and involves the creation and implementation of a system of checks and balances designed to align project decision-making with the objectives of the funding organization (Biesenthal & Wilden, 2014).

Project governance is also distinct from project control in that the latter is only concerned with the validation and verification of completed activities and operates within the internal environment of the project (Bekker & Steyn, 2008), whereas the former has a much broader scope that extends the full length of the project life cycle and beyond. Hence, project control is a subset of project governance (Bekker & Steyn, 2009a).

Ata ul Musawir , Saipol Bari Abd-Karim and Mohd Suhaimi Mohd-Danuri further noted that: *“Project governance at different organizational levels Project-related governance occurs at multiple levels within an organization, with each level varying in its objectives and the breadth of its scope (Terlizzi, Meirelles, & de Moraes, 2016). At the highest level, corporate governance is concerned with the direction and control of all activities within an organization, which naturally includes project activities (Levie et al., 2017). From the corporate level, governance cascades down to the portfolio, program, and project levels (sometimes referred to as P3 governance) with the scope becoming narrower at each step (Hyvari, 2016). While governance structures, processes, and even objectives vary considerably by organizational level, the overarching purpose of governance at each level remains the same: “to define the objectives of organizational projects, provide the means to achieve those objectives, and control progress” (Müller et al., 2016b, p. 958)”*.

The phrase ‘governance in the realm of projects’ as defined by Müller and colleagues is an effective umbrella term for grouping together project-related governance at various levels in the organization. In the professional literature, both PMI (2016) and APM (2012) segregate governance at the portfolio, program, and project levels with the former also including an Organizational Project Management (OPM) level. Also, APM (2011) defined the concept of governance of project management (GoPM), which is based on UK and US corporate governance guidelines, and outlines principles and guidelines aimed at directors and others with corporate governance roles for the effective governance of program and project management activities

within an organization (APM, 2011).

There are wide variations in how project governance is defined in the literature, most notably pertaining to the scope and temporality of project governance (Ahola et al., 2014) among other factors (Joslin & Müller, 2015). For example, some project researchers and practitioners view project governance as an all-encompassing term that spans all aspects of project management while others view it more narrowly as contractual control (Bekker & Steyn, 2009a). This indicates that there is a lack of a mainstream understanding of, and agreement on, what constitutes project governance (Ahola et al., 2014; Biesenthal & Wilden, 2014; McGrath & Whitty, 2015).

In the same article, Ata ul Musawir, Saipol Bari Abd-Karim and Mohd Suhaimi Mohd-Danuri presented some interesting definitions of project governance. They explained that: *“Some common themes exist among the definitions, such as project governance being a framework for project decision-making, addressing interests of stakeholders, monitoring and controlling project progress, defining and ensuring successful project delivery, and aligning projects with organizational strategy”*.

However, the definitions do not agree on what comprises project governance. For example, Müller (2009) suggests that it consists of a value system, responsibilities, processes, and policies whereas Turner (2009) suggests it involves a set of relationships, while Renz (2007) describes project governance as simply a process-oriented system. Definitions from professional literature are also similarly varied. A second point of difference between definitions is the scope of project governance in terms of organizational level. Some definitions describe project governance as an overall framework that includes the governance of projects, programs, and portfolios (APM, 2012; Müller, 2009), while others limit its scope specifically to project-level activities (Pinto, 2014; PMI, 2016).

The project governance of community project is located corporate (councils and contractors), project level which includes community structures such as Ward Development Committees (WDCs), Constituency Development Fund Committees (CDFC) and sector based committees such as Parent Teachers Committees (PTCs), health Neighbourhood committees (HNCs) Village Water, Sanitation and Health (VWASH) among others.

Ata ul Musawir, Saipol Bari Abd-Karim and Mohd Suhaimi Mohd-Danuri asserts that Project governance supports decision-making within a project. It is based on defining clear accountabilities and responsibilities and is therefore crucial to achieving project outcomes. Consequently, good project governance provides logical, robust, and repeatable decision-making processes, ensuring a structured approach is adopted (International Journal of Project Management, Jan 2020).

The literature highlights that project governance is fundamentally a set of relationships between key stakeholders, including the project manager, sponsor, owner, and key decision-makers (Turner, 2006). Thus, by setting a clear structure at the project onset and determining Specific Measurable Achievable Realistic Time bound (SMART) objectives, Local Authorities could be in a better position to achieve effective project outcomes and monitor the project's performance of Community Projects under CDF.

The International Journal of Project Management in its January, 2020 Article, entitled, Project governance and its role in enabling organizational strategy implementation: A systematic literature review wrote:



It should be noted that Community Projects under CDF are driven by various community structures who form part of the Project Governance. Understanding their roles and effectiveness would be very important. In the same publication it is acknowledged that project governance system occupies a central position for ensuring that projects realize their business case and the target benefits stated therein, which in turn supports the implementation of organizational strategy (APM, 2011; Hjelmbrække, Klakegg, & Lohne, 2017; Jenner, 2015; Thorp, 2001; Turner, Huemann, Anbari, & Bredillet, 2010; Zwikaël & Smyrk, 2015).

According to Turner (2006), there are three specific levels of governance within projects:

1. *Corporate: This is the central authority or decision-maker and could include a board of directors or a committee that supports decision-making. This encapsulates the corporate governance requirements that each project must adhere to.*
2. *Strategic: A broader context is provided as to why certain projects are undertaken and others are not.*
3. *Project: Governance structures must exist at individual levels, supporting project delivery.*

Associate Professor Carmen Reaiche, Dr Samantha Papavasiliou produced a manual entitled: **A Manual for Project Governance and Asset Management (2022)-Module 6. Core Project Governance Principles.**

**Reaiche and Papavasiliou in this** provided an explanation on three (3) specific levels of governance with the projects. On **Corporate governance, the duo wrote:** *“Irrelevant of the size of an organisation, principles on project governance are set and based on the components of the organisation’s corporate governance principles. Corporate governance sets the management requirements for relationships across stakeholders and key decision-makers within and outside the organisation, providing a structure for which an organisation sets objectives, strategies and means to implementing and monitoring them (OECD, 2004)”.*

According to **Reaiche and Papavasiliou** in the OECD (2004), they noted that good governance for organisations includes eight primary principles:

1. roles and responsibilities
2. accountability
3. disclosure and transparency
4. risk management and control.
5. decision-making
6. ethics
7. performance and effectiveness
8. implementation of strategy.

These principles of good governance can be applied to project governance and set a good framework for the implementation of governance across both organisations and projects in Community Projects under CDF. However, there needs to be a separation between the project governance and organisational governance structures especially that Community Structures as articulated in the Local Government Act 2 of 2019 are

part of councils while Council management have institutional authority and control.

The project structure needs to be precise, clear and provide mechanisms to support decision-making. Documentation needs to be completed, and provide clarity of decision-making (Garland, 2009). Therefore, we can establish that the adoption of clear governance principles should support decision-making, reduce time delays and budgetary inefficiencies. It ensures that project decision-making is simple to follow and that it can be completed in a timely manner (Garland, 2009).

The Manual for Project Management by Carmen Reaiche, Dr Samantha Papavasiliou (2022)- Module 6. This module highlighted the following:

### ***Core Project Governance***

*“This module outlines eight core project governance principles, which have been adapted from the OECD corporate governance principles. There are various frameworks in the literature; however, we considered these eight principles appropriate, as well as pragmatic, within the field of project management.*

#### ***Principle 1: Clear definitions of roles and responsibilities***

*The establishment of clear project roles and responsibilities is a vital step to the success of a project. The assignment of roles should include definitions of accountabilities, responsibilities, and performance criteria. When assigning these roles, anyone who is involved in the project should be documented and their interest and influence in the project needs to be considered. Therefore, stakeholder management is crucial to the development of these roles and responsibilities documents.*

- (1) ***Establish who has overall responsibility for the governance of the project management.*** This could be the project manager, project team, PMO or the board (it can also be a combination of these). Documentation of these roles and responsibilities can be shown through a RACI (Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, and Informed).

(2)

For Community Project under CDF, this could be useful. RACI a Project management framework could be considered. This study would also examine the application of this methodology.

- (2) ***Identification of the roles, responsibilities, and performance criteria for the project team members.***  
***Key roles to be defined:***

- ***The project sponsor*** is the person who is responsible for overseeing and ensuring project success. This includes the appointment of a project manager and their team, outlining the success criteria and ensuring successful project delivery (Tasmanian Government, 2008). They have three principal groups they are accountable for and to: the board, project manager, and project stakeholders.
- ***The board, steering committee, or governance committee*** is the primary body within the defined organisational and project governance structure (Tasmanian Government, 2008). They are responsible

for responding to issues and risks which arise or could affect the project outcomes. A key role of this group is to ensure the outcomes of the project are met.

- **The project manager** is broad and flexible. They are responsible for overseeing the end-to-end management of a project. This includes resolving issues, determining tasks, sub-tasks, and activities, completing documentation, and monitoring and controlling the project (PMI, 2022b). There is no one-size-fits-all project manager definition. They report to and work with the PMO, governance committee, sponsor, project team and broader stakeholders.
- **Project stakeholders** are those individuals, groups or organisations who are either actively involved with the project, or who have interests in the outcome of the project (either positive or negative), or both (PMI, 2022a; APM, 2009). These stakeholders need to be engaged and communicated with as per a stakeholder management plan, each stakeholder will have different expectations of their roles and responsibilities within a project. Discussions with stakeholders should be held early in the project to establish their requirements, and updates are to be made throughout when roles change.
- **The project team** are those individuals who are working interdependently (or as a collective) to meet a common goal and who share specific responsibilities for outcomes of the project they are working towards (Sundstrom et al., 1990).

**((3) Establishing relationships between all internal and external stakeholders who are involved in the project.** This includes describing the flow of information and communication between these stakeholders. Development of a project stakeholder management plan can support this.

Principle 1 provides a clear outline of the roles and responsibilities of key members of the project team, decision-makers and relevant stakeholders, which feeds directly into Principle 2.

### **Principle 2: Single point of accountability for project success**

A single point of accountability is vital to the success of any project. Through a single point, there is a clear understanding of who can approve each change and the process for leadership, and there is one person or group who is responsible for driving problem solutions. It is not enough to formally recognise just anyone as the accountable party. They must have the authority to make decisions within the organisation and they must be held accountable. To achieve this accountability, there should be agreed-upon criteria as well as agreement on formal governance arrangements. This includes clear allocation of authority for representing project owners, stakeholders, and other interested parties. Principle 2 links back to Principle 1 in ensuring that roles and responsibilities are clearly articulated.

The accountable officer or group should understand the terms of their roles and responsibilities, support stakeholder engagement, establish key performance indicators, and oversee project performance. Accountability parameters should be detailed in the Project Governance Plan to remain in place for the entire project (distinct to a Project Management Plan which is more detailed and only comes into existence during the development of the project).

Projects have many stakeholders and an effective project governance framework must address their needs. The next principle deals with the way this should occur.



### ***Principle 3: Provision of transparency***

*Transparency in project governance processes provides visibility to how the project is progressing, including the quality of work being completed, any issues or risks and changes made (Hassim et al., 2011). Through visibility, stakeholders and sponsors have greater confidence in, and understanding of, the project management process (Danturthi, 2016). Transparency provides a mechanism for project team members to access relevant information in an easy and efficient manner (Danturthi, 2016).*

#### ***Information that may be of interest to the project team includes:***

- *Budget – allowing the team members to be aware of the amount they can spend and their work budget, ensuring they are completing what is expected of them.*
- *Schedule – ensuring they are on track with what was outlined within the timeline.*
- *Communication – clear manner for engaging stakeholders, through information that is both accurate and timely.*
- *Issues/risks that arise and how they were managed – shared problem-solving can be achieved by providing stakeholders and other project teams with information of issues that have arisen.*

*Transparency in project governance provides managers and sponsors with a heightened sense of responsibility to achieve outcomes (Danturthi, 2016). Principle 3 means that decisions and changes made are done in alignment with project roles and responsibilities, ensuring that they are documented and easily accessible to project team members and relevant stakeholders. This principle also requires that enough information is provided, that the information is also accurate, easy to understand and timely.*

### ***Principle 4: Risk management and control***

*Risk management and control within projects is the process of identifying, analysing and responding to risks that can arise during the project life cycle (Chapman & Ward, 1996). This forms a key part of governance, by ensuring that there is an appropriate review of risks which are encountered within the project (Raz & Michael, 2001). The process is not only reactive, it should be proactive, through the identification and planning of potential risks throughout the project lifecycle. Following the ISO 31000 risk management standard (ISO, 2018).*

*Risks are defined as anything which could impact a project's schedule, performance, budget, or scope (Raz & Michael, 2001). There are different ways to manage risks within projects, including extensive and detailed planning for complex projects which outline mitigation strategies and treatment options. Conversely, risk management for simple projects can be a prioritised list of risks that are evaluated as high, medium, or low priority and influence.*

*The development of a risk management plan requires a clear project scope statement, to support the identification of risks (Raz & Michael, 2001). Each risk identified should be logged within a risk matrix, which helps in the prioritisation of the different risks, including if they will have a positive or negative impact on the outcomes. This is accompanied by the actions planned to mitigate the identified risks. The*

*risk management plan should establish the review process, frequency of review and who is accountable.*

#### ***Principle 5: Clear decision-making and change management process***

*Clear decision-making and change management processes are vital to ensuring the management of the project is effective and efficient. The decision-making process should outline the clear roles and responsibilities of the team, including who has the authority to make decisions and how they need to be documented and communicated (Garland, 2008). There needs to be consistency in the decision-making process applied to the requirements, policies and procedures provided by the organisation.*

*The change management process should flow from the decision-making process, whereby, the roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, along with the levels of authority of different decision makers. Within the change management process, the level of authority may be based on different criteria (Muller, 2009; Renz, 2007). For example, financial value, schedule impact, detail of scope change, response to risks or environmental changes are factors that influence authority levels. These criteria need to be set and documented at the beginning of the project. This will reduce complexity, confusion, and conflict by setting appropriate authorisation processes. Within the process, it should clearly dictate that approvals are required for each change.*

#### ***Principle 6: Ethics***

*Each project should be based on ethical considerations and rules of law within the countries in which the projects are performed, operated or applied. Ethics within projects ensure that each accountable officer is doing work or making decisions in line with their legal competence and obligations, along with organisational governance requirements (OECD, 2004; UN, 2008).*

*Projects should be following the rule of law, ensuring that fair and legal frameworks are enforced impartially for all aspects of the project (including management, team performance management and resource use and allocation) (UN, 2008).*

*Best practices of project governance will provide equitable and inclusive outcomes and management planning processes (UN, 2008). It is important that every team member and most stakeholders feel that their views and expectations are considered and that they are not excluded. This requires all groups, including those most vulnerable, to be offered opportunities to share their views.*

#### ***Principle 7: Project and project team performance and effectiveness***

*Project and project team baselines must be set to measure performance and effectiveness of the project team against, for example, scope, budget or schedule. By defining the criteria and frequency of measurement at the beginning of the project, reporting performance of the project status to stakeholders and sponsors will be managed as part of the process. The escalation and management of risks and issues as they arise will be shared in reporting processes.*

*Project team performance reporting should be shared if the team is working as efficiently and effectively*



*as possible. These updates should share the time taken to achieve goals, and the cost to achieve these goals and outcomes and if they are in line with the plan. If not, why are they not in line? This requires the team to critically analyse their performance and share updates on what work they are prioritising and why.*

*Organisations who foster a culture of continuous improvement and sharing project successes and failures are more successful organisations and have greater levels of project success. This includes fostering trust and collaborative problem-solving processes with stakeholders (APM, 2004).*

*The reporting process should occur at all stages of the project, identifying how the project team and managers plan to realise the benefits of the project. Additionally, these updates should be timely, realistic, accurate and based on data (e.g., progress, achievements, forecasting and risks). This should utilise a mechanism to develop an independent review of how the project is going, what the aims are and how they are going to get there. Principle 7 should occur throughout the project and be a key component of Principle 8.*

### ***Principle 8: Implementation of governance processes***

*Implementation of project governance should be built into the project management plan, with specific authorisation points. These decisions should be documented and communicated to relevant stakeholders and project team members. Key components of implementation of governance and principles of project governance include:*

- *Creation of an agreed upon project business case, which outlines the project objectives, roles and responsibilities of team members and stakeholders, and the various resources and inputs required to obtain the project objectives.*
- *Authorisation points within the project plan need to provide clearly defined decision-makers, who have control over specific components of the project (e.g., change management).*
- *Project managers and leaders need to identify similar projects that are underway, which can support the use of resources and reduce conflict and inefficiencies.*
- *Formal agreements should be in place, defining processes for asset management.*

*Within the implementation principle, there is also a need to evaluate, review and implement improvements to support better governance processes in future projects. This can be achieved through learning and adopting new governance procedures. As governance is a process constantly being changed, reviewed, and improved, it is important to learn from mistakes or lessons learned and implement new or improved knowledge and skills (APM, 2007). Additionally, an education process should be implemented as part of the project team development stage (APM, 2007). This will ensure that all team members have the relevant skills and knowledge to implement project governance.*

### **Objective 3: To establish the main challenges and bottlenecks encountered in the Project Cycle Management process within Constituency Development Fund funded Community Projects**

In a Paper published, ResearchGate, entitled, Project Governance: A Municipal Leadership Challenge. Van

der Waladt, (G. 2010) established a number of challenges facing municipalities.

Van der Waladt, (G. 2010) highlighted that:

*“Leadership is fundamentally about indicating what direction to take (Sergiovanni, 1994) and therefore one would expect that municipal leaders (both political and administrative) should set the strategic scene for the municipality and guide all projects towards the accomplishment of its developmental objectives. However, the cases studied revealed significant incidences of corruption, maladministration, and nepotism”.*

He further noted that:

*“A recent Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC) report (2009) regarding fraud and corruption in the awarding of tenders in road projects in the Northwest province in South Africa testifies to the abuse of the tender system to the main benefit of a few privileged contractors (North West Independent 27 Jan 2010:3). Employees at Dr Kenneth Kaunda District Municipality further reported that the municipality “is not functioning” and that the suspension of the municipal manager further causes disruptions. The suspension alone could cost the taxpayer close to R3,5m. Furthermore, in the case of the City of Matlosana the resignation of the executive mayor is regarded by opposition parties “as a cover up for the crisis in the municipality” (North West Independent 27 Jan 2010, p. 2). The appointment of the Provincial Task Team by the Premier of the province to investigate certain municipalities can also be seen as a vote of no-confidence in the leadership of a significant portion of municipalities (Noordwes Gazette, 26 Jan 2010, p. 2). Unfortunately, the interventions made by the Provincial Task Team are also tainted with accusations of political motives. As further evidence of leadership challenges, the Minister of Co-operative Governance had to meet with protesting residents of Tshing township to discuss service delivery-related violence”.*

In his paper, Project Governance: A Municipal Leadership Challenge. Van der Waladt, (G. 2010) reported that:

*“Further challenges highlighted by Kagisano Local Municipality as far as political leadership is concerned include:*

- *Councillors who are not passionate about their work and do not understand their project oversight roles and responsibilities. Monitoring and oversight project governance mechanisms such as reports are poorly understood and utilised.*
- *Inability of councillors to understand financial statements submitted regarding project status.*
- *Opposition parties in council offer little or no assistance other than just attending council meetings.*
- *Low levels of literacy by political role-players which has led to many members of the public “saying praise songs to council” instead of advising and debating developmental and project issues.*
- *Divisions in the ruling party cause council to be divided into warring factions. It makes it difficult for Speakers to take harsh decisions against non-performing councillors and in the process lead to political polarization and poor service delivery because the “captains of the industry are at war ideologically”. These infightings lead to apathy of managers, from non-compliance, and poor implementation of service delivery projects.*
- *The financial year of municipalities and national and provincial government is not linked and this creates a disjuncture towards achieving integrated planning and budgeting.*



Muyaloka David<sup>1\*</sup> Norman Kachamba<sup>1</sup>

The third major challenge, Van der Walddt, (G. 2010) highlighted in his Paper was the lack of coordination and rivalry between departments in municipalities (59%) – especially between civil engineering and electrical engineers. Departments act as separate, independent entities (“silo mentality”) with very low levels of coordination, integration, and cooperation. There is generally a lack of understanding of the operational issues associated with project implementation.

The challenges highlighted in this paper are reflective challenges Community Projects are facing in all various municipalities, especially Chipata City Council.

In an article published in Africa Journal of Commercial Studies in April, 2024, entitle: **Assessing Factors Influencing the Failure of Constituency Development Fund (CDF) Projects in Education and Health Sectors in Zambia: A Critical Analysis**, which was an academic study undertaken by Muyaka David (UNZA:2024). The study was undertaken in Chongwe Constituency of Lusaka Province, in Zambia. Muyakwa (UNZA:2024), highlighted the insights into various factors faced in the failure of implementation of CDF projects, ranging from issues related to funding, accountability, and transparency to challenges with contractors, community involvement, and project management.

He listed the following key factors:

- a) **Delay in Funding & Disbursement:** Respondents pointed out delays in the release of funds as a significant obstacle in executing CDF projects. These delays can lead to project stagnation and increased costs, hampering project progress and stakeholder satisfaction.
- b) **Lack of Project Management Skills:** Lack of knowledge among implementors of the project life cycle. Leadership of the implementors and their competencies and knowledge towards CDF projects was reported to be one of the major cause of CDF project failure.
- c) **Lack of Accountability & Transparency:** Transparency and accountability issues were raised, with concerns about discrepancies between reported and actual disbursements and corruption in selection of contractors. This lack of accountability can undermine trust in the CDF process, hindering community engagement and effective project implementation.
- d) **Incompetency of Contractors:** The competency and commitment of contractors emerged as crucial factors affecting project outcomes. Complaints about delays, poor quality work, and even project abandonment were mentioned underscoring the importance of selecting reliable contractors for successful project execution.
- e) **Presidential and MP Directives/Sabotage of Government Efforts:** Presidential and other directives on project choice and expenditure of CDF are becoming a practice. It needs to be reconsidered because it goes against the spirit of decentralization that CDF is meant to promote. It was noted that some politicians feel like CDF is their money while other respondents expressed concerns about political interference in CDF projects, particularly from opposition MPs who may have intentions to sabotage government efforts and treat CDF as though it were their own money.

- f) **Insufficient Funding/Allocation of the fund:** Insufficient allocation towards community projects emerged as a significant challenge affecting the scope and quality of CDF projects. Limited financial resources can constrain the number of projects initiated and compromise project quality, hindering overall development efforts. Allocation towards the community projects must increase in order to boost the health and education sectors.
- g) **Lack of Community involvement and awareness of CDF:** Inadequate community involvement and sensitization were identified as barriers to project success. Proper engagement with the community is essential for identifying local needs and ensuring project relevance. Communities do not feel part of these projects as there is still knowledge gap around the use of CDF which lead to project failure as there is no one to put contractors to task or even provide community labour support.
- h) **Lack of Proper Monitoring:** An expression of concerns about the absence of adequate monitoring mechanisms for CDF projects was much pronounced. Effective monitoring crucial for detecting problems early which ensures project progress, and foster accountability.
- i) **Method of Work:** The use of labour-based contractors was identified as a potential issue affecting project outcomes. Depending solely on labour-based methods may lead to inefficiencies and lower-quality work, impacting project success. Addressing these underlying issues requires a comprehensive approach, including capacity building, improved governance practices, enhanced transparency and accountability, and targeted interventions to address socioeconomic disparities. By tackling these challenges, future CDF projects in Zambia can enhance their effectiveness in promoting education and health outcomes at the community level.
- j) **Leadership of MP:** Members of Parliament have a direct impact of project outcomes. The ability for a leader to be present and lead project committees is vital. Depending on the leadership qualities MPs are able to influence the approval of funds and projects on time.

David Muyakwa's findings justifies why we must examine the Project Cycle Management in the Community Projects under CDF Projects.

**Objective 4: To suggest potential strategies and solutions for overcoming identified challenges and improving PCM practices to enhance project outcomes.**

Priya Naha, a Senior Writer, published an article in Software Suggest Magazine, which was published on 30th January 2023 and last updated on 20th May 2024. Priya proposed top 10 challenges and solutions of Project Management. She summarized these in an infographic below and narrated both the challenge and associated solutions.

Understanding Priya's proposal could affect improvement of Project Cycle Management (PCM) practices to enhance Community Project outcomes. Here are the Top 10 Challenges as proposed by Priya Naha (2023).



**Source:** <https://www.softwaresuggest.com/blog/major-projects-challenges/>

## 2.2 Theoretical review

### 2.2.1 Decentralization Theory

Decentralization theory heralds a fundamental reimagining of governance structures, advocating for the transfer of power and decision-making authority from central authorities to local governments. This shift is seen as pivotal in fostering more inclusive and effective governance, particularly in the context of democratic ideals and efficient administration at the grassroots level. By redistributing political power, decentralization aims to cultivate governance systems that are not only more responsive to local needs but also more attuned to the nuances of community development. Scholars Larson and Soto (2008) underscore this transformative potential, emphasizing how decentralization can catalyze context-specific development initiatives that resonate deeply within local communities.

Central to the philosophy of decentralization is the belief in democracy and participation. Proponents argue that by devolving power to local entities, governance becomes more transparent and accountable, thereby fostering greater citizen engagement and trust in the political process. This enhanced connectivity between government and citizens is perceived as essential for cultivating robust democratic practices at the grassroots level. Moreover, decentralization is lauded for its potential to drive pro-poor outcomes by empowering local authorities to tailor services and interventions to address the unique challenges faced by marginalized communities. In this way, decentralization is not merely an administrative restructuring but a



means to advance social equity and alleviate poverty within communities (Larson & Soto, 2008).

Beyond its implications for governance and poverty alleviation, decentralization theory profoundly shapes approaches to community development. At its core lies a commitment to community-based resource management, wherein local communities assume primary responsibility for stewarding and leveraging local assets for collective benefit. This paradigm shift recognizes the intrinsic value of local knowledge and agency in driving sustainable development outcomes.

By empowering communities to take ownership of their development trajectories, decentralization fosters a sense of ownership and agency among residents, laying the groundwork for enduring social and economic progress. Consequently, community development initiatives underpinned by decentralization principles are characterized by their responsiveness to local dynamics, thereby enhancing their efficacy and sustainability (Larson & Soto, 2008).

Decentralization theory posits that shifting power and decision-making authority from central governments to local levels can lead to more effective governance, improved service delivery, and increased community participation. In Zambia, the Community Development Fund (CDF) projects exemplify the practical application of decentralization theory. By decentralizing decision-making processes to the community level, the CDF projects empower local stakeholders to identify their own development needs and implement solutions tailored to their unique contexts. This approach recognizes the inherent diversity among Zambian communities and acknowledges that a one-size-fits-all approach to development may not effectively address their varying needs and priorities.

Furthermore, decentralization theory emphasizes the importance of building local capacities and institutions to ensure the sustainability of development initiatives. In the case of Zambia's CDF projects, efforts are made to strengthen the capacity of community leaders, local organizations, and government agencies at the grassroots level.

Through training programs, technical assistance, and capacity-building workshops, stakeholders are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to manage project resources, monitor progress, and address challenges as they arise. By investing in local capacities, the CDF projects aim to foster self-reliance and resilience within Zambian communities, enabling them to continue driving their own development long after external support has ended.

Moreover, decentralization theory underscores the importance of promoting transparency, accountability, and participation in governance processes. In the context of CDF projects, transparency is ensured through open communication channels, accessible information, and regular reporting mechanisms. Community members are actively engaged in project planning, implementation, and monitoring, allowing them to hold decision-makers accountable for their actions and ensuring that resources are allocated equitably and efficiently. By promoting participatory decision-making and fostering a culture of accountability, the CDF projects not only contribute to the sustainable development of Zambian communities but also strengthen democratic governance structures at the local level.

Despite the conceptual appeal of decentralization, there are several challenges to its practical application. Effective decentralization requires constructing accountable institutions at all levels and ensuring that local governments have an autonomous decision-making domain.

Questions of fiscal decentralization, including revenue allocation between central and local governments, the role of formal systems of inter-government transfers, and the demarcation of responsibilities remain pertinent areas of concern (Diagnosis of Fiscal Decentralization in Angola, 2022) (Ribot et al., 2006).

Moreover, beyond the structural considerations, the flow of information between various actors and the ability of local governments to generate their revenue are critical to the success of local governance. A trust deficit among stakeholders can hinder achieving sustainable development goals through decentralization efforts (Guha & Chakrabarti, 2019). Building transparent communication channels and fostering collaboration among stakeholders become imperative to bridge these trust gaps and ensure the effective implementation of decentralized systems. Additionally, investing in capacity-building initiatives at the local level to enhance administrative capabilities and promote participatory decision-making processes can empower communities to take ownership of their development agendas within a decentralized framework.

Through such efforts, the potential benefits of decentralization, such as increased responsiveness to local needs and enhanced service delivery, can be realized more effectively, paving the way for inclusive and sustainable development outcomes.

### **2.2.2 Community Development Theories**

Community development theories encompass a diverse range of perspectives and approaches aimed at understanding and fostering positive change within communities. These theories provide frameworks for analyzing the dynamics of community life, identifying strengths and challenges, and guiding interventions to promote sustainable development and social justice.

### **2.2.3 Social Capital Theory**

Effective community development fund (CDF) projects rely on the active engagement of community members to ensure sustainability and success. Social capital theory offers a valuable framework for understanding the relationships and networks that facilitate community engagement in such projects. In understanding Social Capital Theory, it is imperative to acknowledge its role in fostering community engagement in Community Development Fund (CDF) projects. Social capital, as defined by scholars (Nur Muneerah Kasim et al., 2022), encompasses network ties, shared vision, and trust, influencing job performance and innovative outcomes. Drawing from the insights of digital entrepreneurship research (Ajaz Akbar Mir et al., 2022), the antecedents of digital entrepreneurial intentions, including innovative cognition and role models, highlight the importance of social interactions and networks.

These concepts resonate with the essence of Social Capital Theory, where social relationships and shared values within a community can enhance collaboration and drive meaningful project participation. By integrating the principles of social capital with the context of CDF projects, the potential for leveraging trust and network connections to enhance community engagement becomes apparent. This synthesis underscores the relevance of Social Capital Theory in fostering a sense of empowerment and collective action within community development initiatives, ultimately contributing to more successful outcomes in CDF projects.

The application of Social Capital Theory in Community Development Fund (CDF) Projects serves as a crucial framework for enhancing community engagement and ensuring the sustainability of development initiatives. By drawing upon the insights from research on social attending and sustainability assessment, such as that highlighted by Dr. Shabbir H. D. Eng, the CDF projects can leverage social services and

financial provisions to strengthen social capital within communities.

Moreover, effective leadership qualities such as integrity, transparency, and inclusivity, as emphasized by Patel and colleagues (2023), play a significant role in building and maintaining social capital within communities involved in CDF projects.

Furthermore, the utilization of Social Capital Theory can facilitate a more democratized education and training process, enabling equitable access to resources and technologies. By recognizing potential conflicts and inequalities within communities, this approach fosters governance mechanisms that promote participatory decision-making and accountability,

strengthening trust and cooperation among stakeholders. The integration of Social Capital Theory into CDF projects not only enhances community engagement but also contributes to the resilience of communities in the face of external shocks and challenges. Studies on disaster resilience and community recovery highlight the importance of social networks and cohesion in facilitating collective action and resource mobilization during crises (Smith et al., 2021). By fostering strong social ties and solidarity, CDF projects can contribute to the development of adaptive capacity and social resilience, enabling communities to withstand and recover from adversity more effectively.

Integrating Social Capital Theory into CDF projects offers a comprehensive framework for promoting community engagement, strengthening governance structures, and enhancing resilience. By leveraging social connections, trust, and shared values, CDF initiatives can foster collaboration, empower communities, and achieve sustainable development outcomes that address the diverse needs and challenges of local contexts.

#### **2.2.4 Empowerment Theory**

Empowerment theory has emerged as a pivotal framework within the realm of community development, offering profound insights into strategies for promoting local ownership and capacity-building in Community Development Fund (CDF) projects. According to Zimmerman (1995), empowerment is defined as "a process by which people, organizations, and communities gain mastery over their lives." This definition underscores empowerment as a dynamic process involving both individual and collective agency, whereby individuals and communities acquire the skills, knowledge, and resources necessary to participate actively in decision-making processes and effect meaningful change in their lives (Zimmerman, 1995). Thus, empowerment theory provides a lens through which to understand and foster the development of individuals' and communities' capacities to identify and address their own needs and aspirations.

In the context of CDF-funded projects, empowerment theory offers valuable insights into how to design and implement initiatives that prioritize local participation and ownership. By focusing on enhancing individuals' and communities' sense of self-efficacy and collective efficacy, empowerment theory aligns with the goals of CDF programs aimed at fostering community-driven development (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995). These programs seek to empower marginalized communities by providing them with the resources, support, and opportunities needed to address local challenges and capitalize on existing assets. Through initiatives such as community organizing, leadership development, and skills training, CDF-funded empowerment programs aim to build the capacity of individuals and communities to take control of their own development processes and create sustainable change.

Moreover, empowerment theory emphasizes the importance of addressing structural inequalities and power dynamics that shape individuals' and communities' access to resources and opportunities (Freire, 1970). By recognizing the interconnectedness of personal and social empowerment, empowerment theory underscores the need for CDF projects to adopt a holistic approach that addresses both individual-level and systemic barriers to empowerment (Rappaport, 1987).

This entails not only providing individuals with the skills and resources needed to assert their rights and advocate for their interests but also challenging broader systems of oppression and injustice that perpetuate inequality and marginalization within communities (Freire, 1970). Thus, empowerment theory calls for a nuanced understanding of power dynamics and a commitment to fostering inclusive and equitable development processes within CDF-funded initiatives.

Furthermore, empowerment theory highlights the importance of participatory approaches to decision-making and program design within CDF projects. By involving community members in all stages of the project cycle—from needs assessment and planning to implementation and evaluation—empowerment theory seeks to ensure that initiatives are responsive to local priorities and contexts (Wallerstein, 1992). This participatory approach not only enhances the relevance and effectiveness of CDF programs but also fosters a sense of ownership and investment among community members, thereby increasing the likelihood of sustainable outcomes (Wallerstein, 1992). By empowering communities to play an active role in shaping their own development trajectories, empowerment theory offers a transformative vision for CDF projects that goes beyond mere service provision to promote genuine empowerment and social change.

Empowerment theory offers a robust framework for promoting local ownership and capacity-building in CDF projects, aligning with the goals of fostering community-driven development and empowerment. By emphasizing the importance of enhancing individuals' and communities' sense of self-efficacy, addressing structural inequalities, and fostering participatory decision-making processes, empowerment theory provides valuable insights into how to design and implement initiatives that empower communities to take control of

their own development. Through a commitment to fostering inclusive and equitable development processes, CDF projects can leverage the principles of empowerment theory to create meaningful and sustainable change within communities.

### **2.2.5 Development Communication Theory**

Development communication theory, a multifaceted framework rooted in interdisciplinary perspectives, plays a pivotal role in facilitating community engagement and participation within Community Development Fund (CDF) projects. At its core, this theory elucidates the intricate dynamics of communication within the context of development initiatives, emphasizing the importance of fostering meaningful interactions among stakeholders to achieve sustainable outcomes (Servaes, 2008). Through an in-depth exploration of its principles, such as participatory approaches and empowerment strategies, development communication theory provides a robust foundation for fostering inclusive decision-making processes within CDF projects (Gumucio-Dagron, 2003; Melkote & Steeves, 2001).

The application of communication strategies tailored to promote transparency and information sharing is paramount in enhancing the efficacy of project management processes within CDF initiatives. Drawing upon insights from development communication theory, practitioners can adopt participatory methodologies, such as community meetings and participatory media, to facilitate open dialogue and knowledge exchange among stakeholders (Gumucio-Dagron, 2001). By creating platforms for inclusive communication, project managers can mitigate power differentials and foster a culture of trust and collaboration, thereby enhancing the legitimacy and sustainability of CDF projects (Rogers, 2003). Moreover, the integration of innovative communication technologies, such as mobile phones and social media platforms, can amplify the reach and impact of information dissemination efforts, enabling greater community participation and feedback mechanisms (Obregon & Waisbord, 2010).

Moreover, within the realm of development communication theory, a critical examination of communication strategies is imperative for optimizing stakeholder engagement and fostering community participation in CDF projects. By employing tailored communication strategies, project managers can navigate cultural nuances and address linguistic barriers to ensure effective information dissemination and comprehension among diverse stakeholders (Singhal & Rogers, 2003).

Additionally, the integration of capacity-building initiatives, such as training workshops and educational campaigns, can empower community members with the necessary skills and knowledge to actively participate in decision-making processes (McAnany & La Pastina, 2010). Through a proactive approach to communication strategy development, project managers can foster a sense of ownership and agency among stakeholders, thereby nurturing sustainable development outcomes (Wilkins, 2018).

An exploration of the role of communication in promoting transparency and accountability within CDF projects underscores the transformative potential of development communication theory. By establishing robust communication channels and mechanisms for feedback and grievance redressal, project managers can uphold principles of transparency and responsiveness, fostering trust and legitimacy among stakeholders (Obregon & Waisbord, 2005). Moreover, the adoption of innovative communication technologies, such as blockchain and open data platforms, can enhance the traceability and accountability of project expenditures, ensuring the effective utilization of resources and minimizing the risk of corruption (Zuiderwijk et al., 2015). Through a combination of participatory communication processes and technological innovations, CDF projects can foster a culture of accountability and integrity, laying the groundwork for sustainable development outcomes (Day & Schuler, 2004).

The principles of development communication theory offer a robust framework for promoting community engagement, transparency, and participation within CDF projects. By embracing participatory approaches and leveraging communication as a catalyst for social change, stakeholders can foster inclusive decision-making processes and empower local communities to drive their development agendas (Servaes, 2019; Lennie & Tacchi, 2013). Through strategic communication interventions that prioritize transparency, information sharing, and stakeholder dialogue, CDF projects can navigate complexities and address the multifaceted needs of marginalized populations, ultimately contributing to the realization of sustainable development goals at the grassroots level.



### **2.2.6 Institutional Theory**

Institutional theory offers a lens through which to analyze the dynamics of community-driven development (CDF) project management, particularly concerning the influence of formal and informal institutions on project outcomes. According to DiMaggio and Powell (1983), institutions are the rules, norms, and practices that guide behaviour within a given social system. In the context of CDF projects, these institutions can include formal regulations set by government agencies, as well as informal norms and practices within local communities. By examining how these institutions interact, scholars and practitioners can better understand the complexities of CDF project implementation and identify strategies for enhancing their effectiveness (Scott, 2014).

Formal institutions such as government policies and regulations play a significant role in shaping the structure and processes of CDF projects. These regulations often dictate the allocation of resources, the selection of project beneficiaries, and the overall governance framework within which CDF projects operate. For example, in their study of CDF projects in developing countries, Mwangi and Nyangena (2019) found that government policies regarding resource allocation and community participation had a direct impact on project outcomes. Similarly, informal institutions, including social norms and cultural practices, can influence the behaviour of project stakeholders and shape the implementation of CDF initiatives (North, 1990).

Understanding the interplay between formal and informal institutions is crucial for strengthening governance structures and accountability mechanisms within CDF projects. By aligning formal regulations with local norms and practices, project managers can enhance community participation and ownership, leading to more sustainable outcomes (Ostrom, 2005). Moreover, by recognizing the influence of informal institutions on project dynamics, policymakers can design interventions that leverage existing social networks and cultural norms to facilitate project implementation (Agrawal, 2001).

Institutional theory also highlights the importance of adaptive governance strategies in CDF project management. As environments change and new challenges arise, project managers must be able to adapt their governance structures and decision-making processes accordingly (Peters and Pierre, 2004).

By incorporating insights from institutional theory into project planning and implementation, practitioners can develop more flexible and responsive approaches to CDF project management, ultimately improving their ability to achieve meaningful development outcomes (Skelcher and Sullivan, 2008).

Institutional theory provides a valuable framework for analyzing the role of formal and informal institutions in shaping CDF project outcomes. By understanding how these institutions interact and influence project dynamics, policymakers and practitioners can develop more effective governance structures and accountability mechanisms. Moreover, by adopting adaptive governance strategies informed by institutional theory, project managers can better navigate the complexities of CDF project implementation and enhance their ability to promote sustainable development in local communities.

### **2.2.7 Adaptive Management Theory**

Adaptive Management Theory has gained prominence in various fields, including environmental

management, natural resource governance, and project management, as a response to the complex and dynamic nature of contemporary challenges. The essence of adaptive management lies in its iterative process, characterized by continuous learning, flexibility, and adjustment in response to changing conditions (Holling, 1978). This approach acknowledges uncertainty and complexity, emphasizing the need for experimentation, feedback loops, and collaboration among stakeholders to achieve desired outcomes (Berkes & Folke, 1998).

In the context of project planning, implementation, and evaluation, adaptive management offers a framework to address uncertainties and risks effectively. By embracing a flexible and responsive approach, project managers can anticipate and adapt to unforeseen changes, minimizing negative impacts and maximizing opportunities for success (Walker et al., 2004). Adaptive management encourages the integration of monitoring and evaluation activities throughout the project lifecycle, enabling real-time feedback and decision-making based on empirical evidence (Gunderson et al., 2008).

The application of adaptive management principles to project planning, implementation, and evaluation within the context of Community Development Fund (CDF)-funded projects presents a promising avenue for enhancing project outcomes and sustainability. CDF-funded projects often operate in dynamic and uncertain environments, characterized by diverse stakeholder interests, limited resources, and evolving socio-economic conditions (Stringer et al., 2006). Adaptive management provides a systematic approach to navigate these complexities, promoting stakeholder engagement, learning, and adaptation in response to changing circumstances (Folke et al., 2005).

Incorporating adaptive management principles into Project Cycle Management (PCM) practices within CDF-funded projects can foster resilience and adaptive capacity. PCM, a widely used approach for project management, typically follows a linear process of planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation (European Commission, 2004). However, in dynamic and uncertain environments, such rigid approaches may limit the effectiveness and sustainability of interventions (Folke et al., 2002). By integrating adaptive management principles, PCM practices can become more responsive and adaptive, enabling project teams to navigate uncertainties, embrace innovation, and foster learning (Armitage et al., 2012).

Adaptive management theory offers valuable insights and practical guidance for enhancing the effectiveness of project management in dynamic and uncertain environments. By embracing flexibility, learning, and collaboration, project managers can navigate complexities, capitalize on opportunities, and achieve sustainable outcomes (Walters & Holling, 1990). Through iterative cycles of planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation, adaptive management enables projects to adapt to changing conditions, enhance resilience, and achieve long-term success (Lee, 1993). In the context of CDF-funded projects, integrating adaptive management principles into PCM practices can enhance project effectiveness, promote stakeholder engagement, and contribute to sustainable development outcomes (Olsson et al., 2004).

### **2.2.8 Resource Dependency Theory**

Resource Dependency Theory (RDT) provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing power dynamics and resource allocation within Community Development Fund (CDF) projects. Stemming from organizational sociology, RDT posits that organizations rely on external resources to sustain their operations (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). In the context of CDF projects, which often depend on external funding and support, understanding these dynamics is crucial for effective project management and sustainable

development outcomes. Funders typically wield significant influence due to their control over resources, shaping project agendas and decision-making processes (Aldrich & Pfeffer, 1976).

This can lead to asymmetrical power relations between funders, implementing agencies, and local communities, potentially undermining the autonomy and effectiveness of local initiatives (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

Mitigating dependency risks and enhancing local capacity-building in project management within CDF projects necessitates strategic interventions and collaborations. Diversifying funding sources and mobilizing local resources can reduce reliance on external support and enhance project sustainability (Hillman et al., 2009). Collaborative partnerships among stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society organizations, and private sector actors, can promote participatory decision-making and equitable resource distribution (Ansell & Gash, 2008). Through inclusive governance structures, stakeholders can co-create solutions, share risks, and build collective capacity to address complex development challenges (Sørensen & Torfing, 2007).

Empowering local communities and implementing agencies to take an active role in project management is essential for reducing dependency risks and fostering sustainable development outcomes. Capacity-building initiatives, such as training, mentoring, and knowledge-sharing programs, can enhance local stakeholders' technical skills and managerial capabilities (Heckathorn, 1997). Participatory approaches, like community-driven development and participatory action research, enable communities to identify priorities and implement contextually appropriate solutions (Chambers, 1997). Moreover, promoting transparency, accountability, and inclusivity within project governance structures can foster trust, legitimacy, and ownership among stakeholders, mitigating dependency risks and power imbalances (Bovens, 2007).

Resource Dependency Theory offers valuable insights into the dynamics of power and resource allocation within CDF projects. Strategies for mitigating dependency risks and enhancing local capacity-building include diversifying funding sources, fostering collaborative partnerships, and empowering local communities and implementing agencies through capacity-building initiatives and participatory approaches. By promoting more equitable and participatory decision-making processes, CDF projects can enhance their effectiveness, sustainability, and positive impact on local development.

## **2.2.9 Public Choice Theory**

Public Choice Theory (PCT) offers a theoretical framework rooted in economics and political science to analyze decision-making processes and incentives within the context of governance, including Community Development Fund (CDF) projects. Originating from the work of scholars such as Buchanan and Tullock (1962), PCT posits that individual, including policymakers and bureaucrats, act in their self-interest when making decisions in the public sphere. Within CDF governance structures, this theory sheds light on the motivations and behaviors of various stakeholders involved in decision-making processes (Mueller, 2003). Policymakers may prioritize objectives that maximize their own utility or political interests, while bureaucrats may seek to maximize their agency's budget or influence (Downs, 1957). Understanding these dynamics is essential for designing effective strategies to enhance community participation and accountability in project management.

One key insight from Public Choice Theory is the importance of aligning incentives to encourage desirable behaviors among stakeholders involved in CDF projects. By designing governance structures that reward

transparency, accountability, and responsiveness to community needs, policymakers and bureaucrats can mitigate the risk of agency capture and rent-seeking behavior (Brennan & Buchanan, 1985). For example, introducing performance-based contracting mechanisms or incentive-based funding models can incentivize implementing agencies to deliver results efficiently and effectively (Weingast et al., 1981). Similarly, incorporating mechanisms for citizen oversight and feedback can hold decision-makers accountable for their actions and promote greater responsiveness to community preferences (Ferejohn, 1986).

Efforts to enhance community participation and accountability in project management within CDF governance can benefit from insights derived from Public Choice Theory. By recognizing the self-interested motives of stakeholders and designing governance mechanisms that align incentives with desired outcomes, policymakers can foster a more transparent, responsive, and accountable decision-making process (Hirschman, 1970). For instance, establishing decentralized decision-making structures, such as participatory budgeting or community-driven development initiatives, can empower local communities to have a greater say in project selection and implementation (Ostrom, 1990). Moreover, promoting competition among implementing agencies or service providers can improve efficiency and innovation while reducing the risk of monopoly power and inefficiency (Tullock, 1967).

Public Choice Theory provides valuable insights into the decision-making processes and incentives shaping governance within CDF projects. By understanding the self-interested motivations of stakeholders and designing governance structures that align incentives with desired outcomes, policymakers can enhance community participation and accountability in project management. Strategies informed by Public Choice Theory include aligning incentives, promoting transparency and responsiveness, and empowering local communities to play a more active role in decision-making processes. These efforts can contribute to more effective, efficient, and equitable development outcomes within CDF governance contexts.

### **2.2.10 Systems Theory**

Systems theory provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the intricate interplay between various components within Community Development Fund (CDF) projects. At its core, systems theory views systems as entities composed of interconnected and interdependent parts that work together to achieve a common goal (Stermann, 2000). In the context of CDF projects, this perspective emphasizes the importance of recognizing the multifaceted relationships between different stakeholders, resources, and environmental factors. By adopting a systems thinking approach, project managers gain insights into the complex dynamics at play, enabling them to make more informed decisions and develop effective strategies for sustainable development (Blackmore, 2012).

Moreover, systems thinking can significantly enhance the holistic approach to project planning, implementation, and evaluation within the realm of community development. Rather than focusing solely on isolated interventions or outcomes, a systems perspective encourages stakeholders to consider the broader context in which their projects operate (Stermann, 2000). This entails recognizing the interconnectedness of social, economic, and environmental factors, as well as the potential ripple effects of interventions across different levels of the system. By taking a systemic view, project planners can identify leverage points for intervention, anticipate unintended consequences, and design more resilient and adaptive strategies (Blackmore, 2012).

Furthermore, systems theory underscores the importance of feedback loops and dynamic interactions within CDF projects. Feedback loops represent the circular flow of information and influence between different elements of a system, shaping its behaviour over time (Stermann, 2000). Within community development contexts, understanding feedback mechanisms is crucial for anticipating how interventions may lead to unintended consequences or reinforce existing patterns of inequality.

By identifying feedback loops, project planners can design interventions that leverage positive feedback to amplify desired outcomes while mitigating the effects of negative feedback that may hinder progress (Blackmore, 2012).

Additionally, systems thinking emphasizes the role of emergence in shaping the outcomes of CDF projects. Emergence refers to the phenomenon where complex behaviours or patterns emerge from the interactions of simpler components within a system, often leading to unpredictable or unexpected outcomes (Stermann, 2000). In community development, emergence highlights the need for flexibility and adaptability in project design and implementation. By recognizing that outcomes may evolve in unpredictable ways as a result of emergent properties, stakeholders can embrace uncertainty and employ iterative approaches to planning and evaluation. This allows for the co-creation of solutions with local communities and the ability to respond effectively to evolving challenges and opportunities (Blackmore, 2012).

In essence, systems theory offers a valuable lens through which to understand and address the complexities inherent in CDF projects. By acknowledging the interconnected nature of systems and adopting a holistic perspective, stakeholders can enhance their capacity to promote sustainable development and foster positive change within communities (Stermann, 2000). Through informed project planning, implementation, and evaluation processes, systems thinking can pave the way for more effective and resilient interventions that address the diverse needs and dynamics of communities undergoing development initiatives (Blackmore, 2012).

## **2.3 Historical Context**

### **2.3.1 Decentralization Efforts in Post-Colonial Zambia**

As a process decentralization entails central government transferring some of its political authority, fiscal resources and administrative responsibilities to sub-national entities. Decentralization can therefore be defined as the assignment of fiscal, political, and administrative responsibilities and decision-making away from the central government to its field units, district administrative units, other levels of government, regional or functional authorities, semi-autonomous public authorities, parastatal organizations, private entities, and non-governmental private or voluntary (civil society) organizations (Rondinelli et al. 1983; Hope and Chikulo 2000; UNDP 1993).

Decentralization is viewed as a critical element in facilitating not only the re-invigoration of the state capability in order to establish an effective foundation for an efficient public sector but also as a means of bringing the state closer to the populace (Chikulo 1989; Manor 1999). Thus, the term 'decentralization' is used to describe a wide variety of power transfer arrangements and accountability systems.



### 2.3.2 Forms of Decentralization

Decentralization can further be differentiated into four main types: deconcentration; delegation; devolution; and privatization (Litvack et al. 1998; UNDP 1993).

**Deconcentration:** as a form of administrative decentralization, aims to mitigate bureaucratic inefficiencies by dispersing decision-making authority closer to the grassroots level. By empowering regional or local units within government agencies, deconcentration seeks to enhance responsiveness to local needs and promote more effective service delivery.

Additionally, it can facilitate better coordination between central and local authorities, fostering a more integrated approach to governance. This approach aligns with the principles of subsidiarity, where decisions are made at the lowest level of government capable of addressing them effectively, as emphasized by Cohen and Peterson (1999).

**Delegation:** Delegation, while sharing similarities with deconcentration, involves a distinct mechanism of transferring authority to external entities outside the direct control of the central government. This can foster innovation and specialization in service provision while allowing the government to focus on policy formulation and oversight. Furthermore, delegation can stimulate competition among service providers, leading to improved efficiency and cost-effectiveness. However, it also raises concerns regarding accountability and the potential for regulatory capture by vested interests, highlighting the importance of robust governance frameworks to mitigate risks, as discussed by Kasarda and Parnell (1993).

**Privatization:** as a subtype of delegation, represents a significant shift towards market-based solutions for public service delivery. By engaging private sector entities, governments aim to harness market forces to improve efficiency, innovation, and consumer choice. Privatization can introduce competition, incentivizing service providers to innovate and optimize their operations to meet consumer demands. Moreover, it can reduce the financial burden on governments, particularly in sectors where private entities can operate more efficiently than public agencies.

However, critics argue that privatization may lead to inequalities in access to essential services and compromise the quality of services provided, necessitating careful regulation and monitoring, as noted by Kasarda and Parnell (1993).

**Devolution:** characterized by the transfer of decision-making powers to lower tiers of government, represents a fundamental reconfiguration of the governance landscape. By decentralizing authority, devolution aims to promote local ownership of development processes and enhance democratic participation. Empowering local authorities to make decisions tailored to their communities' unique needs can foster innovation and responsiveness in governance.

Additionally, devolution can strengthen social cohesion by promoting inclusivity and diversity in decision-making processes. However, challenges such as capacity constraints and intergovernmental coordination issues may arise, requiring institutional reforms and capacity-building efforts to ensure effective implementation, as highlighted by Cohen and Peterson (1999).

### **2.3.3 Historical Evolution of Decentralization Efforts**

The historical evolution of decentralization efforts in Zambia commenced shortly after its independence in 1964. Initially, governance in post-colonial Zambia was characterized by centralized power structures, mirroring the administrative legacy inherited from colonial rule. President Kenneth Kaunda and the United National Independence Party (UNIP) predominantly wielded authority, maintaining a top-down approach to governance. This era witnessed limited local discretion and an emphasis on state-led development planning, which often hindered local initiative and responsiveness (Mazunda, 2008).

However, by the 1980s, Zambia found itself grappling with the need to bolster political legitimacy and improve service delivery amidst economic challenges. In response, the country embarked on a trajectory of decentralization reforms aimed at devolving authority to subsidiary units of government. This marked a pivotal shift away from the previous centralization paradigm. The 1980s and 1990s witnessed significant policy adjustments, including amendments to local government acts, the proliferation of local governance institutions, and the introduction of measures aimed at fiscal decentralization (Fjeldstad et al., 2018).

The period spanning the 1980s and 1990s marked a notable progression towards decentralization in Zambia, albeit characterized by a staggered implementation process. These reforms aimed not only to decentralize administrative functions but also to enhance public sector management and strengthen local governance capacities.

As a result, various mechanisms were put in place to empower local authorities and foster community participation in decision-making processes (Mazunda, 2008).

The decentralization initiatives undertaken in Zambia during the 1980s and 1990s laid the groundwork for a more inclusive and participatory governance framework. These reforms sought to distribute power and resources more equitably across different levels of government, thereby fostering local autonomy and accountability. Moreover, the introduction of fiscal decentralization measures aimed to enhance the financial autonomy of local authorities, enabling them to better respond to the needs of their constituents (Mazunda, 2008). Despite facing numerous challenges, including fiscal constraints and administrative hurdles, Zambia's decentralization journey during this period represented a significant departure from its centralized past (Fjeldstad et al., 2018).

The Zambian approach to decentralization cannot be fully comprehended without considering the legacy of the colonial administration. Colonialism left a dual system of governance where a modern state structure-imposed authority over a complex tapestry of traditional leadership and customary law. This duality introduced structural challenges that have persisted into the contemporary era.

During colonialism, the central colonial administration mainly regarded local authorities as instruments to implement its directives with little autonomy or resources of their own. These vestiges have had lingering effects, often manifesting in centralized control over resources and decision-making processes even when formal policies suggest a move towards decentralization. This incongruence between policy and practice reveals the institutional and ideological inertia that contemporary governments have contended with in Zambia. As Simutanyi's analysis indicates, the legacy of these colonial structures has been a significant factor shaping political dynamics and affecting the efficacy of decentralization efforts (Simutanyi, 1996).

The contemporary governance structures of Zambia embody the complex interplay between the intent to



devolve power and the historical and institutional barriers that have challenged its realization. Despite various constitutional amendments and policy initiatives purported to empower the local level, practical changes have often been slow and inconsistent. The underlying reasons for the observed mismatch between decentralization policy and practice are multi-faceted, involving political economy considerations, capacity constraints, and the degree of political will.

Zambia's journey in decentralization has traversed several stages, encompassing diverse strategies aimed at redistributing authority and responsibilities. Initially, the country embraced deconcentration, which involved dispersing administrative functions to lower levels within government agencies. This decentralization phase sought to enhance service delivery and governance efficiency by bringing decision-making closer to local communities (Chapman, 2014). However, central government control remained predominant during this period.

Subsequently, Zambia progressed towards delegation, transferring specific authority and decision-making powers to semi-autonomous agencies and parastatals outside the regular bureaucratic structure. This approach aimed to foster specialization and innovation in service provision while relieving the central government of direct operational responsibilities (Kanyongolo & Patel, 2015). Despite its potential benefits, challenges such as accountability and coordination between government and delegated entities emerged, prompting further reforms.

In tandem with these efforts, Zambia embarked on privatization as another facet of decentralization. Privatization involved transferring operational control and responsibilities for certain government functions and services to the private sector, including private enterprises and organizations. This approach aimed to leverage market mechanisms to improve efficiency, innovation, and service quality (Mwenda & Kanyanta, 2017). However, it raised concerns regarding equity and access to essential services, necessitating robust regulation and oversight.

In recent years, Zambia has embraced devolution as a cornerstone of governance reform. In Zambia, the implementation of devolution represents a significant shift towards decentralized governance aimed at empowering local communities and enhancing service delivery. The country's adoption of devolution reflects a commitment to promoting democratic governance, fostering grassroots participation, and addressing regional disparities in development. With the decentralization of decision-making powers to lower tiers of government, such as provincial and district administrations, Zambia seeks to ensure that development priorities are determined by local needs and aspirations.

This approach aligns with the principles of subsidiarity, emphasizing that decisions should be made at the most appropriate level of government to achieve effective and efficient outcomes.

One key aspect of Zambia's devolution agenda is the implementation of the Constituency Development Fund (CDF), which aims to channel resources directly to constituencies for community-driven development projects. The CDF represents a bottom-up approach to development planning, where local communities have a direct say in identifying and prioritizing projects that address their most pressing needs. By decentralizing the allocation of resources through the CDF, Zambia aims to enhance transparency, accountability, and citizen participation in the development process. Moreover, the CDF empowers local leaders and communities to take ownership of development initiatives, fostering a sense of ownership and pride in local development efforts. As Zambia continues to advance its devolution agenda, the effective

implementation of the CDF serves as a cornerstone for promoting inclusive and sustainable development at the grassroots level.

#### **2.3.4 Key Policy Reforms and Institutional Changes**

The clamour for multi-party democracy led to the scrapping of the *de jure* one-party state on December 17<sup>th</sup>, 1990 and the introduction of political pluralism (Sichone and Chikulo 1996; Chikulo 1996). The official ending of the one party state came on 4<sup>th</sup> September 1991 with the adoption of the new *Constitution of Zambia Act 1991* represented a legal break with the old political order. The proclamation of multi-party democracy ushered in Zambia's Third Republic, and embodied the country's return to political pluralism from a *de jure* one-party state. The first multi-party elections were held on 31<sup>st</sup> October 1991, heralding an end to 19 years of one-party rule and a crushing defeat for the former veteran President K.D. Kaunda and his United Independence Party (UNIP) at the hands of the opposition - the Movement for Multi-party Democracy (MMD) led by Frederick Chiluba a former trade unionist.

Following the victory, the newly elected MMD government embarked on ambitious democratic reforms, pledging to enhance provincial and district governance by decentralizing power in alignment with democratic principles, transparency, and accountable local administration. Initially, efforts focused on delineating clear boundaries between the ruling party and state functions. Subsequently, legislative measures were introduced to reinforce democratic oversight and increase accountability of elected local officials. The enactment of the Constitution of Zambia Act (No.1) of 1991 and the Local Government Act (No.22) of 1991 reinstated the distinction between the ruling party and the civil service, establishing a dual administrative system at the district level.

Local government elections were reinstated, with councillors elected for five-year terms based on universal adult suffrage, irrespective of political affiliation.

In March 1993, the government launched the Public Sector Reform Programme (PSRP) with the aim of enhancing the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of public sector operations. Decentralization emerged as a crucial component of the PSRP, aiming to devolve administrative functions to provinces and empower locally elected authorities. This initiative represented a significant endeavour to strengthen local governance within a pluralistic framework.

In March 1993 Cabinet Office, also announced the re-introduction of the post of District Secretary. (DS) The latter was to ensure the effective co-ordination of government functions at the district level and the DS was accountable to the Provincial Permanent Secretary (PS). Although no appointments were made to this position until several years later, the move represented a return to the *status quo ante*; a return to the structure which had prevailed during the First Republic (1964-1972) The *Cabinet Circular No.1 of 1995* introduced the Provincial and District Development Coordinating Committees to coordinate development activities. The key function of these committees was to "provide a forum for dialogue and coordination on developmental issues between the local authority, line departments, donors and NGO in the district" (Cabinet Circular No.1 1995).

At the Provincial level, each of the nine provinces was to be headed by a deputy minister who became the political head of the province and would report directly to the President. He was assisted by the Provincial Permanent Secretary (PS) who headed the secretariat and coordinates government activities in the province. The PS reported directly to the Cabinet Office. The other new arrangement was the establishment of the



Provincial Development Coordinating Committees (PDCCs). All the heads of the line ministries/departments in the province and all district secretaries were to become members. The PDCC was chaired by the respective provincial permanent secretary with the Provincial Planning Unit (PPUs) providing secretarial support. Each PDCC was responsible for coordinating development activities and preparing a development plan for the province based on the district plans. To this end, it performs an important function in development planning. Each PDCC is assisted by a Provincial Planning office established under the Town and Country Planning Act (cap 283) 1997.

At the district level, the District Development Coordinating Committee (DDCC) comprised of local government officials, NGO representatives, private sector representatives, councillors, and chaired by the District Secretary. The Directorate of Planning or Planning Office of the local authority provided the secretariat. DDCCs serve as technical committees to coordinate development in the district and prepare development plans for submission to the district council. These plans undergo scrutiny by politicians to ensure government responsiveness to local needs. This network of committees mirrors the structures and functions of the old Provincial Development Committees (PDCs) and District Development Committees (DDCs) pre-1980 Local Administration Act.

At the sub-district level, Area Development Committees (ADCs) were established to facilitate local-level discussions on development issues and increase citizen participation in local socio-economic development. ADCs were formal multi-functional developmental institutions managed by citizens at the ward level. Their mandate includes residents' involvement in projection formulation and management, generation of timely data for service delivery planning, and monitoring of council performance to ensure accountability. ADCs were responsible for preparing and approving Ward Integrated Development Plans (WIDP) and budgets, critical inputs in district planning and budget processes.

The creation of a District Administrator (DA), subsequently renamed District Commissioner, in November 1999 reinforced central political control at the district level. The DA oversees district administration, coordinates development agencies, and harmonizes central government functions with those of district councils. However, appointments to this position often lack administrative experience, undermining the intended purpose of improving coordination in the decentralization process.

Political developments following the 2001 tripartite general elections, particularly under President Levy Patrick Mwanawasa's leadership, led to a renewed focus on decentralization. A new Decentralization Policy adopted in December 2002 aimed to empower local communities and enhance democratic governance. The policy outlined functions of Provincial Development Coordinating Committees (PDCCs) responsible for implementing decentralization at the provincial level, acting as a crucial link between district and national levels.

The District Council, as the legal body at the district level, is mandated to provide services and promote development through DDCCs. Additionally, the Council spearheads the implementation of District Implementation Plans (DIP) and undertakes various developmental activities in health, education, infrastructure, agriculture, etc. The DDCC serves as a coordinating forum for the district, facilitating practical implementation of decentralization and making recommendations to the District Council.



At the sub-district level, the lack of legally recognized structures poses challenges. However, the new decentralization framework provides for the establishment of Area Development Coordination Committees (ADCCs) tasked with resource mobilization, project prioritization, and implementation of decentralization policies. The DIP emphasizes bottom-up planning,

linking planning and budgeting, community input, and positioning districts at the forefront of service delivery and development.

Overall, the decentralization efforts in Zambia since independence represent a concerted endeavour to strengthen local governance, empower communities, and foster democratic accountability. The establishment of structures such as the Decentralization Secretariat and the implementation of comprehensive policies like the DIP underscore Zambia's commitment to advancing decentralization reforms.

**2.3.5 Legacy of Colonial Administration and Contemporary Governance Structures** The legacy of colonial administration continues to exert influence on Zambia's contemporary governance structures, shaping perceptions of authority, resource allocation, and political participation. The highly centralized administrative model inherited from colonial rule created entrenched patterns of dependency and marginalization, particularly in rural areas (Chibuye, 2018). Decentralization efforts in post-colonial Zambia thus represent a deliberate attempt to redress historical imbalances and promote grassroots democracy and development.

Decentralization in Zambia has been a multifaceted process, encompassing administrative, fiscal, and political dimensions. Administrative decentralization involves the transfer of authority, responsibilities, and resources from central government institutions to local government entities. This transfer aims to enhance local capacity for decision-making and service delivery, thereby promoting efficiency and responsiveness to local needs.

Fiscal decentralization, on the other hand, entails the allocation of financial resources to subnational levels of government, empowering them to finance their own development initiatives and reduce dependence on central transfers. Political decentralization involves the devolution of political power to elected representatives at the local level, fostering greater citizen participation and accountability in governance processes.

However, the implementation of decentralization in Zambia has faced numerous challenges, including limited institutional capacity at the local level, insufficient financial resources, and political resistance from entrenched elites reluctant to cede power. These challenges have often hindered the effective functioning of local government structures and undermined the potential benefits of decentralization for grassroots development. Moreover, the legacy of colonial-era administrative structures, characterized by hierarchical control and limited local

autonomy, continues to shape the dynamics of governance in contemporary Zambia, influencing patterns of resource allocation, service delivery, and political representation.

Despite these challenges, decentralization has also yielded some positive outcomes in Zambia, particularly in areas where local governments have been able to assert their autonomy and effectively mobilize resources for community development. In regions with active civic participation and strong local leadership, decentralization has facilitated the implementation of innovative projects tailored to local needs, ranging

from infrastructure development to social welfare programs. Moreover, decentralization has helped to foster a sense of ownership and empowerment among citizens, encouraging greater engagement in decision-making processes and promoting social cohesion at the community level.

Furthermore, the decentralization process in Zambia has been accompanied by efforts to strengthen local governance structures and build the capacity of local authorities to effectively manage public affairs. Initiatives such as capacity-building programs, technical assistance, and institutional reforms have sought to enhance the skills and capabilities of local government officials, enabling them to better respond to the needs of their constituents and administer public resources more efficiently. Additionally, the promotion of transparency, accountability, and participatory governance has been central to the decentralization agenda, aiming to foster trust between citizens and government institutions and mitigate the risk of corruption and mismanagement.

While the legacy of colonial administration continues to influence Zambia's contemporary governance structures, decentralization represents a critical strategy for addressing historical imbalances and promoting inclusive development. By devolving power and resources to the local level, decentralization has the potential to empower communities, enhance service delivery, and strengthen democratic governance. However, realizing these objectives requires overcoming various challenges and ensuring that decentralization efforts are supported by adequate institutional capacity, financial resources, and political will. Ultimately, the success of decentralization in Zambia hinges on its ability to translate principles of local autonomy and participatory governance into tangible improvements in the lives of ordinary citizens across the country.

### **2.3.6 Evolution of Constituency Development Funds (CDFs)**

Since its inception, the Community Development Fund (CDF) has undergone a remarkable evolution, expanding its scope and scale to accommodate increasingly resource-intensive community projects. Initially tasked with relatively modest endeavours, such as basic infrastructure development and small-scale community initiatives, CDF has progressively embraced more ambitious undertakings, including the construction of schools, health facilities, and market shelters, alongside the rehabilitation of vital infrastructure like roads and bridges. This expansion reflects a broader commitment to addressing multifaceted community needs comprehensively, aiming to uplift livelihoods and enhance overall well-being.

Moreover, as Zambia endeavours to decentralize governance structures and empower local governments to better serve their constituencies, the role and significance of CDF have grown substantially. The allocation of funds through CDF is structured on a per-constituency basis, reflecting a deliberate strategy to ensure equitable distribution and targeted impact at the grassroots level. By earmarking resources for each constituency, the government endeavours to empower local leaders and stakeholders to identify and address priority development needs within their respective communities.

The trajectory of CDF's budgetary allocations underscores the government's commitment to devolving power and resources, enabling communities to exercise greater agency in addressing their developmental priorities. Beginning with an initial allocation of K500, 000, CDF's budget has witnessed a steady upward

trajectory, reaching K1 million within a relatively short span. Subsequent years saw further increases, with allocations expanding to K1.6 million by 2021.

However, the most significant surge occurred thereafter, catapulting the fund's budget to a staggering K25.7 million. As of the latest figures, the allocation has surged even higher, now standing at an impressive K30.8 million.

The substantial augmentation in CDF's budget underscores the evolving landscape of community development in Zambia, with a renewed emphasis on local empowerment and participatory decision-making. By channelling increased resources towards grassroots initiatives, the government aims to foster inclusive growth and equitable development across diverse regions. Moreover, the evolution of CDF reflects a broader shift towards participatory and inclusive approaches to development planning and implementation in Zambia. By empowering constituencies with greater autonomy and resources, the government aims to foster a culture of local decision-making and community-led development, laying the groundwork for sustainable, people-centred development outcomes.

### **2.3.7 Comparative Analysis of CDF Implementation across Nations**

Community Development Funds (CDFs) have been established and utilized across various developing nations for decades. For example, in Uganda, a precursor to CDFs was in operation as early as 1969 (Chambers, 1974). Similarly, Papua New Guinea introduced its own CDF in 1984, subsequently leading to its adoption as a common government budget allocation mechanism, particularly in regions across Asia and Africa (Baskin, 2010).

There has been a significant global trend towards government decentralization, with many countries advocating for the devolution of authority to local governance units. This push emphasizes the importance of making governance more accessible and accountable at the grassroots level (Maina, 2005).

Decentralization has been particularly embraced in regions such as the Caribbean, East Asia, and East Europe, with studies suggesting that it enhances local governance, democratization, and the efficient and equitable use of public resources (Burki et al., 1991; World Bank, 2000).

Parliamentary involvement in grassroots projects and community development has been on the rise in numerous countries, including Papua New Guinea, Bhutan, Jamaica, Pakistan, India, Uganda, Tanzania, and Kenya (Baskin, 2010). One key policy tool facilitating this involvement is the Constituency Development Fund (CDF), which allocates public finances to benefit specific political subdivisions based on decisions influenced by their representatives in the National Assembly.

CDFs bear similarities to the United States' congressional allocations commonly known as "pork barrel" or "earmarks" (Baskin, 2010).

However, their operations have often sparked controversy, raising questions about government service delivery efficacy, accountability, legislators' role in selecting development priorities, and meaningful public participation in policymaking. Thus, there's a growing need for a deeper understanding of CDFs and the formulation of transparent and ethical guidelines to prevent corruption (Baskin, 2010).

In the Philippines, for instance, Members of Parliament (MPs) are allocated significant financial resources to foster development in their respective jurisdictions (Zyl, 2010). CDFs are perceived as politically-



initiated projects aimed at addressing constituency-based needs, protecting communities from centralized state oversight, and promoting individual community development (Baskin, 2010).

Lessons learned from international experiences with Community Development Funds (CDFs) underscore the importance of decentralization in governance. Across various developing nations, the establishment and utilization of CDFs have been closely tied to efforts to devolve authority to local governance units. This trend, observed in countries like Uganda and Papua New Guinea, emphasizes the need to make governance more accessible and accountable at the grassroots level. Studies from regions such as the Caribbean, East Asia, and East Europe have highlighted the positive impacts of decentralization, including improved local governance, democratization, and the efficient allocation of public resources.

Moreover, the involvement of parliamentary representatives in grassroots projects and community development initiatives has become increasingly prevalent in many countries. The implementation of tools like the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) enables the allocation of public finances to benefit specific political subdivisions based on decisions influenced by elected representatives. This approach has been adopted in nations like Papua New Guinea, Bhutan, Jamaica, Pakistan, India, Uganda, Tanzania, and Kenya, indicating a global recognition of the importance of localized decision-making in development initiatives.

However, the parallels drawn between CDFs and the United States' congressional allocations, often termed "pork barrel" or "earmarks," highlight potential challenges. While CDFs aim to address constituency-based needs and promote community development, their operations have raised concerns about government service delivery efficacy, transparency, and legislators' roles in selecting development priorities.

There is a growing recognition of the need for transparent and ethical guidelines to mitigate corruption risks associated with CDFs, ensuring meaningful public participation in policymaking processes.

For example, in the Philippines, Members of Parliament (MPs) are allocated significant financial resources to support development in their respective jurisdictions through CDFs. These funds are perceived as crucial for addressing local needs, protecting communities from centralized state oversight, and fostering individual community development. However, the Philippines' experience underscores the importance of implementing effective oversight mechanisms and promoting transparency to ensure the accountable and equitable utilization of CDFs for sustainable community development.

Questions remain regarding the extent of CDFs' role in development administration and their impact on the balance of power among government branches (Zyl, 2010). In Kenya, the CDF was established in 2003 under the CDF Act 2003 to address regional imbalances caused by patronage politics and to alleviate poverty through community-based projects (Nyaguthii & Oyugi, 2013; Awiti, 2008).

Overall, the comparative analysis of Community Development Funds (CDFs) implementation across nations underscores the global trend towards decentralization in governance, emphasizing the importance of localized decision-making and accountability at the grassroots level. While CDFs serve as vital mechanisms for addressing constituency-based needs and promoting community development, parallels with the United States' congressional allocations highlight challenges related to transparency, accountability, and potential corruption risks. Lessons from international experiences, such as those in the Philippines and Kenya, emphasize the necessity of effective oversight mechanisms and transparent guidelines to ensure the equitable and accountable utilization of CDFs for sustainable community development. As countries continue to navigate the complexities of decentralization and parliamentary

involvement in grassroots projects, addressing these challenges will be essential for maximizing the positive impacts of CDFs on development administration and fostering inclusive growth.

## **2.4 Institutional Framework**

### **2.4.1 Legal Framework**

The Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in Zambia operates within a robust legal framework, primarily established under Article 162 of the Constitution of Zambia (Amendment) Act No.2 of 2016. This constitutional provision laid the foundation for the operationalization of the CDF through the Constituency Development Fund Act No. 11 of 2018. This Act meticulously outlines the management, disbursement, utilization, and accountability of the CDF, ensuring transparency and efficiency in its implementation.

Complementing the primary legislation are several related and supportive statutes, which play crucial roles in the effective functioning of the CDF. These include:

- a) **The Local Government Act No. 2 of 2019:** This legislation delineates the roles and responsibilities of local authorities, who serve as custodians of the CDF. It establishes the framework within which local councils incorporate CDF allocations into their capital budgets, ensuring community development projects are adequately funded and executed.
- b) **The Public Finance Management Act No. 1 of 2018:** This Act provides the overarching framework for financial management within the public sector, including the CDF. It outlines principles of sound financial management, accountability, and transparency, which are essential for the proper utilization of CDF resources.
- c) **The Public Procurement Act No. 8 of 2020:** Procurement processes are crucial in ensuring the efficiency and effectiveness of CDF-funded projects. This Act governs procurement procedures, ensuring that the procurement of goods and services for CDF projects is conducted transparently, fairly, and in accordance with best practices.
- d) **The Urban and Regional Planning Act No. 3 of 2015:** Effective urban and regional planning is vital for sustainable development. This Act provides the legal framework for urban and regional planning, ensuring that CDF-funded projects align with broader development plans and goals.
- e) **The National Planning and Budgeting Act No. 1 of 2020:** This legislation establishes the national planning and budgeting framework, which guides the allocation of resources, including the CDF, towards priority development areas. It ensures that CDF allocations are aligned with national development priorities and goals.
- f) **Anti-Gender Based Violence Act No.1 of 2011:** Gender equality and the protection of vulnerable groups are integral to sustainable development. This Act addresses gender-based violence, ensuring that CDF-funded projects promote gender equality and safeguard the rights of women and other vulnerable groups within communities.

The legal framework not only governs the utilization of CDF resources but also delineates the rights and responsibilities of key stakeholders. Members of Parliament play a critical role in advocating for CDF allocations and overseeing their utilization to benefit their constituencies. Government agencies are tasked with implementing and monitoring CDF-funded projects, ensuring compliance with legal and regulatory



requirements. Local communities, on the other hand, have the right to participate in project identification and implementation processes, ensuring that CDF resources are utilized to address their specific needs and priorities.

In conclusion, the legal framework governing CDFs in Zambia provides the necessary structure and guidelines for the effective management, disbursement, utilization, and accountability of funds. By adhering to these legal provisions, stakeholders can work collaboratively to ensure that CDF resources are utilized efficiently to promote community development and contribute to the overall socio-economic advancement of the nation.

#### **2.4.2 Operational Structure.**

The operational structure of Constituency Development Funds (CDFs) in Zambia entails a collaborative framework involving various stakeholders, including government bodies, local authorities, and community representatives. Governed by the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, the CDF is designed to provide discretionary financing to local authorities for community-driven development projects within specific constituencies. The allocation of funds, sourced from the national budget and disbursed equally among the 150 constituencies, is overseen by the Ministry of Finance and National Planning (MFNP). Upon receipt of funds, local authorities manage the indirect disbursement to project implementers in accordance with the Local Government Act Chapter 281 of the Laws of Zambia.

The Constituency Development Fund Committee (CDFC), established under the Constituency Development Fund Act No. 11 of 2018, plays a pivotal role in the project selection and recommendation process. Each constituency forms a Constituency Development Committee (CDC), comprising nine members as per CDF guidelines. This committee includes the Member of Parliament (MP), nominated councilors, a representative from the chiefs, a director of works or engineering services, and four community leaders from civil society and NGOs.

The CDC is responsible for identifying and recommending projects to higher committees, ensuring representative community participation in governance and project administration.

The functions of the CDFC, as outlined in the Constituency Development Fund Act No. 11 of 2018, encompass the compilation of records, receipt of project proposals, and submission of project lists to the local authority for further processing. Moreover, the Act mandates the CDC to deliberate on project proposals received from Ward Development Committees and submit approved projects to the Minister for consideration. This structured approach ensures transparency and accountability in project selection and implementation processes.

Local authorities, designated as custodians of the fund, are tasked with ensuring its proper utilization and accountability through regular auditing conducted by the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development. Project identification and proposal development are community-driven initiatives facilitated by Area Development Committees (ADCs) and other sub-district structures. The District Development Coordinating Committee (DDCC) and its Planning Sub Committee provide technical expertise and guidance throughout the CDF process, ensuring that only eligible projects meeting the criteria outlined in the CDF guidelines receive funding.

Payments for project implementation are made to successful contractors and suppliers selected through a

transparent bidding process, emphasizing accountability and adherence to due diligence. By delineating clear roles and responsibilities among stakeholders and instituting transparent decision-making processes, the operational structure of CDFs in Zambia aims to foster community-driven development while ensuring effective utilization of allocated funds.

### **2.4.3 Management of CDF**

Under the stewardship of the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) Management, a robust framework guides the allocation and utilization of resources. This framework delineates transparent protocols concerning procurement, financial management, project beneficiaries, and project typologies to be undertaken. Additionally, it outlines requisite support structures crucial for the effective execution of the CDF initiatives.

#### **2.4.3.1 Constituency Development Fund Committee (CDFC)**

Established under the auspices of the Constituency Development Fund Act No. 11 of 2018, the CDFC constitutes a key operational entity within each constituency. Its composition, as mandated by the Act, encompasses a diverse assembly of part-time members appointed by the Minister. These members include:

a) Two community representatives nominated by the Constituency's Member of Parliament. b) Three Councillors from the Constituency, two of whom are elected by their peers and one nominated by the Member of Parliament. c) Representatives of local Chiefs, nominated by the Chiefs within the Constituency. d) Representatives from the Local Authority's planning and engineering departments. e) Representatives from Civil Society and Religious Organizations within the Constituency. f) The Constituency's Member of Parliament. g) Representatives from the Local Authority's finance department.

The delineated functions of the CDFC, as per the Constituency Development Fund Act, include ensuring meticulous record-keeping, reviewing annual reports, receiving project proposals, deliberating on proposals, and compiling project lists for submission to the Ministry.

#### **2.4.3.2 Technical Appraisal Committees**

In alignment with CDF guidelines 2022, Technical Appraisal Committees are formed as necessary, appointed by the Principal Officer of the respective Local Authority. These committees play a pivotal role in assessing project viability and include responsibilities such as receiving project proposals, conducting appraisals, developing project designs, preparing cost estimations, and presenting appraisal reports to the CDFC for consideration.

#### **2.4.3.3 Responsibilities of stakeholders**

**Ministerial Responsibilities:** The Minister overseeing the CDF assumes crucial duties, including the implementation of the Constituency Development Fund Act, ensuring prudent fund management, reviewing project lists, supervising record-keeping, and assessing annual reports.

**Parliamentary Oversight:** Members of Parliament are tasked with nominating CDFC members, receiving periodic reports from Local Authorities, conducting Joint Spot Monitoring of CDF projects, attending CDFC meetings, and designating a representative from their office in their absence.



**Roles of Ministries and Government Bodies:** The Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, Provincial Local Government Offices, Ministry of Finance and National Planning, Office of the Auditor General, District Sector Departments, and Local Authorities are assigned specific roles encompassing fund oversight, financial management, auditing, technical guidance, project implementation, and monitoring.

**Private sector entities:** Ward Development Committees, Traditional Leadership, and local communities are actively engaged in various capacities to ensure community participation, project identification, implementation, and monitoring, fostering a collaborative approach towards local development initiatives.

The allocation of the CDF to respective constituencies is made through the national budget process. This allocation provides for an equal amount of the fund to each of the 151 constituencies. The general responsibility to administer CDF lies with the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development which then disburses the funds to local authorities. These funds are treated as ear-marked funds within the Local authorities. Thus, separate bank accounts and books of account from the local authorities' regular accounts are maintained for CDF.

#### 2.4.4 CDF Process

The CDF process of approving and subsequently funding projects, according to the CDF guidelines, is relatively simple and it is explained as follows:

**First stage** – Parliament approves the budget and confirms the allocation of the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in that financial year. This crucial step sets the financial framework for community development projects within each constituency.

**Second stage** - The Council initiates the process by inviting project proposals from the communities during the first quarter of every year. This call for proposals is communicated through various channels including advertisements, open meetings, posters in conspicuous locations, and notifications to Chiefs and Village Headmen. This inclusive approach ensures that all stakeholders are aware of the opportunity to contribute to community development initiatives.

**Third stage** - Communities actively engage in the identification and formulation of project proposals tailored to address local needs. They meticulously document their proposals and submit them to the ward development committee (WDC) for review and assessment.

**Fourth state** - Upon scrutiny by the Ward development Committee (WDC) project proposals are submitted to District Community Development Fund Committee (DCDFC).

**Fifth state** – The District Community Development Fund Committee (DCDFC) evaluates proposals and submits to Provincial Community Development Fund Committee (PCDFC) for approval.

**Sixth stage** – The Provincial Community Development Fund Committee (PCDFC) undertakes comprehensive evaluation of the projects and approves.

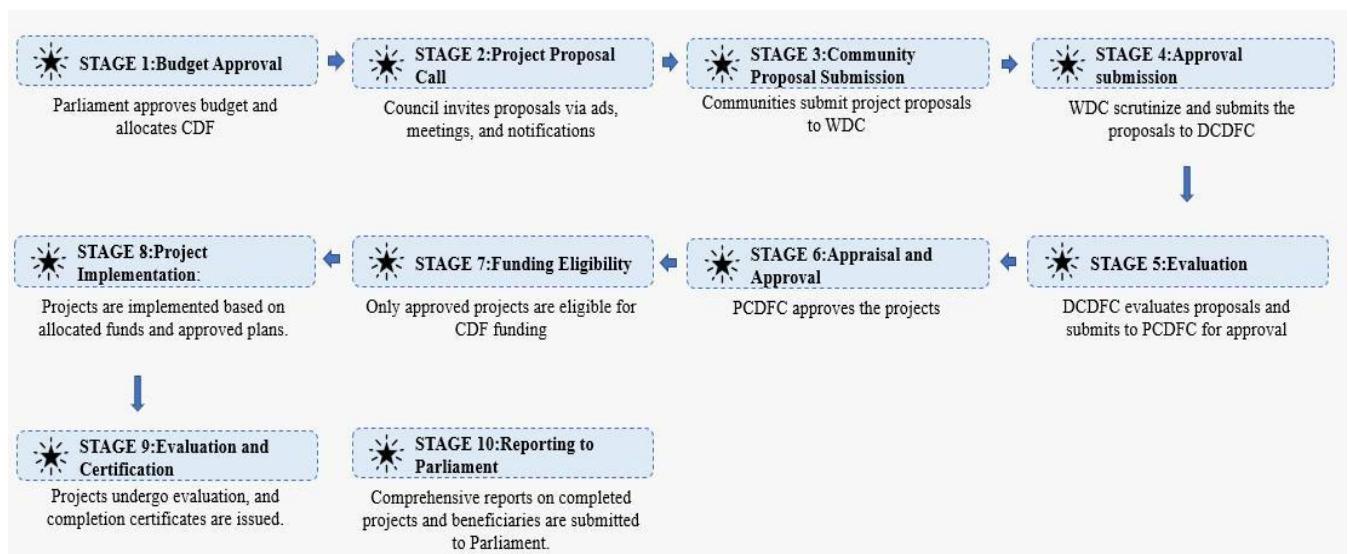
**Seventh stage** - Only projects that have successfully passed the appraisal process and received approval from PCDFC are eligible for funding. The Constituency Development Fund Committee (CDFC) oversees the management of funds allocated to approved projects. The committee, comprising ten members, ensures transparency and accountability in fund disbursement and utilization.

**Eighth stage** – With funding secured, project implementation commences based on the allocated finances and the approved project design. This phase involves coordinating various stakeholders, managing resources, and ensuring adherence to project timelines and objectives.

**Ninth stage** – Upon project completion, thorough evaluation is conducted to assess the effectiveness and impact of the implemented initiatives. This evaluation process includes gathering feedback from stakeholders, assessing project outcomes against set targets, and addressing any challenges encountered during implementation. Upon successful evaluation, a completion certificate is issued.

**Tenth stage** – A comprehensive report detailing the projects completed, their outcomes, and the beneficiaries served is compiled and submitted to Parliament. This report provides a comprehensive overview of the utilization of the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) and the tangible benefits it has delivered to the respective constituencies.

**Figure 2.1 CDF Process**



## 2.4.5 Disbursement and Utilization

The allocation of CDF to respective constituencies is made through the national budget process. This allocation provides for an equal amount of the fund to each of the 151 constituencies. The general responsibility to administer CDF lies with the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development. Which then disburses the funds to local authorities. These funds are treated as ear-marked funds within the Local authorities. Thus, separate bank accounts and books of account from the local authorities' regular accounts are maintained for CDF.

The CDF guidelines provide for a range of projects that are eligible to receive funding. In broad sense, these include water supply and sanitation, roads, agriculture, education and health, social amenities, sports and recreation and other economic activities. CDF guidelines give a lot of flexibility in terms of project

eligibility. All the projects prescribed within the CDF guidelines are distinctively a responsibility of the executive, but they may not be in the District Development Plan. However, qualifying conditions that the local communities consider critical could justify utilization of the CDF on projects and programmes not prescribed in the guidelines.

It is the responsibility of the Local Authorities to invite project proposals from the communities during the first quarter of every year which are submitted to respective CDCs. However, it is up to the 9 member CDC to decide, on behalf of the entire constituency, which project proposals to recommend to the Local Authority for approval. Invitations for the proposals are made through advertisements, open meetings announcements, fixing of posters in conspicuous locations and letters written to Chiefs and Village Headmen.

#### **2.4.6 Constituency Development Fund Accountability Measures**

CDF in Zambia is subject to accountability and transparency mechanisms as stipulated in the CDF Guidelines. As earlier stated, CDF is audited regularly by local government auditors in line with the Local Government Act. Further, every local council is required to maintain separate books of account for each CDF and to prepare monthly statements for submission to the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD). The local council is also required to maintain records of proceedings of all CDF meetings. It is noteworthy that the District Planning Unit of the local council is the secretary to all such meetings. This ensures that the local council has representation at every CDF meeting. Quarterly copies of such proceedings are submitted to MLGRD.

In accordance with the Guidelines, the local council is supposed to carry out regular audit inspections of projects and to monitor project implementation as often as necessary depending on the nature and stage of projects. The local council has the responsibility to prepare progress reports on behalf of the community and to submit these reports to the MLGRD. Evaluation of projects is done hand in hand with officers from the appropriate line ministries and government departments upon completion of projects (GRZ 2006:7).

After projects have been completed, the MLGRD is supposed to carry out regular audits and physical verification of all completed projects in the country in accordance with the Local Government Act and the CDF Guidelines. This verification has to take place before disbursement of the following year's CDF. The Ministry then produces an annual report on the performance of CDF for submission to Cabinet and Parliament.

The Guidelines provide that any abuse of CDF through misapplication or misappropriation by the local council may result in the suspension of the council or the forfeiture of council grants. Any abuse by members of the CDC or community or any council official will result into legal action (GRZ 2006).

#### **2.4.7 Local level participation**

The local government system was established under the Local Government Act of 1991 Cap 281 of the Laws of Zambia. Councils comprise the mayor and elected councilors who represent wards as defined by the delimitation commission and the local MPs. According to the Act, Councils are mandated to deliberate on development challenges and have powers to formulate by-laws for their municipality or district. Sub-committees set the agenda for the council's deliberations. The main actors are the councilors who are the elected representatives of the people at ward level and are expected to bring the community agenda to the council sessions. Members of public (experts and eminent citizens) are sometimes invited to local council





sessions depending on the matter at hand and the expertise required. At this level, opportunities for engagement for non- state actors are mainly in the form of social, religious, cultural and other community associational activities that bring the “targeted” experts and eminent citizens in contact with members of the public (ZGF:19).

PDCCs and DDCCs were set up in 2003 as development structures supporting the ADC, providing a “bottom- up” (decentralised) mechanism of governance. According to the 2003 Cabinet Directive, all organizations and institutions operating in a particular district are expected to register with the District Councils in order to become members of the DDCCs. Each DDCC should be divided into sub-committees based on the nature of organizations operating in the district.

The sub-committees discuss development policy concerns and identify matters for the DDCC agenda. Deliberations at the DDCC level are expected to feed into PDCC deliberations, which, in turn feed into the national framework. Non-state actors should ensure that they belong to or are represented in all these structures (ZGF, 2012:20).

The Local Government Act (CAP 281 of the Laws of Zambia) provides for an integrated three- tier local administration system and defines the functions of local authorities. As with the Standing Orders of Parliament, the Act also provides that documents produced by local governments must be made accessible to members of the public.

In this case, however, there is some variation, as there is no fee or payment required in order to access the documents produced by the local councils. Under the Act (article 109, part xii of miscellaneous provisions), it is provided that a document shall be open to the inspection by any person or class of persons: (a) any such person may, without payment, take copies thereof or make extracts there from; (b) the council may supply a copy thereof or any extract there from to any such person on payment of such charge, if any, as may be imposed under this Act. A document shall be deemed to be open to the inspection of any person or class of person’s at all reasonable times if it is open to such inspection at the offices of a council during the normal office hours of the council. Furthermore, it is also provided that a public notice required to be given by a council or by an officer of a council shall be given by publication of the notice in a newspaper circulating in the area of the council or in such other manner as the minister may approve.

Physical access to the chambers of local government, and Council Committees are open to the public. It should be noted, however, that the Local Council Meetings are not open to the public, as no mention is made of this within the text of the document. Unfortunately, this limitation also includes documents related to council meetings. It is generally accepted that public participation in local government affairs is increasingly viewed as an integral part of a healthy grassroots democracy. This is supported by the household interviews that were carried out in the target areas. Indeed, one of the most important sectors of local government work and public participation is that of budget formulation (Local Government Act, Cap 281 of the Laws of Zambia). It is thus evident that considerable inroads could be made to increase public participation in the affairs of local government if the relevant sections of the above legislation were promoted amongst the public.

A spirit of public participation, however, must be incorporated into the principal framework that outlines the way in which local government is to operate and be structured. Unless specific provision is made for local councilors to consult with the public regularly, then there is no obligation to do so and local level government can act in isolation from the public should it so choose.

The National Decentralisation Policy (2002) and the National Gender Policy (2000) are among the most significant and relevant policies in understanding public participation. Other policies have a limited mandate at district level and, therefore, commit limited resources towards public participation.

The National Decentralization Policy (2002) was developed to overcome the highly centralised and exclusive structure and systems of governance inherited from the colonial era. The policy encapsulates the theme of "empowering the people" by providing for the "strengthening of local government to facilitate more effective citizen participation in governance and accountable, delivery of public services as the basis for decentralisation" (GRZ, Ministry of Local Government and Housing, 2002).

The long-term vision of this policy is to achieve "a fully decentralised and democratically elected system of governance characterized by open, predictable and transparent policy making and implementation processes at all levels of the public service, effective local community participation in decision making and development administration while maintaining sufficient linkages between central and local government" (Ibid, 2002). In February 2013, the Patriotic Front government approved the National Decentralisation Policy to empower provinces and districts to manage their own affairs for effective social economic development. Despite this approval, not all functions were transferred to the councils, as central government retain some core functions over essential national matters. The government through cabinet will also provide leadership and direction to implementation of devolution and implementation of the national decentralisation policy (Ibid).

In the context of public participation, vulnerability implies the inability of a person to actively participate in public affairs due to social or physical status, nationality, economic, education or age reasons. The most significant policy document that tackles issues of vulnerability in Zambia vis-à-vis public participation is the National Gender Policy, 2000. Gender refers to the socially constructed roles and responsibilities assigned to women and men in a given culture or location (Calasanti, Slevin, 2001:1).

According to the primary findings in this survey, the degree of participation in public affairs between men and women in Zambia varies. Traditionally, Zambian men have an upper hand in participating in various spheres of social, economic and political life compared to women. This is consistent with other findings in a study by Calasanti (2001). A review of the formal policy formulation guidelines shows that there is no mention of gender in terms of the policy formulation process or structure or in terms of representation and participation (ZGF:18). Therefore, public participation is not equally distributed among men and women, resulting in a gender gap in public participation.

## **2.5 Key Players**

In the complex landscape of Constituency Development Fund (CDF) project management, various key players hold significant sway over its execution and outcomes.

**Citizens:** At the heart of Constituency Development Fund (CDF) project management are the citizens, whose active engagement and participation are fundamental to the success of community-driven development initiatives. Citizens play a crucial role in identifying local needs, proposing projects that address these needs, and monitoring the implementation of these projects to ensure they meet the intended



objectives. Their input and feedback provide invaluable insights into the priorities and aspirations of the community, guiding decision-making processes and fostering a sense of ownership and accountability for the outcomes of CDF-funded projects.

**Ward Development Committee:** The Ward Development Committee serves as a vital intermediary between the community and the broader CDF management structure. Comprised of local representatives and stakeholders, the committee acts as a conduit for grassroots input, facilitating the submission of project proposals, coordinating community initiatives, and ensuring effective communication between citizens and the CDF Committee. Through its efforts, the Ward Development Committee plays a pivotal role in amplifying community voices, advocating for local priorities, and fostering collaborative partnerships to drive sustainable development within the constituency.

**CDF Committee:** The CDF Committee, comprising representatives from various sectors and appointed in accordance with statutory guidelines, serves as the principal decision-making body responsible for overseeing the allocation and utilization of CDF resources. Tasked with reviewing project proposals, prioritizing funding allocations, and monitoring project implementation, the committee plays a critical role in ensuring transparency, accountability, and compliance with regulatory requirements. Through its deliberations and actions, the CDF Committee aims to maximize the impact of CDF investments, address community needs, and promote equitable development outcomes across the constituency.

**Technical Appraisal Committees:** Technical Appraisal Committees are entrusted with the responsibility of conducting expert evaluations of project proposals to assess their feasibility, technical viability, and alignment with established standards and guidelines. Comprised of professionals with specialized expertise in engineering, architecture, and other relevant fields, these committees play a crucial role in ensuring that CDF-funded projects are well-conceived, properly designed, and capable of delivering the intended benefits to the community. By rigorously assessing project proposals and providing recommendations based on technical merit, Technical Appraisal Committees contribute to the overall quality and effectiveness of CDF investments.

**Local Authorities:** Local Authorities serve as key implementation partners in the execution of CDF-funded projects, providing administrative support, procurement services, and infrastructure management at the grassroots level. As the entities responsible for local governance and service delivery, Local Authorities play a central role in translating CDF priorities into tangible actions and outcomes within their respective jurisdictions. Through their expertise, resources, and institutional capacity, Local Authorities contribute to the efficient and effective implementation of CDF initiatives, ensuring that project activities are carried out in accordance with established standards and regulatory requirements.

**Provincial Local Government Officers:** Provincial Local Government Officers play a critical role in providing oversight, coordination, and support for CDF activities across multiple constituencies within their jurisdiction. As representatives of the provincial government, these officers work closely with Local Authorities, CDF Committees, and other stakeholders to facilitate the smooth functioning of CDF programs, monitor project progress, and address any challenges or issues that may arise during implementation. Through their efforts, Provincial Local Government Officers help to ensure the coherence, consistency, and

alignment of CDF initiatives with broader provincial development objectives and priorities.

**Minister of Local Government and Rural Development:** The Minister of Local Government and Rural Development plays a pivotal role in shaping the policy framework, overseeing the implementation, and ensuring the effective management of the Constituency Development Fund. As the custodian of CDF regulations and guidelines, the Minister provides strategic direction, guidance, and support to CDF Committees, Local Authorities, and other stakeholders involved in the administration of CDF resources.

Through proactive leadership and stewardship, the Minister endeavours to promote transparency, accountability, and good governance in the utilization of CDF funds, thereby advancing the socio-economic development agenda at the grassroots level.

**Minister of Finance and National Planning:** The Minister of Finance and National Planning is entrusted with the responsibility of disbursing funds to the Constituency Development Fund and providing a financial management framework in accordance with the Public Finance Management Act. As the custodian of fiscal resources and budgetary allocations, the Minister plays a critical role in ensuring the prudent management, efficient utilization, and effective oversight of CDF funds. By overseeing financial transactions, monitoring expenditure patterns, and evaluating the performance of CDF investments, the Minister seeks to uphold principles of fiscal discipline, accountability, and transparency, thereby safeguarding the integrity and sustainability of CDF-funded initiatives.

## **2.6 Project Cycle Management (PCM)**

### **2.6.1 PCM Frameworks and Practices**

PCM (Project Cycle Management) frameworks and practices form the cornerstone of effective project management across various sectors. These frameworks encompass a systematic approach to project planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation, ensuring the efficient utilization of resources and the achievement of desired outcomes (Keeley, 2018). Within the realm of development projects, PCM methodologies have gained significant traction due to their adaptability and effectiveness in addressing complex challenges faced by communities. By adhering to PCM principles, project managers can enhance project effectiveness, stakeholder engagement, and sustainability (European Commission, 2020).

A comprehensive review of existing PCM frameworks and best practices reveals a wealth of methodologies and approaches that cater to diverse project contexts. These frameworks typically emphasize the importance of clear objectives, stakeholder involvement, risk management, and continuous learning throughout the project cycle (World Bank, 2016). For instance, the Logical Framework Approach (LFA) is widely utilized for its structured yet flexible framework, which assists in clarifying project objectives, activities, outputs, outcomes, and indicators (UNDP, 2019). Similarly, the Results-Based Management (RBM) approach focuses on achieving desired results through systematic planning, implementation, and monitoring, thereby enhancing project accountability and impact (OECD, 2018).

In the context of CDF-funded community projects, the application of PCM methodologies is particularly pertinent due to the grassroots nature of these initiatives. Community Development Funds (CDFs) aim to

empower local communities by providing financial support for projects that address their specific needs and priorities (World Bank, 2020). By integrating PCM principles into the planning and implementation of CDF-funded projects, stakeholders can ensure that resources are allocated effectively, activities are aligned with community aspirations, and outcomes are sustainable in the long run (European Union, 2017).

Effective project planning is crucial for the success of CDF-funded community projects, as it sets the stage for subsequent activities and resource allocation. PCM frameworks advocate for participatory approaches to planning, wherein community members are actively involved in identifying needs, setting goals, and designing interventions (IFAD, 2021). This participatory approach fosters ownership, transparency, and accountability, thereby enhancing the relevance and sustainability of project outcomes (USAID, 2019). Moreover, PCM emphasizes the importance of conducting thorough contextual analyses to understand the socio-economic, cultural, and environmental factors that may impact project implementation (ADB, 2017).

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) constitute integral components of PCM, enabling stakeholders to track progress, identify challenges, and make informed decisions throughout the project cycle (UNICEF, 2020). In the context of CDF-funded community projects, robust M&E systems play a crucial role in ensuring accountability, learning, and adaptation (World Bank, 2018). By collecting relevant data, measuring indicators, and soliciting feedback from stakeholders, project managers can assess the effectiveness of interventions, address emerging issues, and optimize resource allocation (DFID, 2019). Additionally, PCM encourages a participatory approach to M&E, wherein communities are engaged in data collection, analysis, and interpretation, thus fostering mutual learning and empowerment (FAO, 2019).

To enhance the application of PCM methodologies in CDF-funded community projects, it is essential to address contextual challenges and leverage opportunities for collaboration and capacity building. Contextual challenges such as limited access to resources, weak institutional capacities, and socio-political instability can impede the effective implementation of PCM principles (Crawford et al., 2020). Therefore, project managers must

engage in context-specific adaptations of PCM frameworks, tailoring approaches to suit the unique needs and realities of the communities they serve (OECD, 2020).

This may involve conducting capacity assessments, forging partnerships with local organizations, and advocating for policy reforms that support participatory decision-making and community empowerment (IFRC, 2018).

Furthermore, fostering a culture of learning and knowledge sharing is paramount for continuous improvement and innovation in PCM practices. CDF-funded community projects can benefit from platforms that facilitate peer-to-peer exchange, cross-learning, and documentation of best practices (UNESCO, 2021). By encouraging reflection, dialogue, and critical analysis, stakeholders can identify lessons learned, replicate successful interventions, and avoid repeating past mistakes (UNHCR, 2019). Additionally, investing in training and skill development for project staff and community members can enhance their capacity to effectively apply PCM methodologies and contribute to project success (ILO, 2020). This emphasis on learning and capacity building contributes to the sustainability and resilience of CDF-funded initiatives, ensuring their long-term impact on community development (UNDP, 2020).

PCM frameworks and practices offer valuable guidance for the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of CDF-funded community projects. By adopting participatory approaches, embracing



contextual realities, and fostering a culture of learning, stakeholders can enhance the effectiveness, relevance, and sustainability of these initiatives. As development priorities evolve and new challenges emerge, the application of PCM methodologies will continue to evolve, providing a robust foundation for addressing the diverse needs and aspirations of communities around the world.

## 2.6.2 Project Triangle

The Project Triangle, a cornerstone concept in project management, offers a nuanced understanding of the intricate relationship among scope, time, and cost constraints, particularly within the framework of Community Development Fund (CDF) projects. Smith and Johnson (2020) underscore the significance of this triangular framework as a pivotal tool for comprehending the dynamic nature of project management in the realm of CDF initiatives. It serves as a lens through which project managers can dissect and evaluate the trade-offs and interdependencies among these constraints, thereby influencing project outcomes and delivery trajectories.

In the context of CDF projects, achieving optimal performance necessitates a delicate equilibrium among the competing priorities encapsulated by Project Triangle. Project managers grapple with the challenge of managing scope creep while adhering to stringent time and cost limitations.

Moreover, the intricate landscape of community development introduces additional layers of complexity, with projects often involving diverse stakeholders harboring varying interests and objectives. Navigating these complexities requires proactive risk management, stakeholder engagement strategies, and robust communication channels.

Expanding further on the significance of the Project Triangle within CDF projects, it's crucial to recognize how each vertex of the triangle interacts with the others. Scope, for instance, delineates the boundaries of what the project aims to achieve. It's often the starting point, setting the parameters for time and cost considerations. Time, on the other hand, dictates the project's schedule and deadlines, influencing resource allocation and scope management. Cost encompasses the financial resources required to execute the project within the defined scope and timeline.

Within CDF projects, managing scope effectively is paramount to prevent scope creep, which can lead to project delays and budget overruns. Stakeholder engagement plays a pivotal role in this aspect, as involving community members and other stakeholders from the outset helps in defining clear project objectives and boundaries. Moreover, regular communication and feedback loops throughout the project lifecycle ensure alignment with stakeholder expectations and enable timely adjustments to scope as needed.

Time constraints in CDF projects are often compounded by external factors such as seasonal variations, regulatory requirements, and funding cycles. Project managers must anticipate these constraints and build flexibility into project schedules to accommodate unforeseen delays or changes. Agile methodologies, with their iterative approach and emphasis on adaptability, offer a framework for managing time constraints effectively. By breaking down projects into smaller, manageable increments and prioritizing deliverables, teams can mitigate the impact of time constraints on project outcomes.

Cost management in CDF projects demands meticulous budgeting and resource allocation to optimize the utilization of available funds. Project managers must strike a balance between cost-effectiveness and

quality, ensuring that resources are allocated judiciously to deliver maximum value to the community.

Transparent financial reporting and accountability mechanisms help build trust among stakeholders and ensure that funds are utilized responsibly. Additionally, exploring alternative funding sources and partnerships can expand the financial resources available for CDF projects, enhancing their impact and sustainability.

Essentially, the Project Triangle serves as a guiding compass for project managers navigating the complexities inherent in CDF projects, informing strategic decision-making and resource allocation. By acknowledging the interdependencies among scope, time, and cost constraints, project teams can devise tailored strategies to optimize project performance while delivering tangible benefits to the community. Through proactive risk management, stakeholder engagement, and the adoption of agile methodologies, CDF initiatives can surmount challenges and realize their intended outcomes, thereby contributing to sustainable development and inclusive growth.

In summary, the synergy between the Project Triangle and agile project management practices forms the bedrock of success in CDF initiatives. By leveraging this framework alongside agile methodologies, project managers can effectively navigate the complexities of scope, time, and cost constraints, ultimately driving successful project implementation and fostering positive community impact.

### **2.6.3 Challenges and Bottlenecks**

Project Cycle Management (PCM) within Community-Driven Development Fund (CDF) projects often encounters several common challenges and bottlenecks that impede smooth execution and sustainability. Resource constraints stand out as a significant hurdle, with limited funding posing a threat to the timely completion of projects. According to a study by Jones et al. (2018), insufficient financial resources can lead to compromised quality of infrastructure or services delivered, hindering the overall effectiveness of CDF initiatives. Moreover, stakeholder engagement presents another daunting challenge, as diverse interests and perspectives among stakeholders can result in conflicts and delays. Without adequate collaboration and consensus-building, project timelines may be prolonged, and outcomes may fail to meet community needs (Smith & Brown, 2019).

These challenges have profound implications for project implementation and sustainability within CDF initiatives. Firstly, resource constraints not only jeopardize the timely completion of projects but also undermine their long-term viability. A study by Johnson (2020) highlights how insufficient funding can result in inadequate maintenance and operation of project assets, leading to their premature deterioration and eventual abandonment. This not only wastes initial investments but also erodes trust and confidence in future CDF endeavours.

Additionally, compromised stakeholder engagement exacerbates the risk of project failure by undermining community ownership and participation, which are crucial for sustaining project benefits beyond the implementation phase (Adams & Green, 2017).

Furthermore, institutional capacity emerges as a critical bottleneck in PCM within CDF projects, significantly impacting their effectiveness and sustainability. Limited technical expertise and administrative capacity within implementing agencies can impede proper project planning, monitoring, and evaluation, as noted by a report by the World Bank (2019). Inadequate capacity-building efforts and weak governance

structures further exacerbate this challenge, hindering the efficient allocation and utilization of resources. Consequently, projects may struggle to achieve their intended objectives and fail to address the underlying needs of target communities, perpetuating cycles of poverty and underdevelopment (Lopez & Martinez, 2018).

Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach that combines targeted interventions and strategic reforms. Firstly, enhancing financial mechanisms and mobilizing additional resources are essential for overcoming funding constraints and ensuring the sustainability of CDF projects. This could involve exploring alternative financing models, such as public-private partnerships or innovative fundraising strategies, to diversify funding sources and increase project resilience (Jones et al., 2018). Moreover, fostering inclusive and participatory approaches to stakeholder engagement is imperative for building trust, fostering ownership, and enhancing the relevance of project interventions to local needs (Smith & Brown, 2019).

Additionally, investing in capacity-building initiatives and strengthening institutional frameworks are crucial for enhancing PCM within CDF projects. This entails providing training and technical assistance to project staff and local stakeholders, empowering them with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively plan, implement, and monitor project activities (Johnson, 2020). Furthermore, promoting transparency, accountability, and good governance practices can help improve decision-making processes and enhance the overall efficiency and effectiveness of CDF initiatives (Adams & Green, 2017).

By addressing these challenges and bottlenecks comprehensively, policymakers and development practitioners can optimize the impact and sustainability of PCM within CDF projects, ultimately contributing to the broader goals of poverty reduction and sustainable development.

## **2.6 Community Development Initiatives**

### **2.6.1 Goals and Objectives of CDF**

Community Development Funds (CDF) are instrumental in driving socio-economic progress across various regions worldwide. These funds serve as catalysts for change, aiming to address pressing societal issues such as poverty alleviation, infrastructure development, empowerment, social cohesion, and environmental sustainability. One primary objective of CDF is poverty alleviation, focusing on uplifting marginalized communities from the vicious cycle of poverty. Through investments in education, vocational training, and sustainable livelihood programs, CDF aims to equip individuals with the skills and resources necessary to break free from poverty traps (Smith, 2019).

Infrastructure development stands as another pivotal goal of CDF initiatives. Access to basic infrastructure like roads, clean water, and electricity is fundamental for fostering economic growth and enhancing living standards in underserved communities. By strategically investing in infrastructure projects, CDF endeavors to bridge the gap between rural and urban areas, facilitating better connectivity and resource accessibility (Jones, 2020).

Empowerment lies at the core of CDF's objectives, empowering communities to take charge of their own development trajectories. This empowerment manifests through initiatives that promote community participation, capacity building, and inclusive decision-making processes. By fostering a sense of ownership and agency among community members, CDF initiatives aim to catalyze sustainable development outcomes



that are tailored to local needs and aspirations (Brown, 2021).

Moreover, CDF endeavours to foster social cohesion and inclusivity within communities by promoting equity and justice. By addressing systemic inequalities and discrimination, CDF initiatives strive to create an enabling environment where all individuals, regardless of their background or circumstances, have equal opportunities to thrive and contribute to societal progress (Garcia, 2018).

Furthermore, CDF initiatives often prioritize environmental sustainability as a key objective. Recognizing the interconnectedness between environmental health and human well-being, CDF invests in projects that promote conservation, renewable energy adoption, and climate resilience. By integrating environmental considerations into development interventions, CDF aims to ensure that progress is achieved in a manner that preserves natural resources for future generations (Robinson, 2022).

The goals and objectives of CDF-funded community development initiatives are comprehensive and interconnected, aiming to address poverty alleviation, infrastructure development, empowerment, social cohesion, and environmental sustainability. By adopting a holistic approach that combines economic, social, and environmental dimensions, CDF endeavours to catalyze transformative change and create lasting impact in communities around the world.

CDF initiatives often begin by conducting comprehensive needs assessments within target communities. These assessments involve engaging with community members to identify their most pressing challenges and aspirations. By taking a participatory approach, CDF ensures that interventions are informed by local knowledge and priorities, thus increasing their relevance and effectiveness (Hernandez, 2023).

Once needs are identified, CDF works collaboratively with local stakeholders, including government agencies, NGOs, and community-based organizations, to design and implement tailored development projects. This collaborative approach fosters ownership and ensures that interventions are sustainable in the long run. Additionally, CDF provides technical assistance and capacity building support to empower local institutions and individuals to manage and maintain project outcomes independently (Chen, 2021).

Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are integral components of CDF-funded initiatives, ensuring accountability and learning. By regularly monitoring progress and evaluating impact, CDF can adjust interventions as needed and replicate successful approaches in other communities. This adaptive management approach enhances the effectiveness and efficiency of CDF's efforts, maximizing the benefits for target populations (Wang, 2020).

Moreover, CDF fosters partnerships with diverse stakeholders, including businesses, academia, and international organizations, to leverage additional resources and expertise. These partnerships amplify the impact of CDF initiatives, enabling them to reach more people and address complex challenges more comprehensively (Kim, 2019).

Additionally, CDF recognizes the importance of promoting gender equality and social inclusion in all aspects of its work. By mainstreaming gender considerations and ensuring the participation of marginalized groups, such as women, youth, and indigenous communities, CDF strives to create more equitable and inclusive societies where everyone has an equal opportunity to thrive (Nguyen, 2022).

In conclusion, Community Development Funds play a crucial role in driving socio-economic progress by addressing a wide range of interconnected issues. Through targeted interventions in poverty alleviation,

infrastructure development, empowerment, social cohesion, and environmental sustainability, CDF aims to create positive and lasting change in communities worldwide. By adopting a holistic approach, engaging with local stakeholders, fostering partnerships, and promoting inclusivity, CDF endeavours to build resilient and thriving communities for future generations.

### **2.6.2 Community Projects**

Community projects funded under the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) encompass a diverse range of endeavours aimed at enhancing the well-being and development of local communities. These projects span various sectors, including infrastructure development, social services, and economic empowerment initiatives (Smith, 2019). Infrastructure projects might involve the construction or renovation of schools, healthcare facilities, roads, and water supply systems, thereby improving essential services and infrastructure within communities (Jones, 2020). Social services projects often focus on addressing the needs of vulnerable populations, such as providing support for childcare, eldercare, or counselling services (Brown, 2018). Economic empowerment initiatives aim to create opportunities for employment, entrepreneurship, and skill development, fostering sustainable livelihoods within communities (Garcia, 2017).

Central to the success of community projects funded by the CDF is the active participation and ownership of community members throughout the project lifecycle. This involvement begins with the identification of project needs and priorities, where community members play a crucial role in articulating the challenges and opportunities within their locality (Davis, 2021). Through participatory processes such as community meetings, surveys, and consultations, stakeholders collaborate to develop project proposals that are reflective of local aspirations and realities (Robinson, 2019). This bottom-up approach to project planning ensures that interventions are contextually relevant and responsive to the unique needs of each community (Taylor, 2018).

During the implementation phase, community participation remains integral as local residents contribute their time, labour, and resources to the realization of project objectives. Whether through volunteerism, labour contributions, or community fundraising efforts, the active involvement of residents fosters a sense of ownership and accountability for project outcomes (Perez, 2020).

Moreover, community participation can enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of projects by leveraging local knowledge, networks, and capacities (White, 2019). By empowering communities to take charge of their development, the CDF promotes a model of grassroots governance that fosters self-reliance and resilience (Martinez, 2016).

In conclusion, community projects funded by the CDF represent a vital mechanism for promoting inclusive and sustainable development at the grassroots level. By addressing a diverse range of needs, from infrastructure to social services to economic empowerment, these projects contribute to the overall well-being and resilience of local communities (Adams, 2020). Through active participation and ownership, community members play a central role in shaping the priorities and outcomes of these interventions, ensuring that they are responsive to the realities and aspirations of the people they serve (Wilson, 2017). As such, community projects facilitated by the CDF exemplify the transformative potential of participatory development approaches in fostering community empowerment and social change.



### 2.6.3 Empowerment Programs

Designing and implementing empowerment programs supported by the Community Development Fund (CDF) involves a multi-faceted approach aimed at fostering sustainable growth and development within communities. Here's a breakdown of key components:

**Needs Assessment:** Conducting a thorough needs assessment is foundational to effective community development. This process involves engaging with community members, leaders, and stakeholders to identify priority areas for intervention. Through surveys, focus groups, and consultations, the Community Development Fund (CDF) gathers valuable insights into the social, economic, and environmental challenges facing the community. By understanding the specific needs and aspirations of the population, the CDF can tailor its programs to address these issues directly, ensuring that resources are allocated efficiently and interventions are responsive to local realities.

**Skills Training:** Skills training programs are essential for equipping individuals with the competencies needed to thrive in the workforce. The CDF designs training curricula based on local labour market demands, industry trends, and the unique strengths and interests of program participants. Vocational training in areas such as agriculture, healthcare, construction, and technology not only enhances employability but also empowers individuals to pursue sustainable livelihoods.

By providing access to quality training opportunities and promoting lifelong learning, the CDF fosters economic empowerment and social mobility within communities.

**Entrepreneurship Development:** Entrepreneurship development initiatives empower individuals to create their own economic opportunities and drive local economic growth. Through training, mentorship, and access to financial resources, the CDF supports aspiring entrepreneurs in developing viable business ideas, refining business plans, and navigating the complexities of starting and managing a business. By fostering an entrepreneurial mindset and providing practical skills in areas such as marketing, finance, and operations, the CDF cultivates a culture of innovation and enterprise within communities, spurring job creation and wealth generation.

**Capacity Building Initiatives:** Strengthening the capacity of community organizations, local government agencies, and other stakeholders is critical for sustainable development. The CDF invests in capacity-building initiatives that enhance the skills, knowledge, and leadership capabilities of individuals and institutions involved in community development. Training programs in project management, governance, leadership, and advocacy enable stakeholders to effectively plan, implement, and monitor development projects. By building local capacity, the CDF fosters greater self-reliance and sustainability, empowering communities to drive their own development agendas.

**Partnerships and Collaboration:** Collaboration is key to maximizing the impact and sustainability of development efforts. The CDF partners with local organizations, government agencies, educational institutions, and businesses to leverage resources, expertise, and networks. By forging strong partnerships, the CDF taps into complementary strengths and perspectives, enhances coordination and coherence, and avoids duplication of efforts.

Collaborative approaches also facilitate knowledge sharing, innovation, and collective action, leading to more inclusive and holistic development outcomes.

**Monitoring and Evaluation:** Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are essential for assessing the effectiveness, efficiency, and impact of empowerment programs. The CDF establishes robust monitoring and evaluation systems to track progress, collect data, and measure outcomes against predefined indicators. Regular feedback from participants and stakeholders informs program adjustments and improvements, ensuring that interventions remain responsive to evolving needs and contexts.

By fostering a culture of learning and accountability, monitoring and evaluation processes contribute to evidence-based decision-making and continuous improvement in program delivery.

**Sustainability Planning:** Integrating sustainability considerations into program design is crucial for long-term impact and resilience. The CDF promotes environmentally sustainable practices, social inclusion, and economic viability in its development initiatives. Sustainability planning involves identifying and addressing root causes of vulnerability and inequity, promoting resource efficiency and conservation, and fostering community ownership and leadership. By investing in activities that build local resilience, diversify livelihoods, and protect natural ecosystems, the CDF contributes to the sustainable development of communities and the planet.

**Community Engagement and Participation:** Engaging community members as active participants in the design, implementation, and evaluation of empowerment programs is fundamental to ensuring relevance, ownership, and sustainability. The CDF adopts participatory approaches that prioritize local knowledge, perspectives, and priorities. Community engagement processes facilitate dialogue, collaboration, and collective decision-making, empowering individuals and communities to shape their own futures. By valuing and amplifying diverse voices and fostering social cohesion, community engagement efforts contribute to the democratization of development and the empowerment of marginalized groups.

Through a holistic approach that integrates these eight key components, empowerment programs supported by the Community Development Fund (CDF) can catalyze positive change, foster inclusive growth, and build resilient communities where individuals have the skills, resources, and opportunities to thrive.

## **2.7 Case Study: Chipata District, Zambia**

### **2.7.1 Overview of Chipata District**

**Description:** Chipata is a city and the administrative centre of the Eastern Province of Zambia and Chipata District. It was declared the 5th city of the country by President Edgar Lungu on 24 February 2017.

**Constituencies:** Chipata district has two constituencies, namely, Chipata Central Constituency and Luangeni Constituency.

**Borders:** Chipata is located near the border with Malawi and lies on the Great East Road, which connects the capitals Lilongwe and Lusaka.

**Population (2022 Census):** The total population of Chipata as at 8th September, 2022 was at 327,059 there were more females (167,416) than males (159,643). The rural areas had more people.

**Social Economic Status:** The city's economy is based on trade, commerce, and services. It has a modern market, a central hospital, shopping malls, a university, colleges, and schools. Developed areas include Kalongwezi, Moth, and Little Bombay. The city has a four-star hotel, a golf course, an airport, and a "welcome arch".

### 2.7.2 CDF Implementation in Chipata

The implementation of community projects under CDF in Chipata City Council involves the following steps:

- i. **Project Identification:** Community members, councillors, and council officials identify potential projects that align with the CDF guidelines and community needs.
- ii. **Project Proposal Development:** Project proposals are developed, outlining project objectives, scope, budget, and implementation timelines.
- iii. **CDF Committee Approval:** The Chipata City Council CDF Committee reviews and approves project proposals.
- iv. **Funding Allocation:** CDF funds are allocated to approved projects.
- v. **Project Implementation:** Projects are implemented by contractors, community groups, or council teams.
- vi. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Projects are monitored and evaluated to ensure progress, quality, and impact.
- vii. **Project Completion and Handover:** Completed projects are handed over to the community or relevant authorities.
- viii. **Sustainability and Maintenance:** Communities and council officials ensure project sustainability and maintenance.

Some of the community projects implemented under CDF in Chipata City Council include:

- Construction of classroom blocks, health facilities, and water supply systems
- Road construction and rehabilitation
- Purchase of equipment and vehicles for community use
- Community empowerment and skills training programs
- Support for vulnerable groups, such as orphans and people with disabilities

These projects aim to improve the quality of life, promote economic development, and enhance social services in Chipata City and surrounding communities.

Generally, the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) has been instrumental in fostering community development initiatives within Chipata. Through the CDF, local communities have been empowered to identify and address their most pressing needs, ranging from infrastructure improvements to social welfare programs. Projects funded by the CDF in Chipata have contributed to enhancing access to basic services such as healthcare, education, water supply, and sanitation. Additionally, the CDF has supported income-generating activities and skills development initiatives, thereby promoting sustainable livelihoods and poverty reduction in the district.

The implementation of the CDF in Chipata has been marked by collaboration between government authorities, community leaders, and various stakeholders. This multi-stakeholder approach has ensured transparency, accountability, and effective utilization of allocated funds. Moreover, the CDF has encouraged

active citizen participation in local governance processes, fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility among community members.

### 2.7.3 Opportunities and Challenges of Community Projects under CDF in Chipata

Opportunities of Community Projects under CDF in Chipata district:

- a) **Improved infrastructure:** CDF-funded projects can lead to improved infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, and buildings, enhancing the quality of life for community members (Mwale, 2020).
- b) **Economic empowerment:** Community projects can create employment opportunities and stimulate local economic growth, reducing poverty and improving livelihoods (Chipata City Council, 2022).
- c) **Social services:** CDF-funded projects can provide essential social services, such as healthcare, education, and water supply, benefiting vulnerable groups (Ministry of Local Government, 2020).
- d) **Community engagement:** Community projects can foster community participation, ownership, and social cohesion, promoting inclusive development (Kanyanta, 2019).
- e) **Capacity building:** CDF-funded projects can enhance the capacity of local authorities, community groups, and individuals, promoting sustainable development (Chipata City Council, 2022).

In terms of challenges of Community Projects under CDF in Chipata district, the City council has had the following challenges:

- a) **Inadequate funding:** Insufficient funding can limit project scope, quality, and sustainability (Mwale, 2020).
- b) **Poor project management:** Inadequate project management skills, corruption, and mismanagement can lead to project failure (Kanyanta, 2019).
- c) **Community conflicts:** Conflicts over project benefits, land, or resources can hinder project implementation and sustainability (Chipata City Council, 2022).
- d) **Limited community participation:** Insufficient community engagement, consultation, and ownership can lead to project failure (Ministry of Local Government, 2020).
- e) **Sustainability:** CDF-funded projects may not be sustainable due to inadequate maintenance, lack of resources, or inadequate planning (Mwale, 2020).

## 2.8 Summary of literature and Research Gaps

Project Cycle Management (PCM) is crucial for the success of community projects, especially those funded under the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in Zambia's Chipata District. PCM involves a series of steps from project identification to evaluation, ensuring efficient use of resources and effective project implementation. The literature review indicates a significant focus on PCM and community development initiatives globally, highlighting its importance in achieving sustainable development goals.

**Limited Empirical Studies:** Despite the wealth of theoretical literature on Project Cycle Management (PCM) and community development, there is a noticeable dearth of empirical studies specifically examining PCM within the context of projects funded by the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in Zambia's Chipata District. Existing empirical research either dates back several years or tends to focus on broader

development issues rather than delving into the intricate details of PCM processes within CDF-funded projects. This gap highlights the need for updated, context-specific empirical studies that provide a comprehensive analysis of PCM implementation, challenges, and outcomes within the Chipata District's unique socio-economic and political landscape.

**Inadequate Attention to Stakeholder Engagement:** Effective stakeholder engagement is vital for the success of community projects, yet the literature review suggests a lack of emphasis on this aspect within the PCM framework, particularly concerning CDF projects in Chipata District. Stakeholder engagement goes beyond mere consultation; it entails understanding the diverse roles, interests, and power dynamics of stakeholders involved in the project lifecycle. However, the existing literature falls short in providing a nuanced understanding of stakeholder engagement strategies and their impact on project ownership, sustainability, and overall success. Addressing this gap would entail conducting empirical studies that delve into the intricacies of stakeholder engagement within PCM processes, shedding light on best practices and areas for improvement.

**Limited Evaluation of PCM Implementation Challenges:** While PCM frameworks offer guidelines for project implementation, real-world challenges often arise during execution. However, the literature review indicates a lack of comprehensive evaluation of PCM implementation challenges specific to CDF-funded projects in Chipata District. Identifying and addressing these challenges are crucial for enhancing project efficiency and effectiveness.

Empirical studies focusing on the ground realities of implementing PCM in the Chipata District would provide valuable insights into the barriers and facilitators encountered by project managers and stakeholders, thereby informing strategies to overcome challenges and optimize project outcomes.

**Neglect of Gender Dynamics:** Gender dynamics significantly influence the outcomes and sustainability of community development projects. However, the literature review suggests a lack of emphasis on gender considerations within PCM processes, particularly in the context of CDF projects. Understanding gender disparities, empowering women, and promoting inclusivity are essential for enhancing project impact and fostering equitable development outcomes. Closing this gap requires conducting gender-sensitive research that explores how gender dynamics intersect with PCM practices in CDF-funded projects, thereby informing policies and interventions aimed at promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in community development initiatives.

In conclusion, addressing these research gaps is essential for gaining a holistic understanding of PCM dynamics within CDF-funded projects in Chipata District. Such insights are crucial for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers seeking to enhance project management practices and foster sustainable community development outcomes in Zambia and beyond.

## **2.9 Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework provides a theoretical lens through which to analyze the interactions between key variables and concepts relevant to the research topic. In the context of this study on Project Cycle Management (PCM) within Community Projects funded by the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in Zambia, the conceptual framework draws upon elements from PCM theory, community development



literature, and the institutional context of CDF projects. The framework serves to guide the exploration of relationships between various factors influencing PCM practices and project outcomes.

At its core, the conceptual framework for this study acknowledges the interplay between project management processes, community dynamics, and institutional factors within the context of CDF-funded Community Projects. It posits that effective PCM practices are contingent upon the alignment of project objectives, stakeholder engagement, and institutional support mechanisms. Moreover, it underscores the importance of community participation, transparency, and accountability in enhancing project outcomes and sustainability.

Key components of the conceptual framework include:

## 2.9.1 Independent Variables

**Community Participation in CDF projects:** This component assesses the level of involvement of community members and structures throughout the project life cycle. It examines how actively community members participate in various stages, including planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of projects funded by the CDF. In the context of Chipata District, understanding the extent to which communities engage with CDF-funded projects provides insights into the effectiveness of community involvement and its impact on project outcomes.

**Governance Structures:** This component evaluates the effectiveness of governance structures at different levels (community, district, and province) in ensuring efficient project management within the CDF framework. It investigates the roles, responsibilities, and decision-making processes within these structures, particularly in Chipata District, to understand how governance mechanisms contribute to project coordination, accountability, and transparency.

**Project Management Frameworks:** This component analyses the existing project management frameworks and practices employed in managing community projects under the CDF. It examines the methodologies, tools, and processes utilized to plan, execute, monitor, and evaluate projects within Chipata District.

Assessing the adequacy and efficiency of these frameworks provides insights into the overall project management practices and their impact on project success.

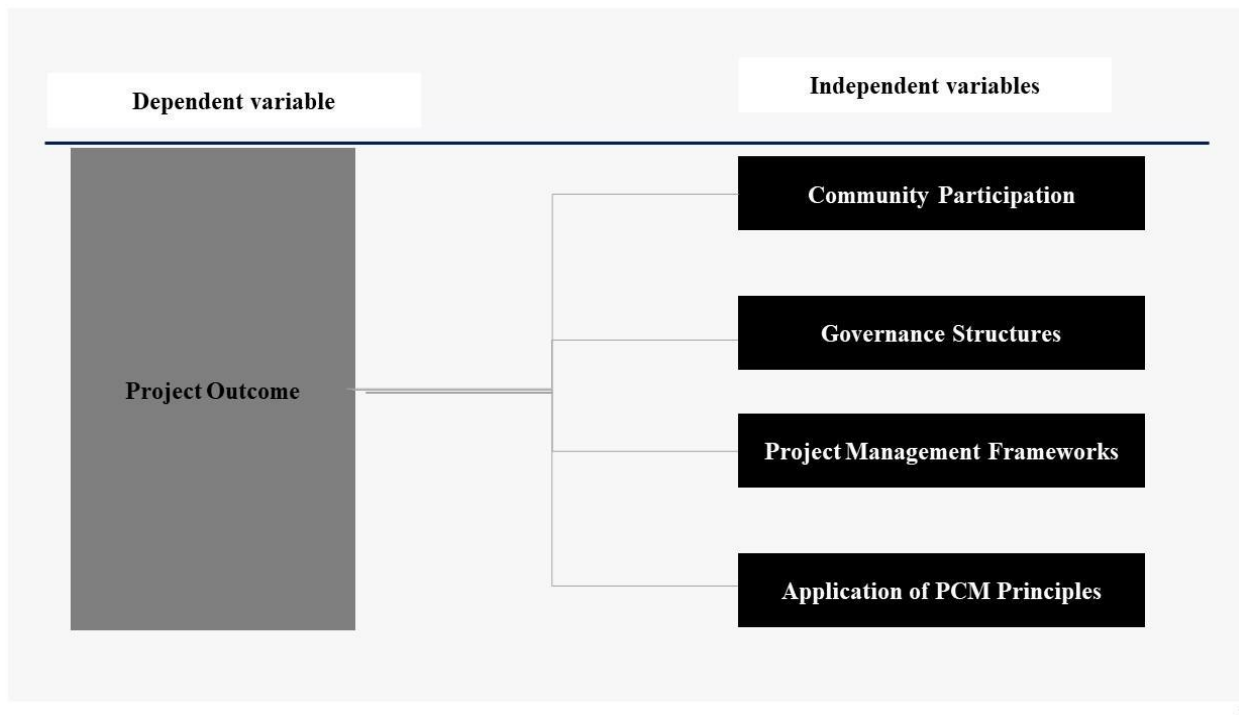
**Application of PCM Principles:** This component assesses the extent to which PCM principles and methodologies are applied in managing community projects under the CDF, specifically within Chipata District. It examines the adherence to PCM principles such as planning, execution, monitoring, and evaluation in project implementation. Understanding the integration of PCM principles helps in evaluating the effectiveness of project management practices and their contribution to project quality and impact within the district.

## 2.9.2 Dependent Variables

**Project Outcome:** This component focuses on the overall outcome of Community Projects funded by CDF, measured in terms of timeliness, ensuring projects adhere to established schedules; cost-effectiveness, optimizing resource utilization to achieve project goals within budget constraints; success of the project,

assessing the attainment of intended objectives and desired outcomes; and quality of delivery, evaluating the standard of project outputs and outcome.

**Figure 1.2: Conceptual model**



## **CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### **3.0 Introduction**

Chapter 3 consists of three parts: (1) Purpose of the study and research design, (2) Methods, and (3) Statistical Data analysis procedure.

Part one, Purpose of the study and Research Design, relates the purpose of the study and describes the research design and the variables used in this study.

Part two, Methods, describes the participants, the data gathering materials and the research procedure used in this study.

Part three, statistical data analysis procedures, reports the procedure for scoring and the statistical analysis used to interpret the hypothesis.

### **3.1 Purpose of the Study and Research Design**

The main purpose of this study is to improve Project Cycle Management (PCM) practices in Community Projects funded by the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in Zambia, with the aim of enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of project implementation and maximizing developmental impact. Assess the roles played by community members/structures at each stage of the Project Life Cycle of Community Projects under CDF. The Study seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of Community Project Governance Structures at all levels (community, district, and province) in ensuring efficient project management and investigating the timeliness, cost-effectiveness, and quality of delivery of Community Projects under CDF.

### **3.2 Research Methods**

#### ***3.2.1 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)***

This study utilized the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with at least 3 Ward Development Committees, one (1) drawn from an urban Ward, one (1) from peri-urban Area and 1 from Rural or Shanty Compound. This is intended to provide in-depth of stakeholder participation in Project Life Cycle of various Community Projects under the CDF. It is important to emphasize that a focus group discussion is a qualitative research tool originated in sociology and popular in business, marketing, and education (Sagoe, 2012).

Focus group discussion is used to gather data, usually in the forms of opinions, from a selected group of people on a particular and pre-determined topic, e.g. consumer topic, political topic, educational topic etc. The purpose of the discussion is to introduce the ground realities. During discussion phase, the researcher encourages free discussion and promotes equal participation of all participants (Neville, 2007). Focus groups also provide a social context within which the phenomenon is experienced, and they display the way in which context can shape people's views, showing how data are generated through conversation with others (Ritchie, & Lewis, 2000). Therefore, this study will at least at least 18 participants of 6 will be drawn from each Ward Development Committees. The Study will consider the fourth FGD involving the District Constituency Development Fund Committee Fund (CDFC).

### **3.2.2 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)**

Considering that the Study will be largely qualitative in nature, this Study will also employ Key Informant Interview (KIIs). Key informant interviews are a research method to gather specific qualitative information from selected knowledgeable people or “informants” about a topic of interest. It is an in-depth interview to prepare any participatory dialogue in a community or with stakeholders and will be used to complement information that will be gathered from FGDs. Information that will be obtained from key informants is expected complement information FGDs. In this regard, the Key informants include the Town Clerk from Chipata City Council, the City Mayor, the Director Planning, the Director Engineering, the Director Legal and 3 Councilors from the selected wards.

It envisaged that the Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) will play a pivotal role in this study mainly to offer an a depth of understanding that might be unattainable through other methods. KII will mainly provide the following:

- **Access to Specialized Knowledge and Expert Insights:** KIIs enable the researcher to tap into the wealth of knowledge possessed by various Council experts in specific fields such as Project Identification, Planning, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and close-out phases of the Community Projects under CDF. This is especially crucial in areas where specialized insights are vital to understanding complex issues involved in the Project Cycle Management of the Community Projects under CDF.
- **Understanding Context and Nuance:** The Researcher is convinced that one of the primary strengths of KIIs is their ability to capture the context and nuances around Project Cycle Management (PCM) of the Community Projects under CDF. Unlike quantitative methods that offer breadth, KIIs in this case will provide depth, uncovering the ‘why’ and ‘how’ behind observable trends in the PCM. This depth is invaluable in this type of Projects where understanding the rationale behind decisions can inform more effective policy development around CDF Community Projects.
- **Flexibility and Adaptability:** This Study has considered KIIs as this will offer unmatched flexibility, allowing the Research to explore new lines of inquiry as they emerge during the interview. This adaptability is critical in exploratory research such as this one or when dealing with emerging issues, where predefined survey questions might miss important aspects.
- **Identifying Hidden or Sensitive Issues:** Given expertise of purposefully selected interviewees and experience, key informants will provide insights into sensitive or hidden issues that might not be readily disclosed through other methodologies. In contexts such as development work at community level, KIIs will reveal underlying problems or needs that are not visible on the surface.
- **Enhancing Other Research Findings:** KIIs will complement and improve findings from quantitative methods. They add depth to the statistical data by providing qualitative insights, offering a more comprehensive view of the research topic, which Examining Project Cycle Management in the Community Project under CDF.
- **Case Studies Illustrating Impact:** The use of KIIs will help expose real-world examples. For example focusing on the role each local community leaders and the team from the City Council experts have been instrumental in understanding the impact of Community Projects at a local level, leading to more targeted and effective conservation strategies.

### **3.2.3 Literature Review**

The Literature Review is focused on systematically searching and analyzing existing research papers, articles, and reports related to project cycle management and CDF-funded community projects. This includes:

- ✚ Synthesizing the findings and outcomes of previous studies to identify patterns, trends, and gaps in knowledge on concept Project Management,
- ✚ Critically evaluating the strengths and limitations of existing research on project management in community projects under CDF.
- ✚ Identifying best practices, lessons learned, and areas for improvement in project Cycle Management (PCM) approaches and strategies.
- ✚ Providing a comprehensive overview of the current state of knowledge on project management in community projects under CDF.
- ✚ Informing the development of effective project management strategies and guidelines for CDF-funded community projects.
- ✚ Identifying areas for further research and investigation to address gaps in knowledge and improve project management practices in community projects under CDF.

The literature review methodology involves:

- ✚ Defining the research question and objectives. In this the focus has been to review literatures especially published articles on the specific objects.
- ✚ Conducting a systematic search of electronic databases, journals, and reports. This has been helpful in broadening the understanding of the study area and what has already been done on the subject.
- ✚ Selecting and evaluating relevant studies based on inclusion and exclusion criteria.
- ✚ Extracting and synthesizing data from selected studies
- ✚ Analyzing and interpreting the findings from other related studies on CDF Projects and professional articles on Project Cycle Management (PCM).
- ✚ Drawing conclusions and making recommendations
- ✚ Reporting the results in a clear and concise manner.

By using a literature review methodology, this study aims to provide a comprehensive and evidence-based understanding of Project Cycle Management (PCM) in community projects under CDF, and to inform the development of effective project management strategies and guidelines for CDF-funded community projects.

### ***3.2.4 Research Philosophy and Approach***

The research design that was used in this study was a descriptive survey. Descriptive survey was employed as a method of collecting information by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals (Orodho, 2003). The study used mixed method design to reach the respondents in order to gather factual information and to quantify the trends and patterns associated with the Examining Project Cycle Management (PCM) in the Community Projects under Constituency Development Fund (CDF). Additionally, it aimed to obtain in-depth insights into the essential elements influencing CDF Community project outcomes and to comprehend the context.

The decision to employ a mixed-method design further strengthened the research approach by allowing for a comprehensive exploration of the subject matter. By combining both quantitative and qualitative



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

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

### **3.2.5 Sampling Design**

### **3.2.6 Population Target**

A population is a group of individuals or objects from which samples are taken for measurement. It is a collection of all the elements about which a study wishes to make some inferences (Cooper, et al., 2003). The target population included community key informants (community leaders, CDF business-related leaders, Department of Resource Development and Water and Supply and Sanitation at Provincial, district, and council levels including District Water, Sanitation and Health (DWASH), Village Water, Sanitation and Health (VWASH) health workers, education workers provincial, district and community levels), relevant Council departments such as Planning, Engineering, Legal, Procurement, Finance and Administration (TC), Ward Development Committee (WDC) members, and CDF committee members and sector based Community Committees such as Parent Teachers Committees (PTCs), Health Neighbourhood Committees, Community Agriculture Committees among others.

### **3.2.7 Population Size**

The population size for this study was drawn from those directly involved with CDF; 12 CDFC from both Chipata Central and Luangeni Constituencies (6 from each constituency), 21 WDCs (7 drawn from 3 Wards purposefully selected) and 25 key Informants conveniently selected across 21 wards of Chipata City Council, including Heads of departments from key sectors at provincial, district and community levels and council management.

### **3.2.8 Sampling Frame**

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

### **3.2.9 Study Sample**

The sample size for this primary data comprised of 58 participants categorized as 12 CDFC (6 from each Constituency), 21 WDCs community groupings (7 from each of the 3 selected Wards) (FGDs) and 21 key informants through 4 KII that would provide epistemology knowledge on study matter.

**Table 1 Study Sample**

Description of Respondents	Designation of Respondents	Sample size
<b>CDFC</b>	Selected Members	12 (6 from each Constituency)
<b>WDCs</b>	Selected members	21 (7 from each Ward) 3 FGDs
<b>PTCs, HNW, CAC, VWASH</b>		18 (6) 3 Groups would target (FDG/ K11s)
<b>Health, Education, Agriculture, Water Departments at both Province and Dis</b>	PHD, PEO, DHID, DEBS, PIO, PCTAO DACO, RDA DHD, PLGO	10
<b>Chipata City Council</b>	Town Clerk and MP	2
<b>Key Informants</b>	Directors at Chipata City Council, DC Chipata, District Works Supervisor, Selected Head teachers, In-Charge	7 4
<b>Total</b>		<b>74</b>

## Sampling techniques

Sampling is the procedure a researcher uses to gather people, places, or things to study. Orodho and Kombo (2002) define sampling as a process of selecting a number of individuals or objects from a population such that the selected group contains elements representative of the characteristics found in the entire group. It should be noted that the main constraints in deciding on the sample size to use are usually resources and time. They argue that the proximity of the researcher's home to the study sample is a factor to consider in research. As a result, distance coverage impediments are reduced while interaction rates between the researcher and respondents at personal levels, both formally and informally, increase (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). In this study, homogenous and expert purposive sampling were utilized to select participants with similar characteristics or traits related to Community Projects under CDF, allowing for a thorough understanding of the phenomenon and a detailed description of the particular group. This approach would enable the researcher to focus on individuals with expertise relevant to the study topic. The expert purposive sampling provided technical know-how on the study matter, ensuring that the participants could clarify certain information crucial for the study's credibility and guidance.



### 3.3 Data Collection Method

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, such as the MP representative, Ward Development Committee Chairpersons (WDC), key informants and Constituency Development Fund Committees (CDFC). Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) would be utilized to gather collective opinions and experiences from community key informants, including health, agriculture and educational personnel; District Water and Sanitation and Health (DWASH), Village Water and Sanitation and Health (VWASH), Parents Teachers Committees (PTCs), Community Agriculture Communities (CACs), and Health Neighbourhood Committees (HNCs) headmen, and other community influencers. These discussions aimed to collect information on whether or not they provided opinions on the locations and quantities of school, health, water infrastructure, dams for agriculture and livestock, and other public assets or facilities to be constructed as well knowledge around the use of CDF

### 3.4 Data Collection Instruments

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

### 3.5 Data Preparation and Analysis

This research integrated findings using a parallel design where both semi-structured and structured interviews and FGDs were collected concurrently, and the results were compared to provide a comprehensive understanding. Quantitative data utilized both descriptive and inferential statistics, including one sample t- test comparing means. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, mean and percentages were employed. Excel and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) were used for data analysis. Results were presented in tables, figures, charts, and graphs. Data were coded, variable categories were assigned labels, and they were then fed into the computer program. Qualitative data underwent thematic analysis along with a review of relevant documents, reports, and project documentation to gain perspective and context of the CDF projects.

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



### 3.6 Data Gathering Procedures

The study was conducted between March 2024 and June, 20224.

Necessary permission was secured from the office of the Town Clerk. After the permit is granted, the researcher conducted interviews.

This Study was conducted a minimum of 16 weeks or 80 working days. Ward Development Committee members were organized in 3 different locations. The 2 CDFC were also organized for a FGD.

### 3.7 Statistical Data Analysis and Procedure

The data gathered was subjected to descriptive and inferential analysis. *Frequency distribution and Percentage*. This will be used to determine the number of respondents in every sections.

*Mean*. This test will be used to ascertain the level of effectiveness of CDF Community Projects and the effectiveness of both technical and governance structure in the implementation and application Of PCM methodology.

***Standard Deviation (SD)***: This test will be employed to determine the homogeneity and heterogeneity of the CDF Community Projects and the application of PCM in Project Life Cycle Management.

## CHAPTER FOUR PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

### 4.1 Introduction

The research results gathered throughout the study's data collection phase were given in this chapter. The major goal of this study was to examine Project Cycle Management in the Community Projects under the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in Zambia: Case study of Chipata District.

Three of the 12 wards of the Two Constituencies (Chipata Central and Luangeni) - Kapata, Kanjala and Nsingo —were visited by the researcher. A significant portion of the data used in this study came from interviews with Provincial and district heads (PHD, PEO, DHID, DEBS, PIO, PCTAO DACO, RDA DHD, PLGO), Council Management (Mayor, Town Clerk, Director of City Planning, Director of Engineering, Director of Finance and other officers from planning and engineering Departments) and Technical Groups who support Ward Development Committees (WDC), Constituency Development Fund Committees (CDFC). Other respondents included lowest governance structures such as the Ward Development Committees, Parents Teachers' Committee, and Neighbourhood Health Committee at Ward and Zonal levels. Twelve (12) projects within the area under study were visited, and a total of seventy (70) respondents were used.

The researcher purposefully sought people who had important knowledge on CDF, such as the local Council staff in the Departments responsible for CDF management such as Planning, Engineering and Finance. In all, six focus group meetings took place in Chipata. These were held at various locations in Chipata, such as churches, community halls, and school halls, between 8th April, 2024 and May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024. The researcher who moderated the sessions led each debate, which lasted an average an hour.

The researcher recorded the sessions with voice notes and handwritten notes. Information processing is crucial to planning and decision- making processes because it simplifies concepts into manageable actions that can be carried out; in this case information obtained from the key respondent interviews was reported as key findings and displayed in the following charts and tables using percentages and frequencies:

### 4.2 Key Findings

#### *4.1.2 Knowledge of Project Cycle Management*

When asked about understanding of Project Cycle Management (PCM) in relation to the Constituency Development Fund, the majority of respondents admitted to have little information on Project Cycle Management, rather most of the respondents had general information on Project management in relation to the Constituency Development Fund. Respondents stated that project management entailed planning, directing, and supervising the project at every stage. Of the 22 respondents interviewed, 10 (45%) reported that they had a poor understanding of Project Cycle Management, while 5 (22%) respondents stated that they had a fair understanding of Project Cycle Management. This information indicated that respondents had on average, little understanding about Project Cycle Management, but had good understanding of project management cycle. Figure 4.1 below shows feedback from respondents on their level of understanding of Project Cycle Management (PCM):



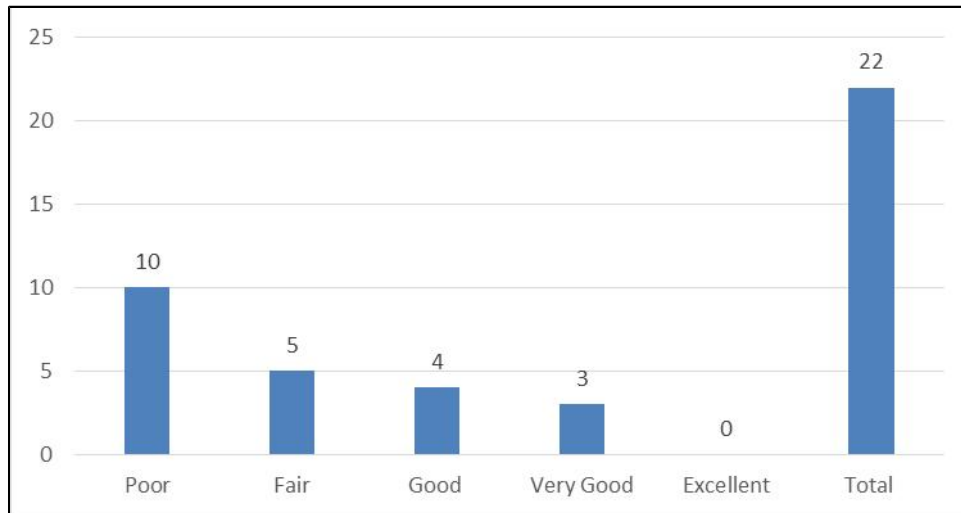


Figure 1 Level of understanding about PCM

Source: Field Survey (2024)

It is important to note that there is an intricate difference between Project Cycle Management and Project Management Cycle. Project Cycle Management (PCM) is a method of project management that guides a project from beginning to end using a logical phase sequence.

The process of carrying out a certain project within predetermined parameters is known as project management.

As this may be the case of the respondents having knowledge on Project Management cycle, they still indicated that they still needed capacity building in terms of training workshops on PCM as shown in figure 4.1 below;



Figure 2 Need for capacity building in PCM

Source: Field Survey (2024).

## 4.2.2 Pressing Issues

To determine the extent to which PCM principles and methodologies are employed in the management of Community Projects under CDF, respondents were asked to explain the most pressing needs in their ward that required CDF project intervention.

To this question most respondents reported health issues (Maternity annexes, Health posts and Clinics) to be among the most pressing needs in their ward that required CDF project interventions. They cited long distances women and the general population covered to access health services which in itself was a challenge.

Other pressing needs submitted included water challenges which presented difficulties for some areas to get safe, clean drinking water. Furthermore, respondents stated that over time, a few of the previously constructed water points had ceased to work. People were now compelled to turn to obtaining water from exposed sources of water features, including shallow wells and streams. In other instances, people were compelled to carry the weight of extended water fetching trips, particularly involving women and children. These water sources were frequently used by both people and domestic animals as drinking sources. Other pressing needs mentioned included deep tanks intended to submerge cattle in liquid herbicide or other therapy for animal disease control.

The table below presents a summary of some pressing issues submitted by respondents:

**Table 2 Community Pressing needs in Chipata Central and Luangeni Constituencies**

SN	PRESSING ISSUE	DESCRIPTION
1	<b>Electricity</b>	Access to affordable, reliable and clean energy is a key driver of change. Most rural areas are not connected to the national grid. For instance Kanjala WDC submitted that areas such as Kagunda community needed electricity to service a mini-hospital, school and other facilities
2	<b>Road infrastructure</b>	Transportation of people and goods is essential across the District. Critical road infrastructure is in a poor state and in need of repair. Khova WDC submitted that the Chipata-Chadiza road other feeder roads that link Luangeni Constituency to Chipata City were in bad state and needed to be worked on. In urban areas WDCs submitted that township roads were also in bad shape with poor drainage system which worsens flooding during rainy season.
3	<b>Water supply</b>	The district experiences critical water shortages due to inadequate dams, bores and an expanded water reticulation system. The situation is worse in rural areas.
4	<b>Long distances to schools</b>	Schools are located far away from where significant number of learners reside resulting in low enrolment rates and low retention in schools. WDCs of Mwami and Kazimule wards submitted no presence of secondary schools.
5	<b>Access to primary health care</b>	Health facilities are not equitably distributed in the district.
6	<b>Urban markets and trading places</b>	Urban flea markets are not well defined and infrastructure in a bad state. Markets stalls and shops are in a deplorable state.
7	<b>Livestock infrastructure</b>	Livestock is one of the major agricultural activities in the district. Animals are frequently dying due to inadequate dip tanks for disease control and dams for animals especially in the dry season.

8	<b>Solid Waste Management (SWM) Disposal</b>	Population growth has resulted in increased generation of solid waste particularly plastics. Kapata WDC submitted the need for additional solid waste bays to improve SWM.
9	<b>Cemeteries</b>	Urban wards (Kapata and Kanjala) reported inadequate gazetted public cemeteries.

**Table 3 Pressing Issues Source: 2024 Field Survey**

### 4.2.3 *Weak and ineffective participation of WDC in Project Cycle Management*

#### 4.2.3.1 *Project Initiation*

The 2022 CDF guidelines provides that all community projects should be initiated by the community themselves through established WDCs (MLGRD, 2022). However, the study revealed that one of the challenges identified by respondents was that even though WDC submitted their community prioritized projects, the CDFC often had a significant influence over what was determined to be community needs. During a focus group session, one community member said the following:

*“Yes we submit projects to the CDFC, but usually what is approved by the CDFC is different from our priorities. For instance, here in Kanjala ward we submitted for purchase of land for cemetery, but to our shock the CDF procured a dental chair for Chipata District Hospital.”* (Participant's perspective during a focus group discussion on Saturday, April 27, 2024, in Kanjala ward).

Further, the WDC observed that the MP had undue influence on the selection of community projects. They alleged that the MP took CDF as his personal fund. This resulted in bulldozing the committee on which projects to be approved. During another focus group discussion in Khova ward, one committee member submitted the following;

*“The composition of the CDFC gave a lot of power to the MP because he nominates five members of the committee.*

*Further, other CDFC members are also appointed in consultation with the MP in that Constituency. In most cases the appointed members by the MP are his/her political loyalists.* (Participant's perspective during a focus group discussion on Friday, April 26, 2024, in Khova ward).

Another related challenge which hindered community participation in project initiation was presidential directives which very often superseded community submission. Respondents stated that even though some directives that come through the ministry were justified, some were imposed and did not speak to their real issues on the ground.

For instance, respondents cited the construction of chief's palaces which were not a community priority and did not benefit a wider community.

#### 4.2.3.2 *Project Implementation*

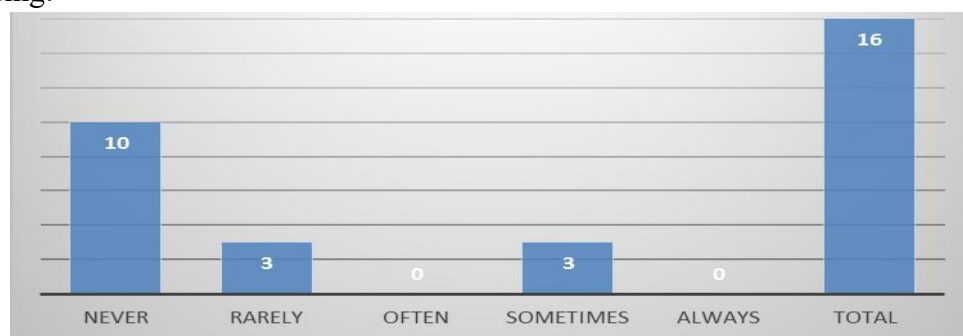
According to the WDC and CDF guidelines, WDCs are mandated to oversee community projects in their wards (MLGRD, 2022, GRZ, 2019). However, the study revealed that these local structures were not fully

involved in the project implementation process. For example when contracts are secured for community projects, the contractor is taken on site by the council without the WDC's knowledge; thereby excluding their participation in the implementation of the project. The following was stated by one WDC member:

*“At times we get shocked to see a contractor on site working without our knowledge and when we inquire from them, they tell us to contact the Council. This already sidelines us from getting involved in the implementation process of the project.”* (Participant's perspective during a focus group discussion on Friday, April 26, 2024, in Msanga ward).

### 4.2.3.3 Project Monitoring and Evaluation

In order to appreciate the Monitoring and Evaluation process in the CDF Community project implementation, respondents were asked on how they do monitor project progress. It was revealed that most WDCs interviewed did not take active role in the project monitoring processes. Most WDCs submitted that they were left out during monitoring process of projects in their area by Engineers. The low or non-participation of the WDC in project monitoring may be attributed to the CDF methodology utilized for project monitoring and assessment. Figure 4.3 below shows the feedback from respondents on frequency of project monitoring:



**Figure 3 Frequency of Project Monitoring**

**Source: Field Survey (2024)**

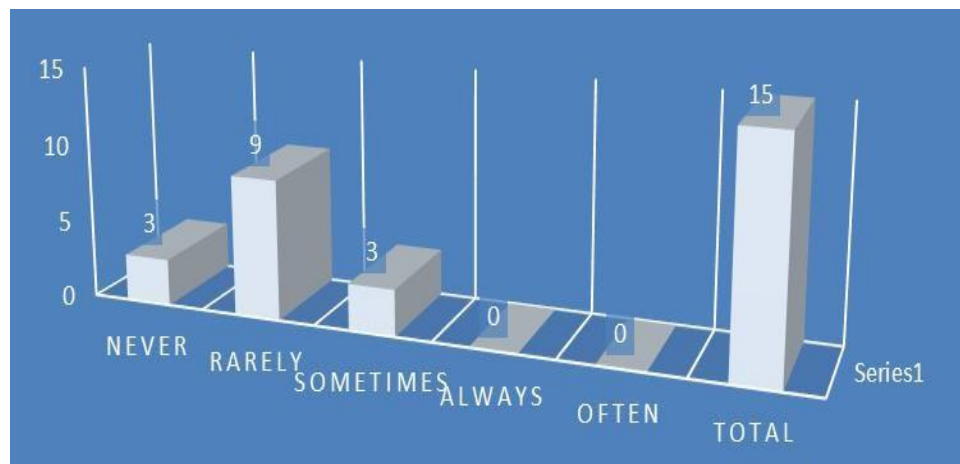
The Study revealed that while the CDF standards recommended community involvement throughout the monitoring phase, they do not clearly define the community's responsibility for monitoring CDF projects. This concern was raised by one of the members of the WDC who stated the following:

*“We do not know exactly our specific roles in project monitoring. This is because the council does avail us with necessary information such as the scope, cost and time of the project. This makes it difficult for us to monitor the project without this key information. Further, we are not involved in the certification of works. Sometimes we just hear that the project is completed and that the contractor was paid, yet when you check the project, you discover that it is not fully completed.”* (Views expressed by WDC member in Kapata ward, Thursday, 18 April, 2024).

Further, WDCs indicated logistical challenges to reach the project sites.

They submitted that they do not have transport or any other incentives to support their monitoring programs.

Similarly, with regards to project evaluation, majority of respondents confirmed that project evaluation had not been given any particular attention as shown in figure below;



**Figure 4 Frequency of Project evaluation**

**Source: Field Survey (2024)**

#### 4.2.3.4 Project Sustainability

It is the responsibility of the project beneficiaries to ensure that the projects are safeguarded after completion and handover. However, the study revealed non-ownership and vandalism of some of the completed projects. For example WDC member in Makangila ward reported instances of theft and vandalism of solar accessories at a water scheme at Chimthiko Health post.

#### 4.2.4 Incomplete Project Facilities

The CDF Act. no. 1 of 2024 Provides for full and complete funding of a community project. This entails that where a facility has been constructed, other auxiliary infrastructure should also be constructed for completeness of the project. For instance, if there is a project involving construction of a health post, other infrastructure such as ablution block, maternity annex, water facilities and staff houses should also be constructed. However, the study revealed that most project had missing infrastructure. An interview with Masupe, Khova, Msanga and Makangila WDCs indicated that most of the health facilities constructed did not have support infrastructure and because of that, facilities could not be opened for use to the public. These projects included Kaphinde Health Post, Sairi Health Post One, Nsanjika Health Post. All these projects are not fully completed with supporting infrastructure. WDC member from Masupe ward stated the following; *“This health post at Mkombola Kabaye in Masupe ward was started with CDF in 2012 and yet until now it is not operational. It has been funded in piecemeal. When we ask authorities in the ministry of health as to why the health post was not opened*

*despite constructing a staff house; they said they could not open it to the public because of absence of other supporting infrastructure such as water scheme, ablution block, placenta pit, maternity annex and furniture.”* (Views expressed by WDC member from Masupe Ward on 24 April, 2024).

#### 4.2.5 Political Influence in the estimations of Bill of Quantities (BOQs)

When projects are selected by the CDFC from the list submitted by the WDCs, they are subjected to technical and field appraisal by the technical appraisal team which makes the assessment of the materials needed and their cost. However, engineers from the Council submitted that even though their estimations of project cost



were objective, politicians put undue pressure for them to adjust the cost of the project downwards in order to accommodate increased number of projects. This, they indicated compromised project quality and timeliness. One engineer from the Council said the following;

*“As engineers we always do our best in terms of coming up with the actual cost of the project, but in most cases we receive directives to reduce the cost of projects and this affect project quality and timeliness. In most cases projects with reduced cost usually take long to be completed because of the back and forth process to the CDFC for addition of extra funding.”* (Comments made by Council Civil Engineer during an interview on 23rd April, 2024).

#### **4.2.6 Underpriced Projects**

Underpriced projects result in delays in implementation because they are in most cases unsuccessful during procurement as contractors bid beyond the project cost. In such situation the affected projects are subjected a second procurement process, thereby delaying the implementation of the project. An officer in the Procurement Office said the following;

*“We have ten (10) projects that have not gone through evaluation stage of the procurement process due to underpricing of projects. All the bidders for such projects offered higher amounts than the approved sum. The implication of underpriced projects is that process has to be re-done from the start after adjusting the project cost and this takes time of about five (5) months.”* (Submission made by an officer in the procurement office during interview on 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 2024).

Further, to understand the effect of underpriced projects in project cycle management the study interviewed some contractors in Chipata district. The results indicated most contractors were demotivated as underpriced projects were subjected to second bidding (after failing in the first bid) which incurred extra expenses on their part. One local contractor said the following;

*“As contractors we become demotivated with underpriced projects because it subjects us to incur more costs especially when there is no successful bidder. We are made to submit bids for the same project just because of underpricing.”* (Submission made by a contractor during interview on 22<sup>nd</sup> April, 2024).

**4.2.7 Inadequate participation of CDFC members in Project Monitoring and Evaluation** One of the functions of the CDFC according to the CDF Act. No. 1 of 2024 is project monitoring and evaluation. This is done to ensure successful implementation of the projects. However, an interview with some of the CDFC memmbers indicated inadequate monitoring and non-evaluation of CDF projects. One CDFC member from Luangeni Constituency stated the following:

*“While as members of the CDFC are mandated to select projects for implementation under CDF, we are not fully involved in the monitoring of projects. The only members that are usually involved in monitoring are the MP and the CDFC Chairperson. Moreover, the committee has never conducted a meeting for evaluation of CDF projects. The reports offered by the secretariat of the CDFC are not enough as they do not always portray the real picture of the project on the ground.”* (Views submitted by one CDFC member from Chipata Central Constituency on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2024).

#### **4.2.8 Delayed Project initiation by the Local Authority**

The CDF Act. no. 1. of 2024 and the 2022 CDF guidelines provides initiation of that Community projects should commence in the month of February for implementation in the following year. However, an interview with one Socio-Economic Planner in the Department of City Planning revealed that the initiation of projects started as late as August against the stated guidelines. The Socio-Economic Planner had this to say; *“Yes in practice the initiation of all the components of CDF projects commences in August every year for implementation in the following year. This is so because we want as much as possible to align the projects to the announcement of the National budget which is usually done in October of each fiscal year. However, this delays the completion of the initiation process and usually extends to January or February the following year, delaying the next cycle of CDF implementation. Further, CDF project initiation meetings are delayed by the MP who in most cases demands his attendance amidst his busy schedules. This, therefore, necessitates postponement of the meetings to another day and this further contributes to the delay of project initiation”*. (Submission from Socio- Economic Planner from interviews held on 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 2024).

#### **4.2.9 Lengthy Procurement Process**

The procurement process of goods, services and works in Zambia is guided by the Procurement Act. no. 8. of 2020. The Act aims to promote transparency, accountability and efficiency in the public procurement. An interview with key staff from Procurement, Engineering and Planning revealed a lengthy procurement process which delays community project implementation under CDF. One officer from Socio- Economic Planning submitted the following: *“The procurement process is more time-consuming, often requiring months or even years for especially for complex projects, such as construction or infrastructure development. The process involves methods of public advertisement and open competition, which very often take longer due to the need to evaluate multiple bids. The procurement process is further delayed due to bureaucratic processes.*

*Inefficient administrative processes and bureaucratic hurdles can significantly slow down the procurement process. The process involves advertisement which runs for Twenty- eight (28) days, followed by site visitation. Later, the evaluation of the bids which is followed by the procurement committee sitting, then submission to the Attorney General’s office for clearance of the contracts and back to the Council contract signing and project site occupation. This process, usually takes about four months, delaying the implementation process.”* (Submission from Socio- Economic Planner during an interview on 22<sup>nd</sup> April, 2024).

Further the newly introduced Electronic Government Procurement (E-GP) has contributed more delays in the procurement process as some contractors lack knowledge of bidding through the system. One officer from procurement submitted the following;

*“We have had situations where we do not receive any bid for some projects because of lack of knowledge in the use of E-GP system by some contractors. This has led to re-advertising of same project over and over.”* (Comments from Procurement Officer during an interview on 20<sup>th</sup> April, 2024).

#### **4.2.10 Inadequacy of staffing levels**

The Government of the Republic of Zambia restructured the organization structure of the Local Authorities in line with the decentralization policy and to respond to the expanded responsibilities placed in local authorities. With the expanded scope of the CDF there was need to effect the newly recommended organization structure in order to respond to the new demands. However, an interview with the Director of City Planning revealed inadequate staffing levels in key departments implementing CDF such as procurement, Planning, Engineering and Finance.

*“Yes, the Council has inadequate staffing levels in the key departments handling CDF. We have few Procurement Officers, Socio-Economic Planners, Civil Engineers, Architects, and Quantity Surveyors to handle CDF projects. Inadequate staffing to manage community projects under the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) has led to several negative effects, impacting the success and sustainability of CDF project management.”* (Submission of the Director City Planning during an interview on 20<sup>th</sup> April, 2024).

#### **4.2.10 Lack of comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation**

A comprehensive M&E is integral to Project Cycle Management. It enhances decision-making, accountability, learning, and impact assessment. By embedding M&E throughout the project lifecycle, organizations can ensure that they deliver effective and sustainable outcomes. In order to enhance outcomes for community projects under CDF, the government procured a CDF Project monitoring vehicle for each constituency. The Government also developed an M&E system called the “CDF Dash Board” to enhance M & E.

However, an interview with officers from Department City Planning and Engineering Services reviewed a weak M & E across all the stages of CDF Project Cycle. It was submitted that there were overwhelming number of projects against the few number of staff in key departments. It was also submitted that a vehicle per constituency for monitoring of projects for all components of CDF was not adequate. On the M&E CDF Dash Board, an officer from Department of City Planning narrated as follows:

*“There is much to be done in terms of developing an effective M&E system, as the current system does not give real time picture of CDF projects. There is need for the Ministry of Local Government to develop a robust platform for M&E system that would more comprehensive; one that will digitalize the whole process of community project implementation from initiation, procurement, implementation, certification of works through to handover of the project to beneficiaries. The current M&E is at higher level requiring manual inputs of data, prone to lots of errors and cannot be used to make quick decisions”* (Submission from Socio- Economic Planner during an interview on 22<sup>nd</sup> April, 2024).

#### **4.2.11 Lack of coordination among key departments involved in CDF Implementation process**

According to the Local Government Act. No.2. of 2019 and the 2022 WDC guidelines, the composition of the Ward Development committee comprise of membership from government departments such as education, health, community development, Fisheries and Livestock, and Agriculture (GRZ, 2024). Among the roles and responsibilities of the ex-officials in the WDC is to provide sectoral policy guidance

and technical advice to the WDC (GRZ, 202).

However, the study revealed non-commitment by these departments in attending the WDC meetings, a situation which brings discord from the very on-set of project initiation. One officer from the planning department had this to say;

*“We were shocked in one DDCC meeting when an officer from education suggested that they were not aware of CDF projects taking place, yet there is on each WDC an ex-officio from Education. The problem is that these ex-officios do not attend WDC meetings, otherwise they should be aware of projects taking place in wards relating to their departments. It is important that Government departments work together in supporting development through unique and technical contribution.”* (Views from Socio- Economic Planner during an interview on 21<sup>st</sup> April, 2024).

### **4.3 Chapter Summary**

Chapter four was based on presentation of data collected from respondents in order to address the objectives of this study. The major aim of this study was to analyse Project Cycle Management (PCM) practices within Community Projects funded by the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in Zambia, with the aim of enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of project implementation and maximizing developmental impact. The study sought to determine the extent to which Project Cycle Management (PCM) principles and methodologies are employed in the management of Community Projects under CDF and to evaluate the effectiveness of Community Project Governance Structures at all levels (community, district, and province) in ensuring efficient project management.

The study has revealed that there are a number of challenges that hinder smooth implementation of community projects under CDF. Some of the identified gaps included lack of coordination among key departments involved in CDF implementation process, Political Influence in the estimations of BOQs and Inadequate participation of CDFC members in Project Monitoring and Evaluation. Others include delayed Project initiation by the Local Authority, lengthy Procurement Process and inadequacy of staffing levels.

## **CHAPTER FIVE DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This Chapter discussed the findings of the study. The main purpose of this study was to Examine Project Cycle Management in the Community Projects under the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in Zambia: Case study of Chipata District. The discussions in this chapter was based on the key findings of the study. The key findings listed and highlighted in Chapter four served as the foundation for this chapter's presentation of the findings to allow for the cohesive gathering of information on a specific topic from many data sources.

### **5.2 Knowledge levels in Project Cycle Management**

Results from the study indicated that majority of participants in the area of study were not very accustomed with Project Cycle Management, rather indicated their familiarity with the project management, which comprised organizing, leading, and overseeing the project at every phase (See figure 4. 1: Level of understanding about PCM).

Respondents further highlighted that most of the projects covered under the constituency development fund follow project management principles and methodologies (such as project identification, project design, project implementation, M & E, feedback loop and sustainability). As this may be the case of the respondents having knowledge on Project Management cycle, they still indicated that they still needed capacity building in terms of training workshops on PCM as shown in figure 4.2. Results of this study relates to the findings of Halvetas in Cameroon that most local authorities did not utilize the Project Cycle Management principles in Community project management. This made Halvetas to develop a project cycle management guide dubbed; learning and experience sharing series no 3 (Asanga, *et al*; 2007). The guide outlined a series of recommendations for implementing Project Cycle Management concepts in council development initiatives. The adaptation of PCM principles to the support of local councils in the Western Highlands of Cameroon was also highlighted.

Developing a PCM guide was in part a capacity building exercise for Local authorities to apply PCM in Community Projects.

In project management, capacity building training for Ward Development Committees (WDCs) and Constituency Development Fund Committees (CDFC) is essential, particularly for local government and community development. Capacity building empowers WDC and CDFC members with the knowledge and skills needed for effective decision-making. A similar gap was identified by the Local Government Association of Zambia through their study on the governance and management of the Ward Development Committees in Zambia. The study established that lack of capacity building was one of the challenges WDCs were facing in executing development in their localities. (Local Government Association of Zambia, 2023). Empowering the lower structures with PCM information will make them to be more informed and inclusive project planning (Kauffman, 2014). Building knowledge and skills in their roles will increases the community engagement skills of WDCs and CDFC, guaranteeing that a variety of opinions are heard and incorporated into project activities (Choguill, 2007). Financial and project



management expertise allows WDCs and CDFC to more effectively allocate and use resources, which improves project implementation efficiency.

Evade (1995) suggests that community participation in monitoring and evaluation is only effective if the communities were involved in the complete project cycle right from planning. He contends that it is impossible to anticipate a high degree of local participation in assessing projects' impacts if they are not started in a participatory manner and if communities are not involved in their administration. As a result, ownership and sustainability of these projects will be impacted.

One of the determinants to ensure project management principles and methodologies are followed in community projects is identifying community needs (needs assessment) to ensure the project addresses real issues. This also entails engaging community stakeholders to understand their perspectives and involvement in the project.

To determine the extent to which PCM principles and methodologies are employed in the management of Community Projects under CDF, respondents were asked to explain the most pressing needs in their ward that required CDF project intervention. To this question most respondents reported Health issues (Maternity annexes, Health posts and Clinics) to be among the most pressing needs in their ward that required CDF project interventions. They cited long distances women and the general population covered to access health services which in itself was a challenge. Other pressing needs mentioned included water challenges.

The difficult for some areas to get safe, clean drinking water.

Furthermore, respondents stated that over time, a few of the previously created water points have ceased to work. People are now compelled to turn to obtaining water from exposed sources of water features, including shallow wells and streams. In other instances, people were compelled to carry the weight of extended water fetching trips, particularly involving women and children. These water sources are frequently used by both domestic and wild animals as drinking sources. Other pressing needs mentioned included deep tanks intended to submerge cattle in liquid herbicide or other therapy.

Respondents were further asked how they identify and prioritize project ideas for CDF funding.

The way they identify projects is by engaging the community in order for them to tell them what they want and from what is submitted by the community the Ward Development Committee through their sitting begin to align projects submitted by the community to the integrated development Plan. In accordance with the Integrated Development Plan, and National Development Plan, communities must actively participate in identifying and resolving their social and economic requirements (MLGRD, 2022).

### **5.3 Pressing Issues**

Infrastructure, social services and amenities, economic development, and the environment were the primary development challenges that were identified throughout the study. Feeder highways, livestock infrastructure, primary health care accessibility, long commutes to schools, and the high rate of adolescent pregnancies were noteworthy. The findings of these key issues relate to the core issues that were identified in the Joint Integrated Development Plan (JIDP) process for Chipata, Chipangali and Kasenengwa districts. Water supply, waste management, urban planning, burial sites, crop impacts of climate change, forest encroachment, soil erosion, deforestation, and water pollution were other significant concerns that were also identified in the study as key issues that needed the attention in order

to push for the development agenda (JIDP, 2021).

However, the 2022 budget's substantial increase in Zambia's Constituency Development Fund offered a crucial chance to improve decentralized local institutions, foster economic growth, and make service delivery more responsive to the needs of the general population. The country has seen unprecedented progress in terms of development both in rural and urban areas because of the expanded Constituency Development Fund (CDF). In Chipata district, beneficiaries of the CDF funded projects unanimously expressed their satisfaction with the development that the CDF funding had brought about in their communities.

Upon conducting field visits to specific initiatives, it became apparent that the recipient communities had experienced several advantages. Individuals from these communities conveyed their delight at having been involved in project implementation.

For example, a visit to a selected Health centers in Luangeni Constituency revealed that the community previously had to walk four kilometers to the nearest health centre, but now had their own and could therefore provide health services to their families. Further in places where water points (boreholes) were made showed that villages now had their own water source, allowing them to produce vegetables for food and as a means of producing cash. Previously, the group had to walk kilometers to the closest water source.

Some initiatives, like electrifying schools, fixing roads, and building and enhancing rural health centers, were highly praised by respondents who said that having access to these facilities had reduced their burdens and saved them a significant amount of money and time because they no longer had to travel far to get education or medical care. One woman expressed her happiness that the Luangeni CDF had been used to construct a maternity wing, since it spared local women from having to go far distances to give birth when they were pregnant.

The accounts gathered from respondents showed that CDF had a beneficial effect on the lives of recipients, and that it is fulfilling its goal of serving as a vehicle to promote grassroots development and that proper coordination of the said funds would make its impact felt even more by the community.

#### **5.4 Community Engagement**

All community initiatives must be started by the community itself through designated WDCs, according to the 2022 CDF standards (MLGRD, 2022). Before the WDC can sit, members of the community at zonal assemble or village level meet with the leaders and representatives of their local communities to identify projects. At a public meeting, the community selects the project and names the project committee. On behalf of the community, that project committee then submits the application to the WDC committee through their zonal representative. Under the direction of the Ward Development committees, meetings are held in each ward.

The goal of these meetings is to identify and rank locally based development initiatives according to community needs. The identified and ranked projects are then submitted by the WDC to the CDFC for recommendation by the CDFC.

Even though WDC presented their community-prioritized projects, the CDFC frequently had a big say in what was deemed to represent community needs, according to the this study. This was one of the

difficulties that respondents mentioned. Craig & Mayo (1995) made the point that development cannot be meaningful unless beneficiary communities are involved. Communities are supposed to participate in CDF community project management meaningfully and at every stage, from project identification and selection to project execution. Examining the level of community involvement in the selection and execution of projects that use CDF was one of the study's objectives.

Given that one of the characteristics of CDF is community participation in project implementation, and since CDF projects were meant to represent the priority requirements of the local people, it was necessary to conduct this kind of assessment.

#### **5.4 Support to the Ward Development Committees and other Local Governance structures**

Respondents from the Council office were asked on the support WDCs and CDFC members receive in PCM-related activities. To this, respondents stated that WDCs and CDFC members were capacity built on a number of issues before they assume their office. The Council officials further indicated that continuous capacity building programs have been offered to CDFC and WDC structures. Part of the curricula they receive during the orientation training include but not limited to; application procedures, minute writing, filling-in of the Community Project Application forms, Project prioritisation, alignment of Community Projects to the Integrated Development Plan and managing Community projects.

The training also focused on cross cutting issues such as Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI). GESI is a strategy that recognizes the intersectionality of social forces that might exacerbate marginalization. Exclusion is a common risk for women, girls, people with disabilities, and many other individuals or groups. Further, respondents from the Local Authority highlighted that they give technical support to both the WDCs and CDFC in the CDF Community project management process. The technical support included guiding the WDCs and CDFCs during meetings and also assisting them with information on every step of Community Project Process (See figure 4.2 on responses from Council Officials in terms of support given to the WDCs and CDFC).

#### **5.5. Challenges and bottlenecks to CDF management**

Among the challenges identified in the process of CDF project Cycle was erratic funding. The respondent stated that even if people knew the allocated funds for CDF in a particular year cycle, funds do not come at once, but in instalments which often delayed initiation of CDF projects. Timing CDF distributions is another difficulty in public finance management. Due to the fact that funding is sometimes disbursed in instalments, incomplete projects accumulate, which is made worse by partial or delayed funding releases. (EAZ 2011; Chrine, Tembo, and Zyambo 2020; JCTR 2019). We do not know if Zambia is an example where the piling of unfinished development projects is caused by changes in electoral representation, despite the fact that data from Ghana indicates that this is the case (Williams 2017). Another respondent cited approval processes as one of the biggest challenges encountered during Community Projects implementation under CDF.

Once project proposals were submitted to the Council for onward submission to the CDFC, the process involves going through procurement processes, approvals by the attorney general's office. All

projects must be procured and completed within a year, as per the existing CDF Guidelines (MLGRD, 2022). Local councils are anticipated to begin acquiring larger projects in the upcoming budget years due to the anticipated increase in CDF funds, which would necessitate an even longer period of time for the procurement and implementation phase. Hence, unless the implementation schedule is extended, the number of unfinished projects can expand.

The challenge of lengthy approval process was also highlighted as a challenge in the Auditor General's Report on the implementation of the 2022 CDF (Office of the Auditor General, 2023). The report suggested amending the legislation controlling the CDF community project procurement process to include unique factors meant to reduce the project's implementation lead time. The report further recommended that in order to guarantee that there are no delays in the implementation of the projects, which are intended to address the issues of insufficient infrastructure, such as schools, health facilities, police stations, feeder roads, and crossing points, for the benefit of the communities within the respective constituencies, contracts for community projects must be awarded promptly.

Ineffective communication among team members, stakeholders, or community members is another challenge revealed by respondents. Some WDC members expressed concern that most of the time they were not engaged when bringing a contractor on site (in their zones) and were not introduced to the contractor as local leaders to the contractor by engineers from the Council. This usually led to misunderstandings between the local people and contractors. Financing initiatives that cater to community needs and preferences and advance local development and welfare is one of the CDF's main goals.

In actuality, though, community involvement is frequently limited to consultation and occurs during the very beginning of the CDF cycle or during the use of unskilled labour in project implementation (Musenge 2009; Chibomba 2013; JCTR 2019).

### **5.6 Political Influence on CDF decisions**

One of the challenges identified by respondents was that even though WDC meetings took place as planned, the Members of Parliament and council members often had a significant influence over what was determined to be community needs. There was a serious worry expressed about partisan influences. Certain respondents noted that projects were approved more quickly in areas perceived as aligned with the local Member of Parliament's political party. On the other hand, CDF committees, particularly the constituency Member of Parliament (MP) usually continue to hold a disproportionate amount of power when it comes to choosing and ranking projects (Chibomba 2013; Phiri 2016). 2013; JCTR (2019).

Certain respondents reported numerous occasions in which the projects implemented differed from those recommended by the community, indicating a significant degree of influence from elected officials throughout the project selection phase. Respondents generally agreed that this occurred because no additional community input took place prior to project approval following the open meeting to identify projects. The finding that projects tended to be situated in areas where the local MP and the ward councillors enjoyed greater popularity was added to this. Several studies also show that MPs frequently twist the CDF narratives to suit their political goals and get support (Casey, 2021). As a result, CDF funding is misrepresented as the MPs' personal funds or as having been obtained solely through the local

MP's advocacy and intervention, rather than being a consistent and uniform distribution provided by the central government to all local governments.

Another related challenge which hindered community participation in project cycle management was presidential directives which very often superseded community submission. Respondents stated that even though some directives that comes through the ministry are justified, some are more imposed and didn't speak to real issues on the ground. As a result, initiatives that were initially chosen by WDCs or other local structures did not end up being implemented (Chibomba 2013). Over time, these processes were likely to fuel citizens' frustration with the CDF mandate and ultimately weaken institutional confidence and the social contract.

According to the information provided above, CDF has not gone far enough in involving the community and has not given the Chipata residents a full sense of ownership and empowerment. Despite the fact that WDCs are involved, they still expressed that their involvement is limited as they feel not actively involved in the development of their district. This runs the risk of leading to the installation of community-unappreciated projects, which could result in project neglect or vandalism, undermining efforts at grassroots development. The results indicate that while community involvement is evident during project selection, it seems to be erratic and hasn't been formalized throughout the CDF procedure. Oakley and Marsden (1987) defined community engagement as an active process through which beneficiaries or community members have a say in how development is carried out and directed.

Therefore, community participation is linked to empowerment and respect for the use of local knowledge, and it allows local people to be involved in the decision-making process and evaluation of development programs (Marsland, 2005). Community participation is necessary because, in order to achieve sustainable development, residents must be given the chance to be involved in the planning, execution, monitoring, and assessment of interventions aimed at enhancing their quality of life.

Consequently, this fosters a feeling of responsibility for development initiatives (Local Government Association of Zambia, 2023).

As a solution to these challenges respondents suggested an establishment of a genuine involvement of grass root stakeholders and clear communication protocols, including regular meetings, updates, and a shared project management platform to enhance transparency and coordination among all the concerned stakeholders.

## **5.7 Managing unfinished deliverables**

Other challenges highlighted by respondents included Managing unfinished deliverables. Incomplete deliverables, they stated, may cause the satisfaction of stakeholders to be negatively impacted. Such challenges relating to unfinished deliverables could be prevented by examining the project's goals and scope in great detail. This would ensure assigning resources and give completion of outstanding deliverables top priority by identifying them. Close cooperation with stakeholders could also guarantee that their expectations for project outcomes are fulfilled. However, Engineers from the Council complained that at times they made bills of quantities (BOQs) with such consideration, but that during



the approval processes of a project, the project allocated amount would be revised by some approving authorities claiming overrated pricing.

These outcomes were similar to results from Auditor General's report on CDF which indicated a number of unfinished projects due to different reasons. A few examples are given below;

**a) Construction of 1x3 Classroom Block at Mangwere Primary School in Lunzi Ward of Chama South.**

The project period was sixteen weeks from 16<sup>th</sup> November 2022 to 16<sup>th</sup> March 2023 at a contract price of K289, 994. The contractor had been given amounts totalling K84, 399 as 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022. Seven (7) months after the anticipated completion date, a physical inspection of the project conducted in September 2023 showed that the work was still unfinished. The installation of windows and doors, painting, drainage, finishes, and decorations were among the outstanding tasks (Office of the Auditor General, 2023).

**b) Construction of a Police Post at Chipete**

At a total of K540,805 and to be constructed for a period of sixteen (16) weeks starting from 5<sup>th</sup> December 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, with a revised completion date of 30<sup>th</sup> October 2023, which was further revised to 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2023.

As of 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023, the contractor had been paid amounts totalling K247, 590 leaving a balance of K293, 215. The scope of works included the following: construction of sub and super structure, roofing, electrical installations, joinery and ironmongery, glazing, painting and decorations.

A physical verification carried out on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2023 revealed that the Police Post was at wall plate and at 60% completion stage. Although the contractor was on site, the works stalled in September 2023 and the project had delayed by two (2) weeks.

The delay in completing the project was attributed to poor road network (Office of the Auditor General, 2023). A total of 10 projects were reported to be incomplete and there were varying reasons as to why there were not complete at the time of audit. Some of the reasons included contract termination and failure to hire a new contractor, distance challenges for a contractor to ferry construction materials, poor scheduling and budget inaccuracies (Auditor General's Report, 2023). Other risks that were recorded due to delayed project take off related to damage of unused masteries such as cement which became caked and other rust prone materials which were damaged. An overall reason for delayed and incomplete projects may be attributed to lack of capacity in Project Cycle Management (PCM) in Council staff and the lower governance structures such as the WDCs and CDFCs.

## **5.8 Inadequate staffing in the Local Authorities**

Further, it was reported that inadequate staffing in key departments such as planning, engineering and procurement compromised timely delivery of projects. It was reported that staff handling CDF were overwhelmed, a situation contributing to poor quality and delayed

delivery of projects. In addition, it was reported that effective PCM was also affected by lack of an integrated information system that could be used to track projects progress by various stakeholders. It

was reported that the manual system storing information was compromising quality and timely provision of projects information for timely decision making.

## **5.9 Proposed strategies and solutions to overcoming identified challenges**

### **5.9.1 Project monitoring and Evaluation by the WDCs**

It was noted during the study that most WDCs interviewed did not take active role in the project monitoring processes. Most WDCs complained that they were left out during monitoring process of projects in their area by Engineers.

The low or non-participation of the WDC in project monitoring could be attributed to the CDF methodology utilized for project monitoring and assessment. The research found that while the CDF standards recommended community involvement throughout the monitoring phase, the Guidelines do not clearly define the community's responsibility for monitoring CDF projects. Although this is a great start having the community incorporated into CDF project monitoring, a monitoring framework could offer a crucial guide to guarantee strict monitoring. One way is to indicate in the Guidelines, a straightforward form to serve as a checklist for government employees to adhere to while writing monitoring reports.

Secondly, a well-defined framework that delineates the distinct oversight functions and accountabilities of the various governmental tiers. This is especially crucial because monitoring duties have to minimize duplication and take into account the varying capacities and purviews of all governmental levels and community participation with regard to project and money utilization monitoring.

WDCs and community members, for instance, can assist in providing first-level oversight on project implementation by using checklists linked to the project's timeline and quarterly goal- setting exercises (Casey et al; 2021). This will make things easier as councils could oversee the financial administration of project funds. The central government can supervise the councils and guarantee that the rules and regulations are followed.

Although most respondents agreed that they always conduct project monitoring, a good number also confirmed that project evaluation was not being given particular attention as indicated in figure 4.4. Project evaluation is a crucial part of project management, which is methodically evaluating a project's performance and results.

One important factor of project evaluation is that it helps to determine whether project objectives were met and the overall impact of the project. It provides insights into what worked and what didn't (Patton, 2008).

Stakeholders can decide wisely about future initiatives, resource allocation, and strategy modifications by examining the data from a project cycle management process. Accountability to cooperating partners, participants, and the community is ensured through evaluation, which also shows responsible resource usage and goal achievement (Wholey et al; 2010). Further, Organizations that practice continuous evaluation cultivate a culture of learning. Teams can use evaluation to grow from both achievements and setbacks, resulting in more refined procedures for subsequent endeavours (Argyris et al; 1978) and

this should be done by engaging including stakeholders in the evaluation process to increase the project's ownership and relevance, which will improve results and garner support from the community (Fetterman and Wandersman, 2005).

Respondents were further asked on strategies used to ensure effective coordination and communication among WDC, CDFC and other stakeholders. Respondents stated that various measures were put in place to guarantee efficient coordination and communication among various stakeholders. Measures such as regular meetings and ensure to define clearly roles and responsibilities for each stakeholder to avoid confusion and ensure accountability. Other measures included communication protocols such as receiving an official communicate from the WDCs to the Council through their Chairpersons and vise-versa. Other strategies to ensure effective coordination included progress reports, feedback mechanisms through formal writing or through social media platforms like WhatsApp to allow stakeholders voice their thoughts and suggestions, in order to enhance collaboration.

### **5.10 Key challenges in the project cycle management**

Community projects provided as realistic examples of how PCM can be applied in real-world circumstances. Community projects under CDF generally involve local stakeholders and addresses specific community needs, making them important case studies for finding gaps and issues within the PCM framework. The study identified challenges and gaps in the PCM process by looking at CDF Community projects carried out in Chipata district which manifested at various stages:

#### **5.10.1 Project Identification**

A lack of thorough needs assessments of Community projects frequently resulted in a mismatch between project goals and community needs. One of the challenges identified during data collection was lack of community engagement.

Most respondents asked, expressed high levels of dissatisfaction with community engagement in project identification process. Respondents expressed that most of the engagement were more on formalities rather than genuine engagement.

Even though it is difficult to fully engage the community due to different community members with different interests and levels of participation, it is still important that the community is engaged for purposes of project ownership and sustainability. Community involvement is a vital component of successful community initiatives. It involves the active participation of community members in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of projects that affect their lives. When community engagement is insufficient, various issues might occur, impacting the effectiveness and sustainability of these activities.

#### **5.10.2 Reduced Relevance and Effectiveness**

One key difficulty coming from a lack of community interaction is the possibility for programs to become obsolete or ineffectual. Without participation from community members, project planners may not completely understand the requirements, interests, and cultural settings of the population they want to serve. This gap can lead to initiatives that do not address genuine concerns or resonate with the target

audience. Research has indicated that projects developed without community engagement generally fail to achieve their desired goals (Wanjui, 2023).

#### **5.10.3 *Diminished Credibility and Trust***

Lack of community involvement in decision-making processes can result in a declining confidence in project managers and outside groups working on the project. Future partnerships may be hampered by this lack of trust, and project implementers may find it challenging to rally support from community members for other initiatives.

Research indicates that regular participation and openness foster trust; when these components are absent, project motivations are seen with greater mistrust (Pinto et al; 2021).

#### **5.10.4 *Limited Resource Mobilization***

In many cases, community involvement is essential to mobilizing resources, including human and financial ones. Community members may be less inclined to provide their time, expertise, or money to the project if they feel left out of the process. This restriction may lead to a lack of resources for sustainability and implementation (Friedman & Kahn, 2019). Communities that are actively involved are more likely to fund initiatives that they have influenced.

#### **5.10.5 *Increased Resistance to Change***

Community members may become resistant to suggested interventions or changes as a result of a lack of involvement. Regardless of the possible advantages of a project, people may actively resist it if they believe that decisions are being forced upon them without their knowledge or agreement (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2011). Passive non-compliance or public protests are two ways that resistance might appear. This is one typical issue that came out especially on presidential directives on projects under the 2023 Constituency Development Fund cycle in which certain projects in constituencies were imposed on people.

### **5.11 Project Implementation**

Challenges such as resource allocation issues or inadequate training and funding for the Ward Development Committees was identified as one of the challenges that hindered effective execution. Studies indicated satisfaction by the people with the massive increase of the Constituency Development Fund, both in scope but also in amount. This had directly impacted positively on several issues in communities. However, this comes without some challenges;

#### **5.11.1 *Delayed disbursement of funds***

Community members expressed dissatisfaction with the way these funds were released. Some CDF funds meant for a particular year's implementation were sometimes released in the last quarter of the year, a thing which made it impossible to complete projects within the cycle. Funding delays for community projects could seriously impede the advancement and efficacy of programs meant to enhance local conditions. Bureaucratic procedures, intricate application criteria, and the inherent unpredictability of grant cycles are frequently the causes of these delays.

#### **5.11.2 *Lack of Financial Support to the WDCs***

Other challenges in project implementation relates to lack of financial support to the Ward Development Committees.

A crucial component of local administration and development is community project management,

especially with the emphasis of decentralisation where Ward Development Committees (WDCs) are essential. Usually, these committees are in charge of determining the needs of the community, organizing projects, and supervising ward-level execution. Securing sufficient financial backing to properly fulfil their mandates is one of the major obstacles to overcome. WDCs support local development activities by involving stakeholders, and making sure that projects are in line with community interests. These committees' ability to effectively mobilize the community and engage stakeholders in project identification, prioritizing, and monitoring is primarily dependent on the support provided. The study, however, discovered that WDCs are not adequately supported financially to lead their communities in the project cycle management process of CDF Community projects. Most zonal representatives are made to walk long distances in order to engage far distant residents in their zones in order to get their input, but also to involve them. This has been a challenge as the WDCs work on voluntary basis and are not paid anything.

### ***5.11.3 Proposed strategies and solutions to the identified challenges***

Taking part in lobbying campaigns to raise government funding for local development projects may aid in obtaining steadier funding for the WDCs. Further, encouraging WDCs to explore various funding avenues—such as crowdfunding platforms or social enterprises—can reduce reliance on traditional sources.

## **5.8 Partisan Influence in CDF project identification process**

Another challenge identified in CDF Community project management was Political Partisan influence. Government funding for development projects is distributed directly to local constituencies through the Constituency Development Fund (CDF). Although the goal of CDF is to enhance service delivery and empower local communities; partisan politics can have a significant impact on the selection and distribution of projects.

Projects that benefit their voters or political allies, who are likely to back them in subsequent elections, are frequently given top priority by MPs. As a result, resources are distributed according to political allegiance rather than the needs of the society. One example of how electoral concerns might trump real developmental objectives is the tendency for MPs to dramatically boost project funding during election years in an attempt to win votes.

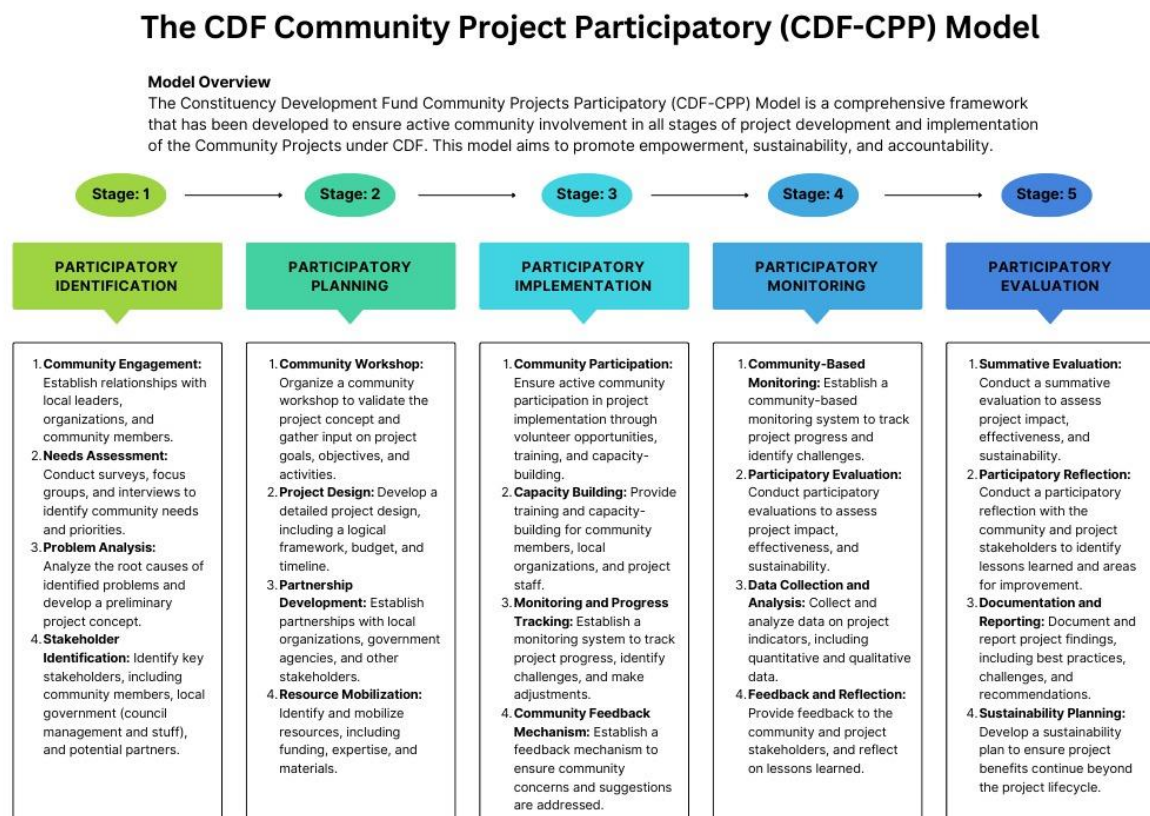
Accountability issues are brought up by MPs' participation in both legislative and executive duties pertaining to CDF. These findings related to what Asanga established in studying community project management in Local Authorities in Cameroon (2007). Asanga established that one of the risks involved in project management was poor choice of projects based on political biasness. He highlighted that it is typical for politicians to select a project for execution only on the basis of political factors, ignoring important factors like participation of all stakeholders in the selection of project options, reduction of potential negative effects on certain stakeholders as a result of the project, Finding possible disputes between interested parties and figuring out how to settle them determining the methods in which project stakeholders can contribute (Asanga *et al*; 2007).

Establishing explicit, unambiguous project identification rules is crucial to reducing partisan influence.



These guidelines ought to specify project selection criteria that are based on unbiased measurements such demographic information, economic impact studies, and assessments of community needs. Stakeholders can guarantee that projects are selected on the basis of merit by depending on empirical data rather than political connections. This can also be done by reducing the number a member of parliament is supposed to appoint to sit on the Constituency Development Fund Committee.

## 5.12 The Constituency Development Fund Community Project Participatory (CDF-CPP) Model



**Figure 4 CDF-CPP Model**

The Researcher has proposed Constituency Development Fund Community Project Participatory (CDF-CPP) Model as a comprehensive framework that aims to ensure active community involvement in every phase of project development and implementation. The Model is designed to foster empowerment, sustainability, and accountability by grounding project activities in the local context and leveraging community knowledge as emphasized by Arnstein, 1969 and Chambers, 1997.

A wealth of literature supports the use of participatory approaches in community development. Arnstein's (1969) "Ladder of Citizen Participation" highlights varying degrees of citizen involvement, emphasizing the value of genuine power-sharing over tokenism. Chambers (1997) advocates participatory rural appraisal methods that integrate local knowledge into development processes. Cornwall (2008) further argues that effective participation requires context-sensitive models that

empower communities. CDF-CPP Model could be used to bridge the gap in the implementation of Community Projects under CDF in Chipata City Council and possibly across the country.

Additionally, Fetterman et al. (1996) discuss empowerment evaluation as a means to build local capacity and ensure accountability through participatory monitoring and evaluation. These theoretical foundations validate the multi-staged approach of the CDF-CPP Model, ensuring interventions are not only effective but also owned by the community.

### ***5.12.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE STAGES OF THE CDF-CPP MODEL***

#### **Stage 1: Participatory Identification**

##### **A. Community Engagement:**

1. Establishing trust and rapport with community members, local leaders, and organizations is critical. This step involves initiating dialogue, attending local meetings, and building partnerships that lay the foundation for an inclusive project. It creates a mutual understanding of shared goals and fosters long-term relationships at Ward and Constituency levels.
2. This aligns with Arnstein's (1969) call for meaningful citizen involvement and Chambers' (1997) emphasis on the importance of local engagement.

##### **B. Needs Assessment:**

1. Conduct comprehensive surveys, focus groups, and interviews to gather data on the community's most pressing needs. This assessment should capture diverse perspectives to ensure that the project addresses the true priorities of the community. Data collection methods must be culturally appropriate and sensitive to local contexts.
2. Chambers (1997) stresses the value of participatory methods that empower community members to voice their needs.

##### **C. Problem Analysis:**

1. Analyze the underlying causes of the identified problems by engaging with various community stakeholders especially such as WDCs, Community Based formations, Faith Based Organizations (CBOs), extension Officers, traditional leaders among others. This analysis should include both qualitative insights and quantitative data to form a robust preliminary project concept. Tools such as root cause analysis or participatory mapping can be used.
2. Cornwall (2008) highlights that understanding the context and root causes is essential for designing relevant interventions.



## **D. Stakeholder Identification:**

1. Identify all relevant stakeholders, including community groups, local authorities, and potential partners. This mapping ensures that all voices are represented and that the project is supported by those who will be impacted by it. Special attention should be paid to marginalized groups to prevent exclusion.
2. Fetterman et al. (1996) underscore the importance of engaging all stakeholders to foster a sense of ownership and accountability.

## **Stage 2: Participatory Planning**

### **A. Community Workshop:**

1. Organize workshops where community members can discuss and validate the preliminary project concept. These workshops should use participatory tools (e.g., brainstorming sessions, group discussions) to refine project goals, objectives, and activities. Workshops also serve as platforms for conflict resolution and consensus building.
2. Chambers (1997) and Cornwall (2008) advocate for interactive sessions that allow for a diverse range of inputs, ensuring that planning is grounded in local realities.

### **B. Project Design:**

1. Develop a detailed project design that includes a logical framework, clear objectives, a detailed budget, and a realistic timeline. The design phase should integrate community feedback and be flexible enough to adjust to emerging needs. Use visual aids like flowcharts and matrices to outline processes and outcomes.
2. Fetterman et al. (1996) suggest that a well-structured project design enhances clarity and guides successful implementation.

### **C. Partnership Development:**

1. Establish strategic partnerships with local organizations, government agencies, and other stakeholders. This involves formalizing roles and responsibilities, signing memoranda of understanding, and ensuring that all partners are committed to the project's goals.
2. Cornwall (2008) highlights that strong partnerships increase resource availability and enhance project credibility.

### **D. Resource Mobilization:**

1. Identify and secure the necessary resources—financial, human, and material—required to execute the project. This step may include applying for grants, engaging local businesses, and organizing community fundraising initiatives.
2. Bamberger et al. (2012) emphasize that resource mobilization is a critical step to ensure the feasibility and sustainability of community projects.

## **Stage 3: Participatory Implementation**

### **A. Community Participation:**

1. Actively involve community members in the day-to-day implementation of the project. This can be achieved through volunteer programs, local committees, or direct involvement in project activities. The approach ensures that the community not only benefits from but also contributes to the project's success.
2. Wandersman et al. (2008) argue that active participation is crucial for fostering a sense of community ownership.

### **B. Capacity Building:**

1. Provide ongoing training and skill development opportunities for community members and local organizations. Workshops, seminars, and on-the-job training sessions can enhance local capacity, ensuring that community members are well-equipped to manage and sustain project activities.
2. Chambers (1997) notes that capacity building is vital for empowering communities to take control of their development processes.

### **C. Monitoring and Progress Tracking:**

1. Establish a robust monitoring system that uses performance indicators, dashboards, and regular check-ins to track progress. This system should be participatory, allowing community members to contribute to the data collection and analysis processes.
2. Bamberger et al. (2012) highlight that continuous monitoring enables timely adjustments and improves overall project outcomes.

### **D. Community Feedback Mechanism:**

1. Create formal and informal channels (such as community meetings, suggestion boxes, and digital platforms) for collecting and addressing feedback. This ensures that community concerns are promptly addressed and that the project remains responsive to local needs.
2. Fetterman et al. (1996) emphasize that effective feedback loops are essential for maintaining accountability and transparency.

## **Stage 4: Participatory Monitoring**

### **A. Community-Based Monitoring:**

1. Empower community members to lead monitoring activities. Train local monitors in data collection techniques and use simple tools (like mobile surveys or participatory mapping) to track progress. This approach not only builds local capacity but also enhances the credibility of the monitoring process.
2. Wandersman et al. (2008) stress that community-based monitoring is fundamental for ensuring that the process reflects local realities.



## **B. Participatory Evaluation:**

1. Involve community stakeholders directly in evaluating the project's impact. Use participatory evaluation methods such as focus groups, storytelling, and community scorecards to gather qualitative insights that complement quantitative data.
2. Fetterman et al. (1996) argue that participatory evaluation promotes transparency and mutual learning between project implementers and the community.

## **C. Data Collection and Analysis:**

1. Systematically collect both qualitative and quantitative data on project indicators. Data collection should be structured around established benchmarks and involve community input. Analysis sessions can be held with stakeholders to interpret findings and identify areas for improvement.
2. Patton (2008) suggests that rigorous data collection and analysis are indispensable for evidence-based decision-making in community projects.

## **D. Feedback and Reflection:**

1. Organize regular reflection sessions and community meetings to discuss progress, challenges, and lessons learned. This iterative process enables continuous improvement and fosters a culture of openness and shared learning.
2. Cornwall (2008) maintains that reflection and feedback are critical for adapting project strategies to better meet community needs.

## **Stage 5: Participatory Evaluation**

### **A. Summative Evaluation:**

1. Conduct a comprehensive Summative evaluation at the end of the project to assess its overall impact, effectiveness, and sustainability. This should compare the initial objectives with actual outcomes using both qualitative and quantitative metrics.
2. Fetterman et al. (1996) indicate that Summative evaluation provides a clear measure of success and areas needing improvement.

### **B. Participatory Reflection:**

1. Facilitate a reflective process that includes all project stakeholders. This involves reviewing successes, challenges, and unexpected outcomes, and documenting lessons learned that can inform future initiatives.
2. Chambers (1997) underscores that participatory reflection helps to democratize the evaluation process and builds collective wisdom.



**C. Documentation and Reporting:**

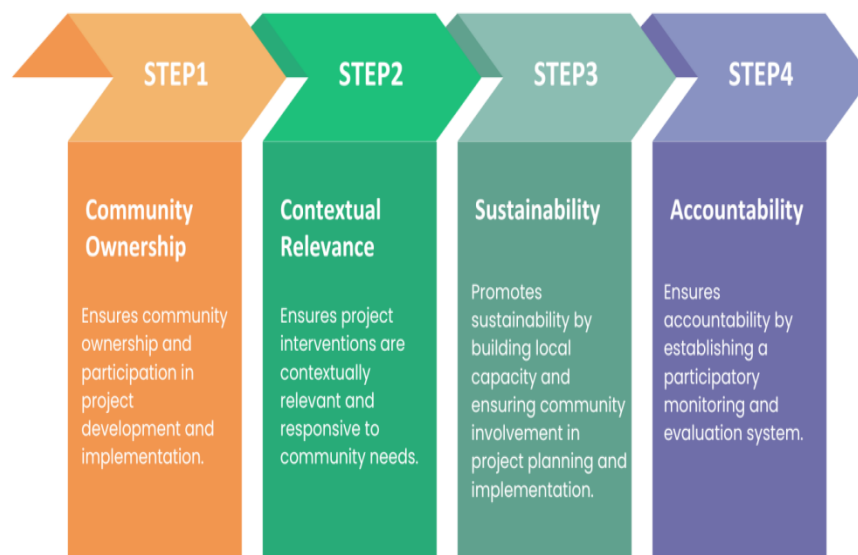
1. Produce detailed reports and case studies that document project processes, outcomes, and lessons learned. This documentation should be shared widely with the community, donors, and other stakeholders to promote transparency and facilitate knowledge transfer.
2. Arnstein (1969) and Patton (2008) both emphasize the importance of thorough documentation for accountability and future planning.

**D. Sustainability Planning:**

1. Develop a clear sustainability plan to ensure that the benefits of the project continue long after its conclusion. This involves strategies for continued resource mobilization, capacity building, and integrating project practices into local governance structures.
2. Cornwall (2008) argues that sustainability planning is key to embedding project benefits into the fabric of the community.

**5.12.2 BENEFITS OF THE CDF- CPP MODEL**

## Benefits of the CPP Model

**Figure 5 BENEFITS OF THE CDF- CPP MODEL**



## **A. Community Ownership:**

1. By involving community members in every phase—from identification to evaluation—the CPP model fosters a strong sense of ownership. This engagement increases the likelihood that community members will continue to support and sustain project initiatives over time.
2. Arnstein (1969) posits that genuine participation enhances community empowerment and ownership.

## **B. Contextual Relevance:**

1. Projects designed with active community input are more likely to be tailored to the specific cultural, social, and economic contexts of the community. This ensures that interventions are practical, acceptable, and effective in addressing local needs.
2. Chambers (1997) highlights that locally driven projects are better aligned with community priorities.

## **B. Sustainability:**

1. The model's emphasis on capacity building and participatory planning promotes long-term sustainability. As community members gain skills and confidence, they are more capable of maintaining and scaling project initiatives independently.
2. Cornwall (2008) and Fetterman et al. (1996) both stress that sustainable projects rely on strong local capacity and ownership.

## **C. Accountability:**

1. Continuous monitoring and evaluation, combined with active community feedback, ensure that the project remains accountable to those it serves. Transparent processes build trust and allow for corrective actions when necessary.
2. Fetterman et al. (1996) assert that participatory monitoring systems are crucial for maintaining transparency and accountability throughout the project lifecycle.

## **CHAPTER SIX CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **6.1 Introduction**

Based on the findings in Chipata district regarding the examination of Project Cycle Management in the Community Projects under the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in Zambia: Case study of Chipata District, this chapter offers the study's recommendations and conclusions. Conclusions and recommendations from this study can help policy makers and key stakeholders in the Ministry of Local Government in addressing bottle necks within CDF Community projects in applying project cycle management principles. The study's conclusions will offer a kind of checklist outlining the necessary to be taken to improve management of Community Projects under the Constituency Development Fund. Based on the study's goals, the condensed results and analysis of this investigation have been combined and shown below:

### **6.2 Project Cycle Management (PCM) principles and methodologies in Community Projects under CDF**

Results from the study indicated that majority of participants in the area of study were not very accustomed with Project Cycle Management, rather indicated their familiarity with the project management, which comprised organizing, leading, and overseeing the project at every phase. Respondents further highlighted that most of the projects covered under the constituency development fund follow project management principles and methodologies (such as project identification, project design, project implementation, M & E, feedback loop and sustainability). Respondents further expressed the need for more capacity building for the WDC and CDFC members in order to respond to some identified challenges in Community Projects under CDF.

### **6.3 Community Participation in Project Management and Identification**

Development cannot be effective unless beneficiary communities are involved, according to Craig & Mayo (1995). From project identification and selection to project execution, communities are expected to be involved in CDF community project management at every level. The study indicated that local communities do not actively participate in the processes of project identification, implementation, and monitoring.

Even though formalities indicated that WDCs were involved, most expressed that the processes were mainly a rubber stamping as Presidential and other directives on project choice and expenditure of CDF were practiced and this, according to most respondents during the study goes against the spirit of decentralization that CDF is meant to promote. It was also noted that some politicians feel like CDF is their money while other respondents expressed concerns about political interference in CDF projects, particularly from opposition MPs who may have intentions to sabotage government efforts and treat CDF as though it were their own money. Further, certain respondents noted that projects were approved more quickly in areas perceived as aligned with the local Member of Parliament's political party. On the other hand, CDF committees—particularly the constituency Member of Parliament (MP)—usually continue to hold a disproportionate amount of power when it comes to choosing and ranking projects (Chibomba 2013; Phiri 2016). 2013; JCTR (2019). Further reported numerous occasions in which the projects implemented differed from those recommended by the community, indicating a significant degree of influence from elected officials throughout the project selection phase. Respondents generally agreed that this occurred because no additional community input took place prior to project approval following the open meeting to identify projects. The finding that projects tended to be situated in areas where the local MP and the ward councillors enjoyed greater popularity was added to this.

Another related challenge which hindered community participation in project cycle management was presidential directives which very often superseded community submission. Respondents stated that even though some directives that comes through the ministry are justified, some are more imposed and didn't speak to real issues on the ground. As a result, initiatives that were initially chosen by WDCs or other local structures did not end up being implemented (Chibomba 2013). Over time, these processes are likely to fuel citizens' frustration with the CDF mandate and ultimately weaken institutional confidence and the social contract.

Several studies also show that MPs frequently twist the CDF narratives to suit their political goals and get support (Casey, 2021). As a result, CDF funding is misrepresented as the MP's personal funds or as having been obtained solely through the local MP's advocacy and intervention, rather than being a consistent and uniform distribution provided by the central government to all local governments.

#### **6.4 Challenges in CDF Community Projects Management**

This study noted that a lack of thorough needs assessments in Community project management frequently resulted in a mismatch between project goals and community needs. This is one of the challenges identified during this study. Most respondents asked, expressed high levels of dissatisfaction with community engagement in project identification process that most of the engagement are more on formalities rather than genuine engagement. Lack of Community Engagement can make Community Projects to become obsolete or ineffectual. Without participation from community people, project planners may not completely understand the requirements, interests, and cultural settings of the population they want to serve. Research has indicated that projects developed without community engagement generally fail to achieve their desired goals (Wanjui, 2023). Lack of community involvement in decision-making processes can also result in a decline in confidence from the community. Future partnerships may be hampered by this lack of trust, and project implementers may find it challenging to rally support from community members for other initiatives. Research indicates that regular participation and openness foster trust; when these components are absent, project motivations are seen with greater mistrust (Pinto et al; 2021).

Another challenge identified related to inadequate training and funding for the Ward Development Committees. Studies have indicated satisfaction by the people with the massive increase of the Constituency Development Fund, both in scope but also in amount. This has directly impacted positively on a number of issues in communities. However, this comes without some challenges such as delayed disbursement of funds and Lack of Financial Support to the WDCs. A crucial component of local administration and development is community project management, especially with the emphasis of decentralisation where Ward Development Committees (WDCs) are essential. Usually, these committees are in charge of determining the needs of the community, organizing projects, and supervising ward-level execution. Securing sufficient financial backing to properly fulfil their mandates is one of the major obstacles to overcome.

WDCs support local development activities by involving stakeholders and making sure that projects are in line with community interests. These committees' ability to effectively mobilize the community and engage stakeholders in project identification, prioritizing, and monitoring is primarily dependent on the support provided. The study, however, discovered that WDCs are not adequately supported financially to lead their communities in the project cycle management process of CDF Community projects.

Most zonal representatives are made to walk long distances in order to engage far distant residents in their zones in order to get their input, but also to involve them. This has been a challenge as the WDCs work on voluntary basis and are not paid anything. Another challenge identified in CDF Community project management is Partisan influence. Government funding for development projects is distributed directly to local constituencies through the Constituency Development Fund (CDF).

Although the goal of CDFs is to enhance service delivery and empower local communities, partisan politics can have a significant impact on the selection and distribution of projects. Projects that benefit their voters or political allies, who are likely to back them in subsequent elections, are frequently given



top priority by MPs. As a result, resources are distributed according to political allegiance rather than the needs of the society.

Chipata District's Constituency Development Fund has shown promise in promoting favourable community development outcomes, especially in the fields of social services and infrastructure. However, difficulties with planning, execution, monitoring, and governance limit the efficacy of project cycle management in reaching these goals. The impact of CDF-funded projects would be greatly increased if these issues were resolved through increased community involvement, better capacity-building, more robust monitoring and evaluation systems, and improved governance procedures. In the end, a more open, responsible, and inclusive approach to PCM would guarantee that the CDF achieves its potential as a game-changing instrument for Zambian community development.

### **6.5 Solution to some identified Challenges**

An establishment of a genuine involvement of grass root stakeholders and clear communication protocols, including regular meetings, updates, and a shared project management platform to enhance transparency and coordination among all the concerned stakeholders can bring effectiveness in CDF Community Projects. Building community trust is a crucial to overcoming challenges related to negligence from community members. Transparent communication regarding the ways in which community involvement may impact decision-making processes can help achieve this. Other strategies include creating accessible engagement opportunities. This entails offering a variety of participation avenues, including in-person meetings, and interactive platforms that accommodate varying tastes and skill levels.

In the case of Community participation and project identification, establishing explicit, unambiguous project identification rules is crucial to reducing partisan influence. These guidelines ought to specify project selection criteria that are based on unbiased measurements. Stakeholders can guarantee that projects are selected on the basis of merit by depending on empirical data rather than political connections. This can also be done by reducing the number a member of parliament is supposed to appoint to sit on the Constituency Development Fund Committee.

### **6.6 Conclusion**

The analysis of Project Cycle Management (PCM) in community projects funded by the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in Chipata District revealed both achievements and difficulties, providing important information about the capabilities and constraints of PCM in relation to community development programs. The study revealed that Infrastructure development has benefited from the CDF, as seen by projects concentrating on rural infrastructure, healthcare, and education that have significantly increased community access to basic services.

Although the CDF seeks to include local communities in decision-making, the study points out that the planning stage has limitations. Local political processes can occasionally eclipse the true needs of the community, and there are cases of poor community engagement despite efforts to consult them. The planning process might be made more relevant and effective by implementing clearer, more inclusive procedures for assigning project priorities and including a variety of stakeholders.

One major issue noted in the case study was the delay in funding distribution, which caused projects to be implemented slowly. Capacity limitations at the local level, such as a lack of technical know-how, project management experience, and administrative resources, make these delays worse. Providing training and technical assistance to strengthen local authorities would improve their capacity to effectively oversee projects. Further, according to the study, a crucial weakness identified in the project cycle of community projects under CDF was absence of strong monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems. It is challenging to keep tabs on project developments and make sure that money is being spent wisely without efficient monitoring. It is more difficult to evaluate the long-term effects of CDF programs and draw lessons from the past when there are inconsistent evaluations. Enhancing project results and guaranteeing accountability would need strengthening M&E systems.

### **6.7 Recommendations**

Departing from the conclusion, the study recommends for policy implications to address the stated challenges:

- 1) Policymakers within the ministry of Local Government should seriously consider the financial and capacity building needs of the Ward Development Committees and the Constituency Development Committees in project cycle management in order for them to effectively manage projects at local level;
- 2) Local Authorities to ensure effective Monitoring and Evaluation of Community Projects under CDF and this can be done by establishing a systems to track Community projects' progress on a regular basis. This guarantees that money is being spent effectively and that any problems can be resolved quickly. Through evaluation the Local Authority can make an impact assessment by routinely evaluating how CDF programs affect society, the economy, and the environment. This will assist in gauging the accomplishment of projects and pinpointing areas where future funding should be improved;
- 3) Set up a feedback mechanism by establishing channels for citizens to offer comments on finished projects. This feedback loop makes it easier to spot flaws and modify future funding distributions appropriately;
- 4) The WDCs and CDFCs to ensure inclusive fund distribution by providing advantages to underserved groups, including women, young people, people with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups; think about designating a certain percentage of the funds for initiatives that enhance the quality of life for these groups. These Local governance structures can further promote equity in resource Allocation by putting in place safeguards against an excessive concentration of capital in particular areas or industries. Funds ought to be allocated fairly, taking into account demands, poverty levels, and population;
- 5) The Local Authorities to strengthen digital systems by putting in place computerized payment systems to track and distribute CDF funds meant for Community Projects. This guarantees accurate documentation of financial transfers, improves accountability, and cuts down on delays; and
- 6) Further, the Local Authority must train their officers handling finances under CDF in financial management to make sure local fund managers possess the necessary financial expertise. Effective and responsible management of finances will be ensured by regular training and capacity-

building for financial managers.

### **6.8 Areas of further Research**

A comprehensive technique, Project Cycle Management (PCM) includes project planning, execution, monitoring, assessment, and closing. Even though PCM is a well-established discipline, there are a number of areas where more research could improve knowledge, efficacy, and the use of PCM techniques. The following are some possible topics for more project cycle management research:

- 1. Integration of Sustainability into PCM:** Under this area further research can be done in;
  - i. Long-Term Sustainability: Studies on how to better incorporate environmental, social, and economic aspects of sustainability into all phases of a project's lifecycle, from design to evaluation.
  - ii. Climate Resilience: Examining how PCM frameworks, particularly for projects in sensitive areas, might include resilience-building techniques and adaption methods for climate change.
  - iii. Sustainable Financing Models: Analysing strategies to guarantee that projects are both financially feasible throughout and after their implementation phase.
  
- 2. Risk Management in PCM:** Under this area further research can be done in;
  - i. Frameworks for Dynamic Risk Management: Studies on risk management strategies that can adjust to quickly changing conditions, particularly in projects affected by outside variables like political unpredictability, changes in the economy, or natural disasters.
  - ii. Investigating methods and resources to handle the peculiar dangers that international and cross-cultural initiatives encounter, especially in conflict zones or regions with inadequate governance systems, is known as risk mitigation in international development projects.
  - iii. Examining how PCM may incorporate resilience thinking into its risk management procedure to make sure that projects are built to endure and adjust to unforeseen obstacles is known as resilience-based risk management.
  
- 3. Agile and Adaptive Project Management Approaches:** Under this area the focus of the study can be;
  - i. Agile Methodologies in PCM: Investigating the potential for incorporating agile methodologies (typically used in software development) into PCM, particularly in sectors where projects face a lot of uncertainty and need flexibility.
  - ii. Hybrid Models of PCM: Researching hybrid models that combine traditional project management techniques with more adaptive and flexible methods to respond to complex and dynamic environments.
  - iii. Cross-Sectoral Agile Practices: Studying how agile project management could work across sectors like healthcare, education, infrastructure, and public administration, where project scope and goals often change based on evolving circumstances.



## CONCLUSION

This research investigated the application of Project Cycle Management (PCM) principles in managing Constituency Development Fund (CDF)-supported community projects in Chipata District, Zambia. The study highlighted the critical role PCM plays in improving project efficiency, transparency, and accountability. While CDF remains a vital tool for promoting grassroots development, the findings revealed significant gaps in governance structures, community participation, and capacity for effective project management. Challenges such as political interference, lack of coordination among key stakeholders, and inadequate monitoring and evaluation were identified as major obstacles.

To address these issues, the research emphasized the need for adopting PCM tools such as the Logical Framework Approach (LFA), Results-Based Management (RBM), and robust Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) frameworks. Strengthening governance structures and ensuring stakeholder accountability were identified as essential steps for improving project outcomes. Capacity-building initiatives for Ward Development Committees (WDCs) and enhanced community involvement are crucial for fostering a sense of ownership and ensuring project sustainability.

In conclusion, integrating PCM principles across all stages of project implementation can significantly enhance the effectiveness of CDF-funded projects. By addressing the challenges identified and adopting the proposed strategies, stakeholders can ensure that CDF projects achieve their intended developmental impact and contribute to sustainable community development in Zambia.

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## **Annex 1: Questionnaire one**

**Thank you for participating in this key informant interview. Your input is valuable in improving the implementation of Community Development Fund (CDF) projects through effective Project Cycle Management (PCM). Please feel free to share your thoughts and experiences.**

### **Section 1: PCM Knowledge and Understanding**

1. What is your understanding of Project Cycle Management (PCM), and how does it relate to CDF community projects?

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2. How familiar are you with the PCM guidelines and tools used in CDF project implementation?

.....

.....

3. How do you currently support WDC, CDFC in PCM-related activities?

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.....

### **Section 2: Project Identification and Design**

1. How do you currently assist WDC, CDFC in identifying and prioritizing project ideas for CDF funding?

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.....

.....

2. What role do you play in ensuring that project designs align with community needs and CDF objectives?

.....

.....

3. How do you facilitate stakeholder engagement and participation in project design and implementation?

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.....

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### **Section 3: Project Implementation and Monitoring**

1. What challenges do you face in supporting WDC, CDFC in project implementation, and how do you overcome them?

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.....

2. How do you currently monitor project progress, and what tools or methods do you use?

.....  
.....

3. How do you ensure that project activities align with project objectives and goals?

.....  
.....

### **Section 4: Project Evaluation and Closure**

1. What criteria do you use to evaluate the success of CDF projects in your district/constituency/ward?

.....  
.....

2. How do you currently conduct project evaluations, and what methods do you use?

.....  
.....  
.....

3. What are the common challenges you face during project closure, and how do you address them?

.....  
.....

### **Section 5: PCM Capacity Building and Support**

1. What training or capacity-building programs have you received on PCM, and how have they helped?

.....  
.....

2. What additional support or resources do you need to improve your PCM skills and knowledge?

.....  
.....

3. How do you currently access technical assistance or guidance on PCM, and how effective is it?



.....

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### **Section 6: Collaboration and Coordination**

1. How do you currently collaborate with other stakeholders, such as local government, NGOs, and private sector entities, in PCM-related activities?

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2. What strategies do you use to ensure effective coordination and communication among WDC, CDFC, DCDF, and other stakeholders?

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.....

3. How do you address conflicts or issues that arise during project implementation?

.....

.....

### **Conclusion:**

Thank you for your valuable insights and contributions to this key informant interview. Your input will help improve the effectiveness of PCM in implementing CDF community projects.

**Please help review this structured key informant interviews questionnaire for Council Management and Technical Groups who support Ward Development Committees (WDC), Constituency Development Fund Committees (CDFC), and District Constituency Development Committees (DCDF) on Project Cycle Management (PCM) under CDF Community Projects:**

Annex 2B: KII for Technocrats (Structured Questionnaire)

### **Section 1: Demographic Information**

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Position: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Department/Unit: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Years of experience: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Section 2: PCM Knowledge and Understanding**

1. How would you rate your understanding of Project Cycle Management (PCM)?  
(Scale: 1-4, 1. Poor – 2. Fair – 3. Good – 4. Very good – 5. Excellent)

.....



2. Have you received training on PCM? (Yes/No)
3. How familiar are you with the PCM guidelines and tools used in CDF project implementation? (Scale: (Scale: 1-5, where 1= Not familiar 2=limited, 3=Moderate, 4=adequate 5=extensive)

.....

### Section 3: Project Identification and Design

1. How often do you assist WDC, CDFC, and DCDF in identifying and prioritizing project ideas for CDF funding? (Scale: 1-5, where 1=rarely and 5=frequently)

Never – Rarely – Sometimes – Always – Often

2. What role do you play in ensuring that project designs align with community needs and CDF objectives? (Check all that apply)

- Facilitating community engagement
- Conducting needs assessments
- Providing technical guidance
- Other (please specify)

3. How do you ensure stakeholder engagement and participation in project design and implementation? (Check all that apply)

- Public meetings
- Community surveys
- Focus groups
- Other (please specify)

### Section 4: Project Implementation and Monitoring

1. How often do you monitor project progress? (Scale: 1-5, where 1=rarely and 5=frequently)

2. What tools or methods do you use to monitor project progress? (Check all that apply)

- Project management software
- Regular meetings with WDC, CDFC, and DCDF
- Site visits
- Other (please specify)

3. How do you ensure that project activities align with project objectives and goals?





(Check all that apply)

- Regular progress reports
- Performance monitoring
- Mid-term evaluations
- Other (please specify)

## Section 5: Project Evaluation and Closure

1. How often do you conduct project evaluations? (Scale: 1-5, where 1=rarely and 5=frequently)

2. What methods do you use to conduct project evaluations? (Check all that apply)

- Surveys
- Focus groups
- Case studies
- Other (please specify)

3. What are the common challenges you face during project closure, and how do you address them? (Check all that apply)

- Ensuring project sustainability
- Managing project assets
- Documenting lessons learned
- Other (please specify)

## Section 6: PCM Capacity Building and Support

1. What training or capacity-building programs have you received on PCM? (Check all that apply)

- Workshops
- Training sessions
- Mentorship programs
- Other (please specify)

2. What additional support or resources do you need to improve your PCM skills and knowledge? (Check all that apply)

- Technical assistance



- Training programs
- Guidelines and tools
- Other (please specify)

3. How do you currently access technical assistance or guidance on PCM, and how effective is it? (Scale: 1-5, where 1=not effective and 5=very effective)

## **Section 7: Collaboration and Coordination**

1. How often do you collaborate with other stakeholders, such as local government, NGOs, and private sector entities, in PCM-related activities? (Scale: 1-5, where 1=rarely and 5=frequently)

2. What strategies do you use to ensure effective coordination and communication among WDC, CDFC, DCDF, and other stakeholders? (Check all that apply)

- Regular meetings
- Joint planning sessions
- Communication protocols
- Other (please specify)

3. How do you address conflicts or issues that arise during project implementation? (Check all that apply)

- Mediation
- Negotiation
- Problem-solving
- Other (please specify)

## **Conclusion:**

Thank you for your valuable insights and contributions to this key informant interview. Your input will help improve the effectiveness of PCM in implementing CDF community projects.