Int. j. adv. multidisc. res. stud. 2026; 6(1):393-402

Received: 19-11-2025
Accepted: 29-12-2025

International Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary Research and Studies

ISSN: 2583-049X

Examining Citizen Engagement in Participatory Constituency Development Funds: Case Study of the Mbala CDF Municipal Council

[1] Beltrand Hamweene Lubinga, [2] Dr. Kelvin Chibomba

[1] School of Humanities, Information and Communications University and, Zambia Research and Development Center, Lusaka, Zambia

[2] Department of Social Research, Information and Communications University and, Zambia Research and Development Center, Lusaka, Zambia

DOI: https://doi.org/10.62225/2583049X.2026.6.1.5564

Corresponding Author: **Beltrand Hamweene Lubinga**

Abstract

This study examines citizen engagement in Participatory Community Development Funds (PCDFs), focusing specifically on the Mbala Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in Zambia. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, data were collected from 50 respondents, revealing that 74% were aware of the CDF, yet only 10% understood its mechanisms very well. Key barriers to participation included lack of awareness (40%), political influence (24%), and socio-economic disparities. The findings indicated significant positive correlations between perceived transparency and community satisfaction ($\rho = 0.878$, $p < .001$). Workshops (30%) and surveys (20%) emerged as the most effective engagement methods, while traditional methods like notice boards were deemed ineffective (0% effectiveness rating). The study underscores the necessity for targeted awareness campaigns and inclusive participatory mechanisms to enhance citizen involvement and ensure that development initiatives align with community needs.

Keywords: Citizen Engagement, Participatory Development, Community Empowerment

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Citizen engagement in Participatory Constituency Development Funds (PCDFs) is an important approach to improve community development. Traditionally, decisions about community needs were made by outside authorities without local input, leading to projects that often missed the mark and frustrated residents (Mansuri & Rao, 2013). PCDFs allow communities to have a say in how funds are used, helping them set their own priorities and fostering a sense of ownership. Engaging citizens in decision-making and project implementation is essential for making development efforts effective and sustainable. Engaged citizens are more likely to hold local leaders accountable, enhancing transparency and trust in governance processes (World Bank, 2023). However, many barriers still exist, especially for marginalized groups like women, youth, and low-income individuals. Barriers include economic challenges, lack of access to information, and cultural norms that discourage participation. For instance, socio-economic disparities significantly hinder broader involvement in PCDFs (Baiocchi *et al*., 2011). Technology can help improve communication and participation, but unequal access can worsen existing inequalities (Boulton *et al*., 2018). For example, while digital platforms can enhance engagement, only a small percentage of communities may have reliable access to these technologies.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The effectiveness of Participatory Constituency Development Funds (PCDFs) is significantly undermined by inadequate citizen engagement, particularly among marginalized groups. Despite the intent of PCDFs to empower communities by involving them in decision-making processes, many initiatives suffer from low participation rates, leading to a disconnect between development priorities and the actual needs of the community. Barriers such as socio-economic disparities, lack of access to information, and cultural norms often hinder meaningful participation, resulting in tokenistic engagement rather than

genuine involvement. Furthermore, the design and implementation of participatory mechanisms within PCDFs frequently lack the necessary inclusivity and responsiveness, which diminishes community ownership and accountability (Baiocchi & Ganuza, 2017). Without a thorough assessment of these challenges, efforts to enhance citizen engagement in PCDFs risk perpetuating cycles of disempowerment and ineffective governance, ultimately undermining the potential for sustainable community development (World Bank, 2023).

1.3 Objective

1.3.1 General Objective

1. To examine the level of citizen engagement in participatory Constituency development funds.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives of the Study

1. To establish the current levels and types of awareness among citizens regarding participatory Constituency development funds.
2. To Examine the effects of CDF towards the community.
3. To Assess different methods used by communities to engage citizens.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What is the current level or types of awareness among citizens about participatory community development funds?
2. What are the effects of Constituency Development Funds to the citizens?
3. What strategies do communities currently employ to facilitate citizen participation?

1.5 Conceptual Framework

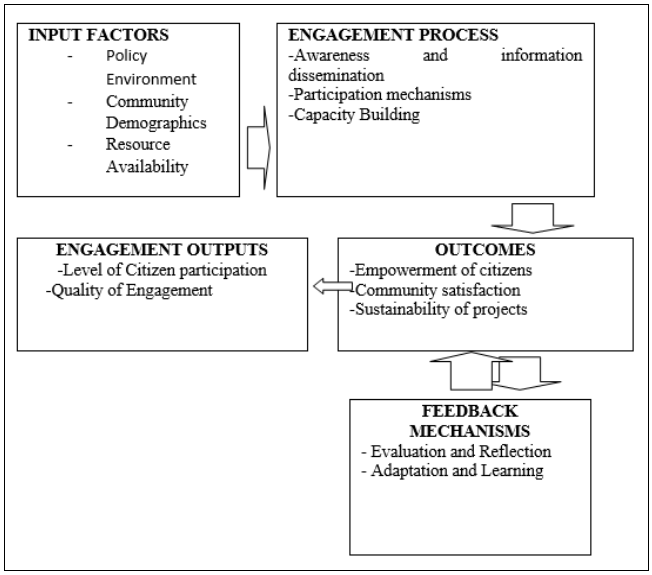


Fig 1.1: Represents an Integrative Approach for the Study

This table in figure 1.1. serves as a starting point for building a theoretical framework to examine the dynamics of citizen engagement in community development funds. Researchers can adapt and expand on these concepts based on the specific context and goals of their study.

Citizen engagement in Participatory Constituency Development Funds (PCDFs) is vital for ensuring that development projects meet local needs. The framework for understanding this engagement includes three key concepts:

Participatory Governance: This involves actively involving citizens in decision-making to improve transparency and accountability. Fung (2006) highlights that such participation empowers citizens to influence outcomes, fostering community ownership.

Social Capital: This refers to the networks and trust that enable cooperation among community members. High social capital encourages participation, while low social capital can create barriers, as noted by Baiocchi and Ganuza (2017).

Empowerment Theory: Rappaport (1987) explains that empowerment helps individuals gain control over their lives and advocate for their community's needs. Engaging citizens effectively can boost their confidence and willingness to participate in future initiatives (Mansuri & Rao, 2013).

Despite these benefits, barriers like socio-economic disparities and lack of access to information can limit participation, especially for marginalized groups.

Technology's Role: Digital tools can enhance communication and awareness of development initiatives (Boulton *et al*., 2018). However, unequal access to technology can worsen existing inequalities.

Design of Processes: Effective participatory processes must be inclusive and transparent. If citizens feel their input is ignored, they may disengage (Cornwall, 2008).

Evaluation of Engagement: A mix of quantitative and qualitative methods is necessary to assess citizen engagement, including participation rates and community feedback (Mansuri & Rao, 2013).

Context Matters: The success of citizen engagement depends on local social, political, and cultural factors (World Bank, 2023).

Role of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs): CSOs help promote engagement and accountability, supporting citizens in interacting with government (GPSA, 2023).

Feedback Importance: Integrating citizen feedback into decision-making builds trust and encourages future participation. When citizens see their input lead to changes, they are more likely to engage again (World Bank, 2023).

2. Literature Review

A literature review critically examines existing research on a specific topic, highlighting key studies, gaps in knowledge, and significant findings. Bryman and Burgess (1994) emphasize that conducting a literature review is essential for understanding the current landscape of research, as it informs future inquiries and contextualizes new studies within the broader academic discourse.

2.1 Awareness of Participatory Community Development Funds

Awareness of participatory Constituency development funds involves understanding their existence, objectives, and engagement processes. Informed citizens are more likely to participate actively, leading to better governance outcomes, while lack of awareness can result in resource underutilization and increased inequality (Warren, 2013). Socioeconomic factors significantly influence awareness, with wealthier individuals typically having better access to information. Education also plays a crucial role, as those with higher educational attainment are more adept at navigating bureaucratic processes (Kapur, 2018). Additionally, urban residents often have greater access to information compared to rural populations, who may rely on

local leaders, leading to potential misinformation (Rajasekaran, 2019). Government initiatives, such as MGNREGA, aim to enhance participatory development; however, many rural citizens remain uninformed about their rights (National Rural Livelihoods Mission, 2020). Gender disparities and caste dynamics further complicate awareness efforts, with marginalized groups facing systemic barriers (Kabeer, 2015; Ranjan & Singh, 2020). Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are vital in raising awareness and facilitating engagement, though their effectiveness varies (Bhasin, 2017).

2.2 Perceptions of Transparency and Accountability

Transparency is essential for effective fund management, enabling stakeholders to make informed decisions (Khan, 2017). However, many fund managers lack transparency, leading to mistrust among investors (Bollen, 2017). Research indicates that only a small percentage of investors feel adequately informed about fund managers' strategies (Investment Company Institute, 2019). Accountability ensures that fund managers are responsible for their actions, but complexities in fund management often obscure this accountability (Khan, 2017). To enhance transparency, fund managers should disclose clear information about their strategies and risks, while regulatory bodies must establish robust oversight mechanisms (Kimmel, 2013). Global examples, such as Germany, illustrate the challenges of maintaining transparency despite strong regulatory frameworks (Müller, 2020) [26]. In Ghana, unclear reporting practices contribute to skepticism among investors (Agyemang, 2018) [1], underscoring the need for improved transparency and accountability in fund management.

2.3 Methods for Citizen Engagement

Communities utilize various methods to engage citizens in participatory processes. Traditional public meetings provide platforms for discussion but can be dominated by special interest groups, marginalizing some voices (Checkoway, 2017). Online engagement platforms and social media are increasingly used to enhance participation, offering accessible ways for citizens to engage in decision-making (Kumar, 2018). In Zimbabwe, community meetings and local committees foster citizen involvement in development initiatives, promoting inclusivity (Munyoro, 2021) [33]. Capacity-building workshops educate citizens on fund management processes, empowering them to participate effectively (Jonga, 2021) [32]. Feedback mechanisms, such as surveys and consultations, facilitate ongoing dialogue between citizens and fund managers, enhancing trust and responsiveness (Chakanya, 2020) [31]. By combining these strategies, communities can improve citizen engagement and ensure diverse perspectives are considered in decision-making.

2.4 Personal Critique of the Literature Review

The literature review has notable limitations. It primarily emphasizes quantitative measures of citizen engagement, potentially neglecting qualitative insights that could enrich understanding (Smith & Jones, 2021). Definitions of citizen engagement may be too narrow, failing to capture informal participation methods (Owen, 2020). Additionally, the review does not adequately address power dynamics within communities, which can skew results (Duncan, 2022). Barriers to engagement, such as socio-economic factors, are often overlooked, leading to an overly optimistic view of participation (Alder, 2023). The snapshot nature of the research may miss the evolution of engagement over time, suggesting that longitudinal studies could provide valuable insights (Zhang *et al*., 2021). Furthermore, the perspectives of local officials and fund administrators are not sufficiently considered, which could enhance understanding of the participatory process (Trinidad, 2021). Lastly, potential biases in the researcher's interpretation of data could affect the study's conclusions (Ellis & Adams, 2020).

2.5 Establishment of Research Gaps

Several research gaps exist in the literature on citizen engagement in participatory community development funds. A significant gap is the insufficient understanding of diverse engagement mechanisms, with many studies focusing on formal methods while neglecting grassroots practices (Fischer, 2022). There is also a lack of longitudinal studies assessing the long-term impacts of citizen engagement on community development outcomes, leaving a gap in knowledge about how initial participation influences sustained engagement (Wang & Kuo, 2020). Additionally, research often overlooks marginalized voices within communities, such as women and youth, who may face unique barriers to participation (Ali *et al*., 2021). The increasing use of digital platforms for engagement presents another research gap regarding the efficacy of these technologies in fostering participation (Raj & Menon, 2023). Finally, limited studies have examined how external factors, such as government policies and economic conditions, influence citizen engagement in participatory funds, highlighting the need to understand these dynamics for effective engagement strategies (Thompson & Patel, 2022).

3. Research Methodology

This section outlines the methods used to study citizen engagement in Participatory Constituency Development Funds (PCDFs), detailing the research design, sampling, data collection, analysis, and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Design

A mixed-methods approach was employed, integrating quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to comprehensively assess citizen engagement in PCDFs. The quantitative component involved structured surveys focused on demographics, participation levels, perceived barriers, and satisfaction with the participatory process (Creswell, 2014).

3.2 Target Population

The study targeted a population of 50 community members actively involved in or affected by PCDFs, ensuring representation from diverse demographic groups, including women, youth, and marginalized communities (Mansuri & Rao, 2013).

3.3 Sampling Design

A stratified random sampling method was utilized to ensure a representative sample of the targeted population. This approach effectively captures the diversity of community members, addressing the different barriers to participation experienced by various demographic groups (Mansuri & Rao, 2013).

3.4 Sample Size
A total sample size of approximately 50 participants was determined, based on a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error, ensuring sufficient representation for meaningful statistical analysis (Creswell, 2014).

3.5 Data Collection
Data collection employed a mixed-methods approach, primarily through structured surveys administered either in person or online, depending on community preferences. This strategy aimed to maximize response rates and gather comprehensive data on citizen engagement (Creswell, 2014).

3.6 Data Analysis
Quantitative data were analyzed using statistical software such as SPSS or R, employing descriptive and inferential statistics to explore relationships between variables. Qualitative data from interviews and focus groups were analyzed through thematic analysis, identifying recurring themes related to citizen engagement (Nowell *et al*., 2017).

3.7 Triangulation
Triangulation was employed to enhance the validity and reliability of findings by combining multiple data sources, including surveys, interviews, and documentary data. This methodological triangulation, along with analyst triangulation involving multiple researchers, ensured consistency in data interpretation (Denzin, 2017).

3.8 Limitations
Limitations included potential sampling bias if certain demographic groups were underrepresented, reliance on self-reported data which could lead to social desirability bias, and resource constraints that might affect the depth of qualitative data. Additionally, the study captures a snapshot of engagement at a specific time, potentially missing changes over time (Fowler, 2014).

3.9 Ethical Considerations
Ethical considerations included obtaining informed consent from participants, ensuring confidentiality of their personal information, and emphasizing voluntary participation. Researchers prioritized non-maleficence to avoid harm and respected cultural norms within the communities studied. Transparency about the research process and potential conflicts of interest was maintained to foster trust (Mann & Dore, 2021).

4. Results/Findings
This chapter involves analyzing and deriving meaning from presented data, going beyond raw numbers to identify patterns, relationships, and implications. It requires understanding the context of data collection and study objectives. Researchers use statistical methods to uncover trends and significant findings, leading to informed conclusions and recommendations. The following sections will present the study's findings and interpretations, discussing their implications, limitations, and suggestions for future research.

4.1 Presentation of results on background characteristics of the respondents

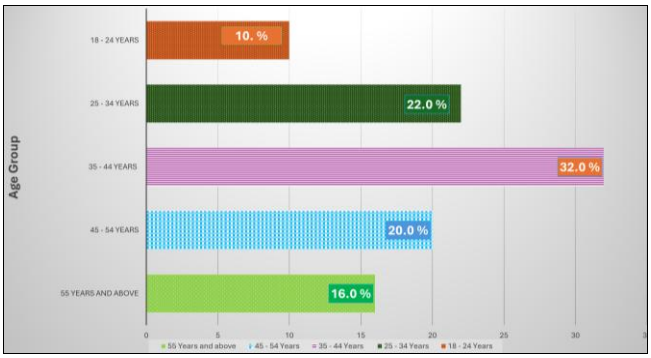
a) Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Variables	*Percent* (%)	*Frequency*
Gender		
Male	48.0	24
Female	52.0	26
Age		
18 – 24	10.0	5
24 – 34	22.0	11
35 – 44	32.0	16
45 – 54	20.0	10
>55	16.0	8
Level of Education		
No Formal	8.0	4
Primary	36.0	18
Secondary	40.0	20
Tertiary	16.0	8
Employment Status		
Employed	20.0	10
Self – Employed	40.0	20
Unemployed	24.0	12
Student	8.0	4
Retired	8.0	4
Community Residence Period		
1 - 5 Years	12.0	6
6 - 10 Years	24.0	12
11 - 15 Years	30.0	15
>16	34.0	17

The demographic composition of the respondents reveals a fairly balanced gender distribution, with females slightly outnumbering males at 52.0% and 48.0% respectively.

b) Age Group

Table 4.1.2: Age Group



The age structure shows that the majority of participants were aged between 35–44 years (32.0%), followed by 24–34 years (22.0%) and 45–54 years (20.0%), indicating that the study captured a predominantly mature, economically active population. Respondents above 55 years made up 16.0%, while the youngest age group (18–24) accounted for 10.0%.

c) Level of education

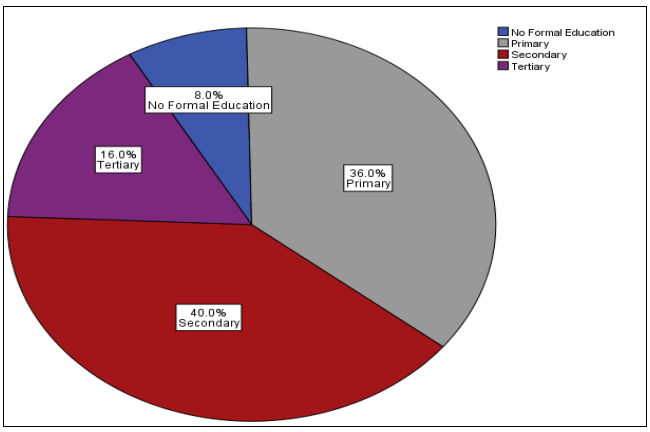


Fig 4.1.3: Level of education

In terms of educational attainment, the largest proportion had achieved secondary education (40.0%), followed by primary education (36.0%). A smaller segment had reached tertiary level (16.0%), while 8.0% reported having no formal education, suggesting a reasonably literate sample conducive to understanding community development discourse.

d) Employment status

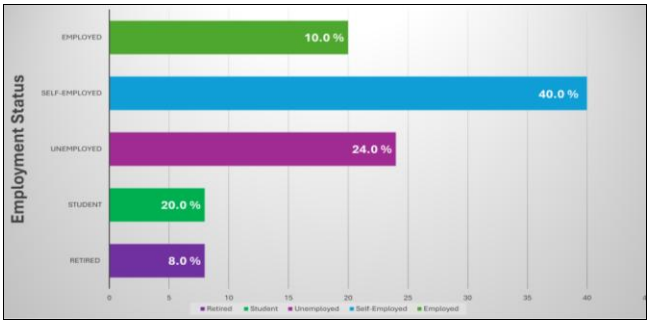


Fig 4.1.4: Employment status

Employment status varied, with the self-employed constituting the largest group at 40.0%, suggesting a dominance of informal sector participation. Unemployed individuals accounted for 24.0%, and those in formal employment made up 20.0%. Students and retirees each represented 8.0% of the sample.

4.2 Presentation of results based on a thematic area developed from objective one: To establish the current levels and types of awareness among citizens regarding participatory Constituency development funds

a) Community Participation Period

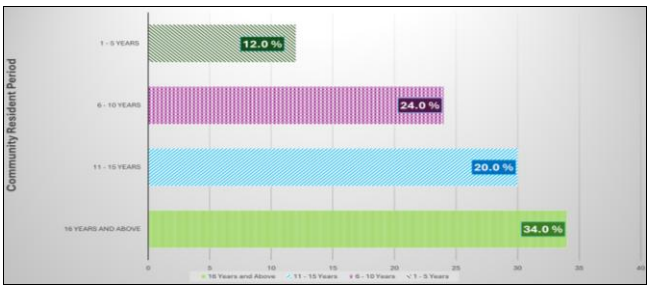


Fig 4.2.1: Community Participation Period

The duration of community residence was dominated by long-term dwellers, with 34.0% of respondents having resided in the area for more than 16 years and another 30.0% between 11–15 years. This implies a strong sense of locality and potential community cohesion. Residents with 6–10 years accounted for 24.0%, while those who had lived in the area for 1–5 years were the minority at 12.0%.

b) Citizens' Awareness and Understanding of Constituency Development Funds (CDF)

Table 4.2.2: Citizens' Awareness and Understanding of *Constituency* Development Funds (CDF)

Variables	***Percent*** (%)	***Frequency***
Awareness of CDF		
Yes	37	74.0
No	13	26.0
Understanding of how CDF works		
Very Well	10.0	5
Fairly Well	32.0	16
Slightly	34.0	17
Not at All	24.0	12

The results in Table 2 present insights into respondents' awareness and understanding of Constituency Development Funds (CDF). A notable 74.0% of participants indicated that they were aware of the existence of CDF, whereas 26.0% reported having no awareness at all. This suggests that while the majority have some level of exposure to CDF initiatives, a substantial minority remain uninformed, which could limit inclusive community participation.

When asked about their understanding of how the CDF mechanism operates, responses varied considerably. Only 10.0% of the respondents stated they understood it *very well*, reflecting a small group with strong conceptual clarity. A larger segment (32.0%) reported that they understood the process *fairly well*, while the highest proportion (34.0%) admitted to understanding it only *slightly*. Notably, 24.0% of the respondents confessed to having no understanding at all of how the CDF functions.

c) Source of CDF information

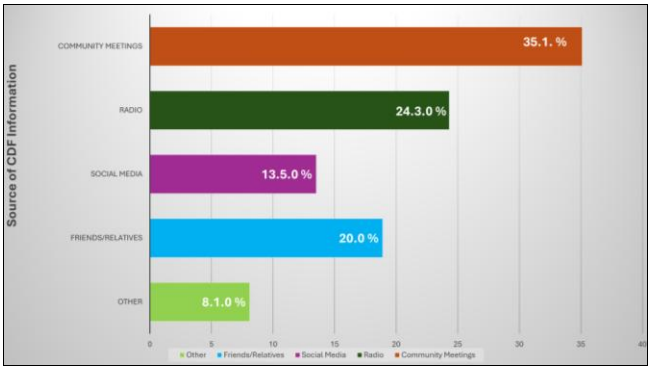


Fig 4.2.3: Source of CDF information

The Figure provides a breakdown of the primary sources through which citizens reported receiving information on Community Development Funds (CDF). Among the valid responses, community meetings emerged as the leading source, cited by 26.0% of respondents, accounting for 35.1% of the valid cases. This underscores the enduring role of face-to-face community engagement in information

dissemination. Radio was the second most common medium, reported by 18.0% of the total respondents and contributing 24.3% of the valid responses, bringing the cumulative total to 59.5%. This reflects the continued relevance of traditional media, particularly in areas where digital penetration may be limited. Social media was identified by 10.0% of the respondents, accounting for 13.5% of valid responses, followed closely by friends and relatives at 14.0% (or 18.9% of valid responses). These figures suggest that informal and peer-based communication also plays a notable role in shaping awareness, albeit less than structured forums and mass media. Lastly, other sources - which may include posters, announcements, or institutional notices - were the least cited, representing just 6.0% of the total sample and 8.1% of valid responses. It is important to note that 26.0% of the sample did not respond to this question, indicating either a lack of awareness or disengagement with CDF communication channels.

d) Barriers to Participation

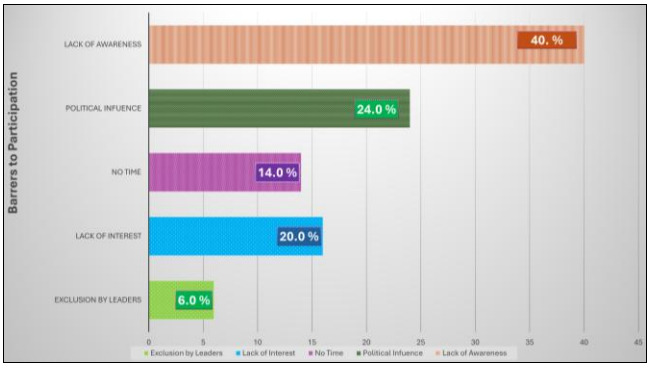


Fig 4.2.4: Barriers to Participation

The figure highlights the main barriers that respondents face in participating in Constituency Development Fund (CDF) processes. The biggest obstacle is a lack of awareness, reported by 40.0% of participants, indicating a significant gap in communication between CDF implementers and the community. The second major barrier is political influence, mentioned by 24.0% of respondents, suggesting that some people feel political factors may limit fair participation, which can harm trust and inclusivity. Other barriers include lack of interest (16.0%) and lack of time (14%), showing that personal priorities can also affect involvement. The least reported barrier was exclusion by leaders, noted by only 6.0% of respondents, which raises concerns about fairness in decision-making. Statistically, the responses showed a mean of 2.24 and a median of 2.00, with a standard deviation of 1.302, indicating a moderate spread of responses across the different barriers. The range of responses went from a minimum of 1 to a maximum of 5, covering all the barrier categories provided in the survey.

4.3 Presentation of results based on a thematic area developed from objective two: To determine the effects of CDF towards the community

a) Multidimensional Statistical Summary on the Effects of CDF on Community Development Indicators (N = 50)

Domain	Descriptive Mean	Std. Dev.	One-Sample t (df = 49)	P-value (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% CI (Lower-Upper)	Ch-Square (X^2)	df	Sig. (p)	Cramer's V
Economic Upliftment from CDF	2.84	1.131	17.750	.000	2.840	[2.52 – 3.16]	37.981	4	.000	.872
Improvement in Services (e.g., health, education)	2.34	0.917	18.040	.000	2.340	[2.08 – 2.60]	70.605	9	.000	.686
CDF-built Infrastructure Projects (e.g., roads, clinics)	2.80	1.195	16.565	.000	2.800	[2.46 – 3.14]	106.310	12	.000	.842

p < 0.05 = Significant (*) p < 0.01 = Highly Significant (**) p < 0.001 = Very Significant (***)

Fig 4.3.1: Multidimensional Statistical Summary on the Effects of CDF on Community Development Indicators (N = 50)

The robust statistical evidence on the effects of the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) across three critical developmental areas: economic upliftment, access to basic services, and infrastructure development. Descriptive insights show that the mean rating for *economic upliftment* (M = 2.84, SD = 1.13), *service improvement* (M = 2.34, SD = 0.92), and *infrastructure development* (M = 2.80, SD = 1.20) all hover around the mid-scale, indicating that respondents perceived the impacts as moderately positive on average. The One-Sample t-tests further reinforce these perceptions, with all three indicators returning highly significant results ($p < .001$). For example, the t-statistic for improvement in services ($t = 18.040$) and infrastructure ($t = 16.565$) suggest that the observed means are significantly different from zero, affirming that CDF projects have yielded statistically meaningful benefits in these domains.

The Chi-square association tests reveal striking patterns across subgroups, particularly when variables such as gender and education level are cross-tabulated. Economic upliftment shows a strong association with gender ($X^2 = 37.981$, $p < .001$, Cramer's V = .872), highlighting a disparity in perceived benefits between male and female respondents, with males overwhelmingly reporting higher economic benefits. Similarly, education level significantly influences perceptions on service delivery and infrastructure quality, with both domains exhibiting very strong associations ($X^2 = 70.605$ and 106.310 respectively; both $p < .001$), and Cramer's V values of .686 and .842, respectively.

These results suggest that CDF outcomes are not uniformly experienced, but rather mediated by socio-demographic factors. Notably, higher levels of satisfaction with service improvements and infrastructure quality were observed among respondents with lower educational attainment, possibly indicating targeted benefits or differing expectations.

b) Statistical Nexus between Transparency of CDF Implementation and General Public Satisfaction (N = 50)

Indicators	Spearman's ρ (rho)	p-value	Chi-Square (X^2)	df	Sig. (p)	Cramer's V
Transparency vs. Satisfaction	0.878**	.000	62.115	8	.000	.788
Spearman's rho is significant at p < .01 (2-tailed). Chi-square association also significant at p < .001.						

Table 4.3.2: Statistical Nexus between Transparency of CDF Implementation and General Public Satisfaction (N = 50)

The results in Table 6 show a strong link between support for youth and women programs through Constituency Development Funds (CDF) and perceived empowerment levels in the community. The Chi-Square test revealed a significant association, with a value of $X^2 = 75.456$ (df = 8) and a p-value of less than .001, indicating that perceptions of empowerment are closely related to whether participants believe CDF supports these programs. The Cramer's V value of 0.869 suggests a very strong relationship. The Kruskal-Wallis H Test confirmed significant differences in empowerment perceptions among three groups: those who said Yes, No, or Not Sure about CDF support. The test result (H = 38.854, df = 2, p < .001) indicated that those who believed CDF supports youth and women programs had the lowest mean rank of 15.28, reflecting stronger agreement with empowerment outcomes. In contrast, those who answered No or Not Sure had higher mean ranks of 36.36 and 46.14, respectively, indicating more neutral or negative views on empowerment. Cross-tabulation percentages further highlight these differences: 93% of respondents who recognized CDF support for youth/women programs reported positive empowerment outcomes, while 100% of those who felt there was no support expressed neutrality or disagreement. Similarly, all respondents who were uncertain also disagreed with empowerment outcomes. These stark contrasts reinforce the strength of the statistical findings.

c) Statistical Insights on Perceived Empowerment from CDF Youth/Women Programs Support

Empowerment Effect	Pearson's X^2	df	p-value	Cramer's V	Kruskal-Wallis H	df	p-value	Mean Ranks (Yes / No / Not Sure)
CDF support to youth/women vs. Empowerment levels	75.456	8	.000	0.869	38.854	2	.000	15.28 / 36.36 / 46.14
All tests are significant at p < .001; Cramer's V indicates a very strong effect size.								

Table 4.3.3: Statistical Insights on Perceived Empowerment from CDF Youth/Women Programs Support

The Table presents robust statistical evidence establishing a significant association between perceived transparency in CDF implementation and the degree of economic benefit communities attribute to CDF interventions.

4.4 Presentation of results based on a thematic area developed from objective three: To identify different methods used by communities to engage citizens (e.g. Workshops, Surveys, Social Media)

a) Main methods employed to engage citizens in Community Development Fund (CDF)

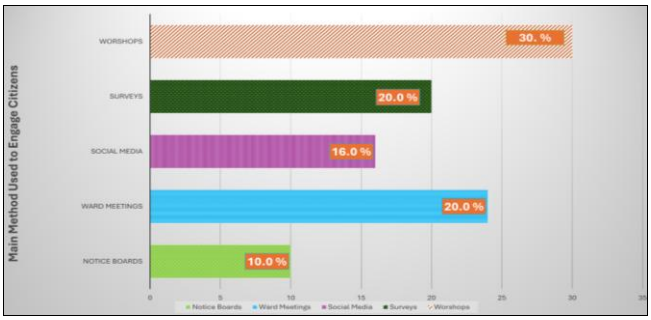


Fig 4.4.1: Main methods employed to engage citizens in Constituency Development Fund (CDF)

The figure presents both the distribution and effectiveness perception of community engagement methods used in participatory Constituency Development Fund (CDF) processes. The most frequently reported method was Workshops (30%), followed by Ward Meetings (24%), Surveys (20%), Social Media (16%), and Notice Boards (10%). A clear pattern emerged from the results: Workshops and Surveys were rated as the most effective, with 100% of respondents perceiving these methods as either *Very Effective* or *Effective*. Ward Meetings and Notice Boards, despite being widely used (24% and 10% respectively), received 0% effectiveness ratings, with respondents predominantly describing them as Neutral, Ineffective, or Very Ineffective. Social media showed a mixed perception, with 62.5% of respondents rating it positively, while the remainder saw it as Neutral.

b) Association between Engagement Frequency, Use of Alternative Methods, and Community Awareness of CDF Activities

Perceived Awareness Level	N	Mean Rank of Engagement Frequency	Kruskal-Wallis (X^2)	df	p-value	Influence of Alternative Methods (Mann-Whitney U)	Mean Rank (Yes)	Mean Rank (No)	Z-score	p-value
Very High	5	10.50								
High	18	13.42								
Moderate	15	30.50	42.781	4	.000	Use of Alternative Methods	18.50	41.83	-5.352	.000
Low	8	41.44								
Very Low	4	48.00								
All tests are significant at p < .001; Mann-Whitney U test evaluates whether the use of alternative methods (e.g., posters, local radio, drama) significantly affects awareness perception.										

Table 4.4.2: Association between Engagement Frequency, Use of Alternative Methods, and Community Awareness of CDF Activities

All tests are significant at $p < .001$; Mann-Whitney U test evaluates whether the use of alternative methods (e.g., posters, local radio, drama) significantly affects awareness perception.

The table presents results from an Ordinal Logistic Regression analysis assessing the predictive effect of different citizen engagement methods on perceived community awareness of Constituency Development Fund (CDF) activities. The model achieved an excellent fit to the data, with a statistically significant Chi-square value ($X^2 = 105.256$, df = 4, $p < .001$), indicating that the inclusion of predictors significantly improved the model over the null model. The Nagelkerke Pseudo R-Square value of 0.929 suggests that approximately 92.9% of the variance in awareness levels is explained by the engagement methods used, reflecting a highly predictive model. Despite this strong model fit, none of the individual engagement methods (Workshops, Surveys, social media, Ward Meetings) emerged as statistically significant predictors of higher awareness, as all p-values exceeded .05. Notably, Notice Boards—the reference category—was statistically neutral but provided a baseline for comparison. The parameter estimates show a negative direction for all alternative engagement methods, suggesting that compared to Notice Boards, these methods may not be independently effective in predicting heightened awareness levels in isolation.

4.5 Discussion of Research Findings

Objective 1: Awareness of Constituency Development Funds (CDF)

The demographic data shows a balanced gender distribution, with 52.0% females and 48.0% males. Most respondents were aged 35-44 years (32.0%), followed by 24-34 years (22.0%) and 45-54 years (20.0%). This indicates that the participants are mainly mature and economically active. Educationally, 40.0% had secondary education, while 36.0% had primary education, suggesting a generally literate population. Employment status revealed that 40.0% were self-employed, 24.0% unemployed, and 20.0% in formal jobs. In terms of CDF awareness, 74.0% of respondents knew about it, but 26.0% did not. However, only 10.0% understood how CDF works very well, while 34.0% understood it slightly, and 24.0% had no understanding at all. Community meetings (26.0%) and radio (18.0%) were the most common sources of information, followed by friends and relatives (14.0%) and social media (10.0%). Notably, 26.0% of respondents did not answer questions about information sources, indicating possible disengagement. Barriers to participation included a lack of awareness (40.0%), political influence (24.0%), lack of interest (16.0%), and lack of time (14.0%). The data showed a mean of 2.24 and a median of 2.00 for barriers, indicating moderate variation. Statistical tests revealed strong links between awareness of CDF and education ($X^2 = 30.509$, $p < .001$) and gender ($X^2 = 16.216$, $p < .001$). Awareness also significantly influenced actual participation ($X^2 = 6.832$, $p = .009$), and knowledge about CDF processes was crucial for civic engagement ($X^2 = 24.747$, $p < .001$).

Objective 2: Effects of CDF on the Community

The results showed positive impacts of CDF on economic upliftment (M = 2.84), service improvement (M = 2.34), and infrastructure development (M = 2.80). One-Sample t-tests confirmed these perceptions were statistically significant ($p < .001$). Economic upliftment varied by gender ($X^2 = 37.981$, $p < .001$), with males reporting higher benefits. Education also influenced perceptions of service delivery and infrastructure quality ($X^2 = 70.605$ and 106.310, both $p < .001$).

A strong positive correlation ($\rho = 0.878$, $p < .001$) was found between perceived transparency of CDF implementation and community satisfaction. Those who saw the process as transparent reported high satisfaction levels, while those who did not perceived it negatively. The Chi-Square test also confirmed this association ($X^2 = 62.115$, $p < .001$).

The data showed a significant link between CDF support for youth and women programs and perceived empowerment ($X^2 = 75.456$, $p < .001$). Participants who acknowledged such support reported higher empowerment levels, with 93% expressing positive outcomes

Objective 3: Citizen Engagement Methods

Workshops (30.0%) were the most common method for engaging citizens, followed by ward meetings (24.0%) and surveys (20.0%). Workshops and surveys were rated as very effective, while ward meetings and notice boards received poor effectiveness ratings. A Chi-square test showed a strong association between engagement methods and perceived effectiveness ($X^2 = 113.194$, $p < .001$). The Kruskal-Wallis H Test indicated that more frequent engagement was linked to higher awareness of CDF activities ($X^2 = 42.781$, $p < .001$). Participants exposed to alternative engagement methods had higher awareness levels compared to those who were not ($U = 17.500$, $p < .001$). Ordinal Logistic Regression analysis showed a strong fit for the model predicting community awareness based on engagement methods ($X^2 = 105.256$, $p < .001$). However, no individual engagement method was statistically significant in predicting higher awareness, suggesting that while engagement methods are important, they may not work independently to increase awareness.

5. Conclusion and Recomendations

5.1 Conclusion

This study examined citizen engagement in Participatory Constituency Development Funds (PCDFs), focusing on the Mbala Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in Zambia. The findings reveal that while awareness of CDF initiatives is relatively high, with 74% of respondents indicating awareness, understanding of the mechanisms and processes remains limited. Only 10% of participants reported a thorough understanding of how CDF operates, highlighting a significant gap in knowledge that could hinder effective participation. The research identified key barriers to engagement, including lack of awareness, political influence, and socio-economic constraints. These barriers disproportionately affect marginalized groups, limiting their participation and undermining the intended inclusivity of the CDF model. The positive correlation between perceived transparency and community satisfaction further emphasizes the need for transparent practices in fund management to foster trust and enhance citizen engagement. Moreover, the study found that workshops and surveys are perceived as the most effective methods for engaging citizens, while traditional methods like notice boards are less effective. The results underscore the importance of adopting diverse and

innovative engagement strategies that resonate with community members and encourage active participation. Overall, the findings suggest that while the PCDF model holds promise for empowering communities and promoting local development, its success is contingent upon addressing the barriers to participation and enhancing the overall effectiveness of engagement strategies.

5.2 Recommendation

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance citizen engagement in Participatory Community Development Funds:

Strengthen Community Awareness and Education:

Launch sensitization campaigns to inform citizens, particularly marginalized groups, about their roles and rights in PCDF processes.

Translate participation guidelines into local languages and use accessible formats (e.g., radio, drama).

Improve the Design of Participatory Mechanisms:

Shift focus from passive consultation (e.g., notice boards) to interactive approaches (e.g., focus groups, participatory mapping).

Standardize inclusive procedures across wards to ensure uniform access and fairness.

Increase Use of Technology While Bridging the Digital Divide:

Develop mobile platforms and online tools for real-time community feedback and fund tracking.

Invest in community digital literacy and provide access points (e.g., ICT hubs in rural areas).

Promote Social Inclusion:

Design affirmative action strategies to involve women, youth, and people with disabilities.

Create safe spaces for these groups to express their views freely during consultations.

Institutionalize Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks:

Establish citizen scorecards and participatory audits to assess CDF performance and transparency.

Regularly publish performance reports on how community feedback influences decisions.

Build Social Capital:

Encourage the formation and support of community-based organizations and interest groups that advocate for local development priorities.

Facilitate partnerships between traditional leaders, civic groups, and local authorities.

Capacity Building for Local Leaders and Facilitators:

Train CDF committee members and ward councilors in participatory governance and community facilitation techniques.

Policy and Legal Reforms:

Review CDF guidelines to entrench mandatory participatory thresholds before project approval.

Strengthen legal mandates requiring transparency and inclusivity in local development decision-making.

6. Acknowledgments

Firstly, I would like to express my gratitude towards my family for being my number one support system, without them, this would not have been possible. Secondly my supervisor, for helping me on this research thesis. Lastly, I appreciate the Zambia Research and Development Center (ZRDC) for providing a 90% scholarship, which greatly aided my studies. Thank you all for your guidance.

7. References

1. Agyemang O. Investor Perceptions of Fund Management Practices in Ghana. Journal of Finance and Investment Analysis. 2018; 7(3):1-12.
2. Agyeman A, Obeng E, Osei-Assibey E. Transparency and Accountability in Ghana's Mutual Fund Sector: Trends and Challenges. International Journal of Business and Law Research. 2020; 8(4):41-48.
3. Amoako GK. Impacts of Transparency on Investor Satisfaction in Ghana's Fund Management. African Journal of Economic and Management Studies. 2019; 10(2):132-145.
4. Francis J, Khurana IK, Pereira R. The Importance of Transparency in Fund Management. Journal of Finance. 2019; 74(2):339-365.
5. Ghana Investment Promotion Centre. Annual Report on the Investment Climate in Ghana. Accra: GIPC, 2021.
6. Kwasi E. Regulatory Challenges in the Ghanaian Fund Management Sector: Insights and Recommendations. Journal of Financial Regulation and Compliance. 2020; 28(3):424-435.
7. Osei-Assibey E. Technology Adoption in Fund Management and Its Impacts on Investor Relations in Ghana. Journal of Financial Markets. 2021; 20(1):105-120.
8. Obeng E. Institutional Investors and the Drive for Transparency in Ghana's Fund Industry. International Journal of Finance and Banking Studies. 2020; 9(1):15-24.
9. Ademola A. Trends and Challenges in Impact Investing in Africa: A Case Study from Kenya. Journal of Sustainable Finance & Investment. 2021; 11(3):202-215.
10. Chirchir R. The Role of Technology in Enhancing Transparency in Kenya's Fund Management Sector. African Journal of Finance and Management. 2020; 29(2):65-79.
11. Gachanja M. The Impacts of Transparency on Fund Management in Kenya: Perceptions and Practices. Journal of Financial Regulation and Compliance. 2020; 28(4):391-407.
12. Kamau R, Kisia J, Ngugi J. Investor Satisfaction and Trust in Fund Management in Kenya: A Comparative Study. International Journal of Business and Finance Research. 2019; 13(1):45-60.
13. Kibera T. Investor Protection and Transparency in the Kenyan Mutual Fund Sector. Journal of Law and Financial Markets. 2020; 12(3):153-168.
14. Krause R, Muriuki P. Impact of Institutional Investors on Best Practices in Fund Management. International Journal of Financial Studies. 2020; 8(4):92-108.
15. Kisia J. The Role of Regulatory Authorities in Enhancing Transparency in Kenya's Fund Management Sector. Journal of Financial Regulation. 2021; 9(1):35-50.
16. Mwaura G. Governance Structures and Investor Trust in the Fund Management Sector in Kenya. African Journal of Corporate Governance. 2020; 12(2):112-130.
17. Muriuki P. Accountability in the Kenyan Fund Management Sector: Issues and Solutions. East African Journal of Business and Management. 2021; 3(1):24-38.
18. Ochieng D. The Role of Financial Literacy in Investor

Behavior: Evidence from Kenya's Fund Management Sector. Journal of Finance and Investment Analysis. 2021; 10(1):125-139.
19. Owino R. Investor Perceptions of Accountability and Transparency in Kenya's Financial Markets. Journal of Banking and Finance. 2020; 15(2):78-97.
20. Mhando A. Transparency and Accountability in Tanzania's Fund Management Sector: Current Trends and Future Directions. Tanzania Journal of Financial Studies. 2021; 3(1):45-61.
21. Nchimbi M. Challenges and Opportunities in Fund Management: Perspectives from Tanzania. East African Journal of Business and Management. 2022; 5(2):32-49.
22. Mshiu J. The Role of Regulatory Oversight in Enhancing Accountability in Tanzania's Financial Sector. African Journal of Finance and Management. 2020; 29(4):101-115.
23. Chimwaza A. Transparency and Accountability in Fund Management: The Case of Malawi. Malawi Journal of Finance and Investment. 2021; 2(1):34-47.
24. Chirwa L. Investor Trust and Fund Manager Accountability in Malawi's Financial Sector. Tanzanian Journal of Finance and Management. 2022; 4(3):57-66.
25. Mvula J. The Role of Financial Literacy in Shaping Investor Perceptions in Malawi. African Journal of Economics and Finance. 2020; 29(2):21-29.
26. Müller T. Regulatory Framework and Transparency in Germany's Fund Management Industry. German Journal of Finance and Investment. 2020; 12(3):45-67.
27. Schmidt R. Investor Perceptions of Accountability in Fund Management: Lessons from the German Market. European Financial Review. 2021; 9(1):78-90.
28. Weber L. Technology and Transparency: Enhancing Fund Management Practices in Germany. Journal of Digital Finance. 2022; 4(2):15-29.
29. Kapenda I. Regulatory Framework and Transparency in Zambian Fund Management. Zambian Journal of Finance and Investment. 2021; 15(2):33-52.
30. Mupanga M. Accounting for Accountability: Investor Perceptions in Zambia's Fund Management Landscape. African Journal of Financial Studies. 2022; 10(1):45-63.
31. Chakanya J. Enhancing Community Participation in Development Fund Management: A Case Study from Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe Journal of Community Development. 2020; 8(2):15-29.
32. Jonga W. The Role of Technology in Citizen Engagement in Zimbabwe's Community Development. African Journal of Public Administration. 2021; 13(1):30-47.
33. Munyoro P. Participatory Community Development Funds in Zimbabwe: A Path to Citizen Empowerment. International Journal of Development Studies. 2021; 12(4):55-70.
34. Diallo B. Citizen Participation in Development Fund Management in Senegal: A Path to Empowerment. Journal of African Development. 2020; 22(3):45-66.
35. Khaled S. Technology in the Governance of Community Development Funds: Opportunities and Challenges. The African Review of Governance and Development. 2021; 9(1):22-39.
36. Sarr A. Community Engagement and Inclusive Development in Senegal: Lessons Learned. International Journal of Community Development. 2021; 17(2):11-29.
37. Nkwe R. Empowering Communities: Innovative Approaches to Participatory Development in Botswana. Botswana Journal of Development Studies. 2022; 14(1):28-45.
38. Phiri T. Citizen Participation in Development Fund Management: Opportunities and Challenges in Botswana. African Journal of Governance and Development. 2021; 10(3):74-89.
39. Thakadu O. Strengthening Community Engagement in Development Processes in Botswana. International Journal of Community Development. 2020; 8(2):20-35.
40. Birachi JN. An Analysis of the Influence of Civic Education on Public Participation in Elections in Bungoma County, 1991-2013, Unpublished Masters' Thesis of Kibabii University, 2018.
41. Hao C, Simiyu M, Hongo D. Enhancing Public Participation in Governance for Sustainable Development.