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Assessing effectiveness on constituency development funds CDF adherence guidelines by local communities: A case study on school infrastructure projects in Mkushi district

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Abstract

Constituency Development Funds (CDFs) are financial mechanisms established to empower local communities and facilitate their active participation in the planning and execution of development projects within their respective regions. The concept of CDFs emerged as a response to the need for decentralized decision-making and community-driven development initiatives. These funds aim to strengthen local governance structures and promote grassroots involvement in identifying, prioritizing, and implementing projects that directly address the unique needs and challenges of the community.

However, the effectiveness of Constituency Development Fund (CDF) guidelines in the context of school infrastructure projects in Mkushi District is not clear, hence the study. The research aimed to investigate three primary objectives: the level of adherence to CDF guidelines, the mechanisms in place to enhance adherence, and the effectiveness of local

Collection methods. A total of 60 community members from Mkushi District participated in the study, representing various stakeholders, including community members, project committee members, Educational stakeholders, government representatives, development organizations, and experts.

The findings revealed varying levels of adherence to CDF guidelines, with 35% of respondents rating it moderate, 23.33% low, and 20% high. The study identified several mechanisms essential for enhancing adherence, including training programs, project reviews, financial audits, community meetings, oversight committees, and communication. Financial audits were particularly emphasized for maintaining financial compliance and transparency.

Regarding community oversight, the study found diverse perspectives, with 41.67% of respondents considering it effective, 40% not effective, and 18.33% very effective. The findings highlight the complexity of community oversight in ensuring adherence to CDF guidelines. Based on the study's findings, recommendations were made to improve the effectiveness of CDF guidelines in school infrastructure projects. These recommendations include tailoring training programs to specific needs, enhancing transparency in financial audits, strengthening community engagement through regular meetings, conducting an in-depth analysis of oversight committees, and implementing a comprehensive communication strategy. The study's findings offer valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of adherence to CDF guidelines, providing practical recommendations for policymakers, implementers, and stakeholders involved in community development projects.

Keywords: Empowerment, development, decentralization, effectiveness and adherence

Introduction

Community Development Funds (CDFs) are financial mechanisms established to empower local communities and facilitate their active participation in the planning and execution of development projects within their respective regions. The concept of CDFs emerged as a response to the need for decentralized decision-making and community-driven development initiatives (World Bank, 2013) ^[14]. These funds aim to strengthen local governance structures and promote grassroots involvement in identifying, prioritizing, and implementing projects that directly address the unique needs and challenges of the community (DFID, 2008). The CDF was first established in 1995 to support micro-community projects as part of the wider decentralization and local development policy. The fundamental objective was to provide resources to bridge the financing gap arising from non-existence sources of funds to finance micro-community led projects in all the Constituencies across the Country.

The first appropriation and disbursement of this fund was done in 1995 by Parliament. From 1995 to 2016, the Fund was provided for under Section 45 of the Local Government Act Cap 281 of the Laws of Zambia. In 2016, the Constitution established the Constituency Development Fund. Subsequently, the Local Government Act was repealed and the Constituency Development Fund Act was enacted in 2018 to provide for the management, disbursement utilization and accountability of the Fund. Government developed the first guidelines in 2006 commonly known as the “CDF Guidelines to guide on the Management and Utilization of the Fund”.

The Fund has since evolved with an expanded scope and increased budget allocation with increased emphasis on enhanced community participation in determining local development priorities. In 2021, Government increased the amount of the CDF from K1.6 million to K25.7 million per Constituency. The expanded scope of the CDF covers three (3) specific areas namely; Community Projects; Youth, Women and Community Empowerment and Secondary Boarding School and Skills Development Bursaries. MORE than K3.2 million was disbursed as empowerment loans to various groups under Constituency Development Fund (CDF) for Mkushi North Constituency. (Sylvester, 2023) ^[120].

In Mkushi District, located in central province, the utilization of CDFs has gained prominence as a means to foster community-driven development, particularly in the realm of school infrastructure projects. These projects encompass a broad spectrum of initiatives, ranging from the construction of classrooms and sanitation facilities to the provision of learning materials and equipment. The adherence to CDF guidelines is pivotal in ensuring that allocated funds are efficiently and effectively utilized for the betterment of educational facilities.

Adherence to CDF guidelines implies strict compliance with the established procedures, protocols, and criteria set forth by the governing bodies overseeing the fund. It encompasses various stages of project implementation, including project identification, planning, budgeting, procurement, execution, and monitoring. Effective adherence ensures transparency, accountability, and the realization of intended project outcomes (UNDP, 2010).

While the theoretical framework of CDFs underscores the importance of community engagement and adherence to established guidelines, the practical application and effectiveness of these principles remain subject to empirical inquiry. Previous studies have highlighted the potential challenges faced by local communities in adhering to prescribed guidelines, including resource constraints, capacity limitations, and administrative complexities (Jones & Smith, 2018; Smith *et al.*, 2019) ^[100, 121]. Therefore, a comprehensive assessment of the adherence to CDF guidelines in the context of school infrastructure projects in Mkushi District is imperative to discern the actual impact of community-driven development initiatives.

In summary, Community Development Funds (CDFs) serve as crucial instruments in decentralizing decision-making processes and empowering local communities to take charge of their development initiatives. By providing a financial mechanism for communities to prioritize and execute projects that address their unique needs, CDFs aim to strengthen local governance structures and foster grassroots involvement.

Problem Statement

The use of Community Development Funds (CDFs) for school infrastructure projects in Mkushi District has become a key aspect of community-driven development. However, the effectiveness of local communities' adherence to CDF guidelines, which cover project identification to monitoring, has not been thoroughly studied. Previous studies suggest potential challenges, including resource constraints and administrative complexities. This study aimed to investigate the adherence to CDF guidelines by local communities in Mkushi District, focusing on their impact on school infrastructure projects. It seeks to provide insights into the effectiveness of community-driven development initiatives in the region.

Significance of the Study

The study on Community Development Fund (CDF) adherence guidelines in Mkushi District's school infrastructure projects has significant implications. It provides empirical insights into community-driven development, informing policy and decision-making at local and regional levels. The study empowers local residents to participate in development decisions, fosters accountability and transparency, and improves educational outcomes. By ensuring effective adherence to CDF guidelines, the study promotes judicious resource allocation, trust between the community and authorities, and enhanced development initiatives. Its findings have far-reaching impacts on policy, community empowerment, transparency, and education, driving positive change in community-driven development and education.

General Objective

Assessing Effectiveness on Community CDF Adherence Guidelines by Local Communities: A Case Study on School Infrastructure Projects in Mkushi District

Specific Objectives

1. To ascertain levels of adherence to outlined guidelines in CDF
2. To establish mechanisms put in place to enhance adherence to CDF guidelines
3. To examine the effectiveness of oversight by local communities in CDF projects

Research questions

1. What are the levels of adherence to outlined guidelines in CDF?
2. What mechanisms have been put in place to enhance adherence to CDF guidelines?
3. How effective is the oversight by local communities in CDF projects?

Literature Review

Level of adherence to outlined guidelines in CDF

The study examines the importance of adherence to guidelines in Community Development Funds (CDFs) in various countries, including Malaysia, South Africa, Ghana, Kenya, and Uganda. It highlights the need for transparency, accountability, and community participation in the management of CDFs to ensure effective and equitable resource allocation. The study notes that a robust legal and regulatory framework is essential for promoting adherence

to guidelines and preventing corruption and mismanagement of funds.

In Malaysia, the Community Development Department Act 1995 and the National Community Policy provide a framework for community development initiatives, emphasizing transparency, accountability, and community engagement. However, research reveals instances of corruption and mismanagement, highlighting the need for rigorous monitoring and evaluation.

In South Africa, transparency and accountability issues have been reported, with funds not reaching intended beneficiaries or being used for unintended purposes. Stricter adherence to guidelines is recommended to prevent irregularities and ensure that funds benefit marginalized communities.

In Ghana, compliance with anti-corruption measures is crucial, while in Kenya, community participation and oversight mechanisms are essential for ensuring adherence to guidelines. Uganda's Public Finance Management Act 2015 provides a comprehensive legal framework for managing community development funds, emphasizing transparency, accountability, and responsible financial management.

The study emphasizes the importance of community involvement, oversight mechanisms, and rigorous monitoring and evaluation to ensure adherence to guidelines and the success of community development projects. It highlights the need for a robust legal and regulatory framework to promote transparency, accountability, and effective management of CDFs.

Mechanisms put in adherence to CDF place to enhance guideline

Adherence to Constituency Development Fund (CDF) guidelines is crucial for effective and transparent utilization of funds allocated for community development initiatives. In Malaysia, a robust monitoring and evaluation system, active involvement of Members of Parliament (MPs), and transparency and public participation are essential mechanisms for promoting adherence to CDF guidelines (Ghazali & Abdul Samat, 2019; Ramlee *et al.*, 2018; Ibrahim & Ramly, 2020) [42, 97, 51].

In Nigeria, transparency and accountability, community involvement, and robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are vital for enhancing adherence to CDF guidelines (Oyekanmi & Ayo, 2017; Adelakun, 2019) [94, 3]. Similarly, in Ghana, the establishment of the District Assembly Common Fund Secretariat, regular audits by the Ghana Audit Service, and participatory mechanisms are essential for promoting adherence to CDF guidelines (Ghana Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, 2020; Ghana Audit Service, 2020) [41, 39].

In Ethiopia, local Project Management Committees, capacity-building and training programs, and a rigorous monitoring and evaluation system are crucial mechanisms for ensuring adherence to CDF guidelines (World Bank, 2019; Government of Ethiopia, 2018) [117]. The adoption of digital platforms and mobile applications for project documentation and reporting has also improved transparency and accountability (African Development Bank, 2020) [4]. In Botswana, a robust monitoring and evaluation system, community engagement and participation, and capacity-building and training programs are essential for enhancing adherence to CDF guidelines

(Jibrin & Osemeikhian, 2019; BIDPA, 2020; UNDP, 2018) [54, 11, 109]. Clear reporting and auditing requirements, as stipulated in the CDF Act of 2003, also serve as a deterrent to fraudulent activities (Government of Botswana, 2017) [46]. In Lesotho, a comprehensive oversight system, capacity-building and training programs, and a grievance redressal mechanism are vital for promoting adherence to CDF guidelines (World Bank, 2017) [116]. Public awareness campaigns also play a crucial role in informing communities about their rights and responsibilities (World Bank, 2017) [116].

In Benin, clear legal and regulatory frameworks, oversight and monitoring mechanisms, capacity-building and training programs, and public awareness campaigns are essential for enhancing adherence to CDF guidelines (World Bank, 2019; USAID, 2021) [117].

In Zambia, oversight and monitoring bodies, community involvement and participation, strict financial management and reporting systems, and dissemination of information are crucial mechanisms for ensuring adherence to CDF guidelines (National Assembly of Zambia, 2016; Mwamba, 2018) [83, 79].

Effectiveness of oversight by local communities in CDF projects

The effectiveness of local community oversight in Constituency Development Fund (CDF) projects has been a subject of research and debate in various countries, including Malaysia, South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, and Zambia. Studies have shown that community involvement in CDF projects leads to better outcomes, increased accountability, and transparency. Local communities play a crucial role in ensuring that projects align with their needs and priorities, and their participation fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility (Rahman and Othman, 2017) [96]. However, challenges persist, including capacity constraints, lack of information, political interference, and corruption. To address these challenges, researchers recommend strengthening oversight mechanisms, building capacity among community members, and ensuring transparency and accountability.

In Malaysia, community involvement in CDF projects has shown significant positive outcomes, and the Malaysian Ministry of Rural and Regional Development has emphasized the importance of local community involvement. In South Africa, community oversight is critical for promoting transparency, accountability, and successful project implementation. In Nigeria, community participation is essential for ensuring that projects address community needs, and local communities have shown a growing awareness of their rights and responsibilities in overseeing CDF projects (MMORRD, 2019).

In Kenya, community oversight has been linked to successful project implementation, and the World Bank has acknowledged the positive impact of community involvement in CDF projects. In Zambia, community engagement and oversight are crucial for ensuring that projects align with community needs, and local governance structures play a vital role in facilitating community engagement (Lim and Tan, 2020) [122].

Overall, the literature highlights the importance of local community oversight in CDF projects, but also acknowledges the challenges that need to be addressed to ensure effective oversight.

Personal critique of literature review

The literature review on the effectiveness of Community Constituency Development Fund (CDF) adherence guidelines by local communities offers valuable insights, but there are several aspects that warrant critique: The review should expand its scope to include a broader range of sources and viewpoints. While it provides a comprehensive understanding of the subject, including diverse sources, could add depth and nuance to the analysis. Additionally, exploring research from countries with similar community-driven development models could offer comparative insights. The literature review could benefit from a more critical assessment of the methodologies used in the studies cited. Evaluating the quality of research methods and identifying any potential biases or limitations would enhance the review's credibility. For instance, were the studies quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods? Were sample sizes sufficient to draw meaningful conclusions?

The review should strive to provide a more coherent synthesis of the findings. It appears that some studies are mentioned individually, but there is limited integration of these findings to draw overarching conclusions. A comparative analysis of different research outcomes can help readers understand the trends, contradictions, or gaps in the existing literature.

It is crucial to consider the temporal relevance of the sources cited. Policies, community dynamics, and governance structures evolve over time. Therefore, an assessment of how older studies align with contemporary challenges and opportunities in CDF adherence could add depth to the review.

The review should highlight the importance of considering the geographic context in the effectiveness of CDF adherence. Local conditions, political landscapes, and social dynamics can vary significantly between regions, influencing adherence outcomes. Therefore, acknowledging these variations and their impact on CDF adherence is essential. The review could be enhanced by discussing the policy implications of the findings. What lessons can policymakers and community leaders draw from the literature to improve CDF adherence? Providing actionable recommendations for stakeholders could make the review more practically valuable. While the review mentions some challenges and successes, it could benefit from exploring the diverse perspectives of various stakeholders involved in CDF adherence, including local community members, government officials, and non-governmental organizations. Different viewpoints may provide a more comprehensive understanding of the issue.

Establishment of research gaps

The establishment of research gaps is a critical component of any literature review as it helps to identify areas where further investigation is needed. However, the effectiveness of this process can vary, and it is important to critically assess how well the literature review in section 2.6 accomplishes this task. It's essential to consider the clarity of the research gaps identified in the literature review. Are these gaps well-defined and clearly articulated? The effectiveness of this section depends on the reviewer's ability to not only point out areas where research is lacking but also to describe why these gaps are significant. The literature review should provide a solid rationale for why addressing these gaps is important for advancing the field.

Furthermore, the scope of research gaps identified should be neither too broad nor too narrow. It's crucial to strike a balance. Sometimes, literature reviews fall into the trap of either proposing research gaps that are overly general and obvious or, on the contrary, getting lost in minutiae that are of limited relevance. The literature review should guide the reader toward meaningful, feasible research questions that can make a substantive contribution to the field.

Moreover, the integration of recent and relevant sources in this section is crucial. The identification of research gaps should be based on the most up-to-date and pertinent literature. Neglecting to include the latest research can lead to the oversight of emerging areas where research is needed. Therefore, the review's success in establishing research gaps should be measured by how well it incorporates current insights and trends. Lastly, a good literature review should consider potential bias. Are there any biases in the identification of research gaps? Sometimes, researchers unconsciously focus on areas that align with their own interests or the prevailing views in the field. A well-rounded literature review should critically assess this aspect to ensure that research gaps are identified without undue bias.

Methodology

Overview

This study employed an exploratory case study approach and a mixed methods research study to assess the effectiveness of community development fund adherence guidelines by local communities in Mkushi, Zambia.

Creswell (2003) ^[20] affirms that qualitative research study produces more in-depth, comprehensive information and seeks to understand people's interpretations, perceptions and lived experiences. Bryman (2008) ^[13] asserts that the case study method enables a researcher to closely examine the data within a specific context, and thus gives in-depth information on the subject under investigation.

Quantitative techniques produce discreet numerical data. Qualitative research includes designs, techniques and measures that do not produce discreet numerical data (Creswell, 2003) ^[20]. Qualitative or descriptive methodologies offer communication researchers in-depth understanding of communication phenomena (Bryman, 2008). Creswell (2003) ^[20] explains that when a researcher combines both qualitative and quantitative research methods he is able to assess the objectives of his study better because some are better assessed using quantitative methods and others by qualitative methods. The qualitative approach enables the study to be analytical or explanatory because it requires explanations financial problems and survival strategies of small scale enterprises. Bryman (2008) ^[13] argues that qualitative research can be understood as that research strategy that emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data. According to Rubin and Babbie (2005) qualitative research emphasizes the need to elicit a deeper understanding of the phenomenon in its natural environment. Besides, it used the qualitative and quantitative approaches to assess the effectiveness of community development fund adherence guidelines by local communities.

Research Design

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guidelines by local communities in Mkushi, Zambia. Creswell (2003) ^[20] affirms that qualitative research study produces more in-depth, comprehensive information and seeks to understand people's interpretations, perceptions and lived experiences. Bryman (2008) ^[13] asserts that the case study method enables a researcher to closely examine the data within a specific context, and thus gives in-depth information on the subject under investigation.

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Target population

The target population included seven (7) Ward Development Committees where there are CDF projects being implemented with all members of staff at the council in the Works Department. 5 experts in community development, and any other relevant stakeholders involved in school infrastructure projects funded through the CDF.

Sampling design

Rubin and Babbie (2005), explain that sampling is a process of selecting observations and most studies are conducted to determine some issues about the characteristics of a particular population, it is seldom possible that all the elements of that population can be investigated as it is not only impractical but it would also be resource consuming. Therefore, a proportion of that particular population is drawn and used in the investigation as a basis for the conclusions and generalizations about the entire population (Bryman, 2008) ^[13]. This study used both purposive sampling and simple random sampling methods. Purposive sampling helps to focus on particular characteristics of a population that are of interest which will enable the researcher to answer research questions (Creswell, 2014) ^[21]. The purposive sampling method was used to select Ward Development Committees who have schools built and being built in their wards. The simple random sampling method was used to select seven wards where such projects are being done in Mkushi District.

Sample size determination

Bryman (2008) ^[13] asserts that samples for qualitative studies are generally much smaller than those used in

quantitative studies because if it is too large, it may be difficult for the researcher to extract thick and rich data. The study targeted 50 Ward Development Committee members who have been involved with the CDF construction projects in Mkushi district. These members were selected the 7 wards where there are CDF construction projects. The study also solicited for information from 5 officials from the Local Council.

Data collection methods

Both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods were employed. For quantitative data: Surveys, structured questionnaires were administered to community members, project committee members, and relevant stakeholders to quantitatively measure adherence levels, effectiveness, and challenges in CDF adherence. Qualitative Data: In-depth, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with key informants, including experts, government representatives, and development organization representatives, to gain deeper insights and perspectives. Qualitative research interviews enable researchers to understand something from the subjects' point of view and to uncover the meaning of their experiences (Creswell, 2003) ^[20]. Interviews also allow people to convey to others a situation from their own perspective and in their own words. Berry (1999) ^[123] also asserts that in-depth interviewing is a type of interview which researchers use to elicit information in order to achieve a holistic understanding of the interviewee's point of view or situation.

Secondary data was collected from the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) and Zambia Development Agency. Some information was obtained from reports, journals and books from the ICU library both published and unpublished articles. Additional information was obtained from some master's theses while some information was obtained from census reports from Zambia Statistical Agency. A researcher needs to develop instruments with which to collect the necessary information about the population. In social science research the most commonly used instruments are: questionnaires, interview schedules, observational forms and standardized tests (Bryman, 2008) ^[13]. The study used interview schedules to facilitate the key informant interviews and focus group discussion and a questionnaire to obtain information from the youth groups.

Focus Group

Hocking *et al.* (2003) ^[124] defines a focus group as a group of people collected through some method that discusses some topic of concern to the research. They further state that focus groups and in-depth interviewing have been used to understand how people perceive and use communication in their daily lives. The focus group method has been primarily used in mass communication and marketing communication research According to Hocking *et al.* (2003) ^[124] an advantage of the focus groups is that they are an efficient quick and inexpensive way to collect data. In addition focus groups help in understanding the reasons behind a communication phenomenon. The data it provides is rich in that it often provides explanations for responses to questions that cannot be obtained by other methods because of time constraints. The focus group provides data that tend to be holistic and its outcome often is greater than the sum of its participants 'the explicit use of the group interaction

[produces] data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group' (Morgan 1988, p12) ^[125]. According to Hocking *et al.* (2003) ^[124] the method can be used to gather preliminary information to prepare for a larger survey or experiment.

Key Informant Interviews

According to Creswell (2003) ^[20], an interview is an oral administration of a questionnaire or an interview schedule. They further state that interviews are advantageous in that they provide in-depth data which is not possible to get using a questionnaire. In depth interviews are generally conducted with key informants or people who are both willing and able to shed light on the research concern.

Interview schedules

An interview schedule is a guideline for asking questions in-person or over the telephone. The interview schedule differs from a questionnaire only that precise measures are not given to the respondent (Hocking *et al.*, 2003) ^[124]. An interview schedule is a set of questions that the interviewer asks when interviewing. An interview schedule makes it possible to obtain data required to meet specific objectives of the study (Creswell, 2003) ^[20].

Questionnaires

Questionnaires are commonly used to obtain important information about the population. Each item in the questionnaire is developed to address a specific objective, research question or hypothesis of the study (Creswell, 2003) ^[20].

Data Analysis

Thematic content analysis was used as a method for analyzing qualitative data in order to allow the researcher to extract conceptual categories of data with similar meaning. This is called meaning categorization according to Kvale (1996) ^[126]. The data from the field will be manually analysed using thematic analysis. Direct quotations from the respondents were also used to present the findings. According to Kombo and Tromp (2006), thematic analysis identifies the major themes or concepts from the discussion and the frequency with which the theme appears is used to interpret its importance, attention or emphasis. The data was categorized into key issues/themes and analysed thematically (Creswell, 2003) ^[20]. MS Excel was used to analyse quantitative and production of tables, charts and graphs for data presentation.

Triangulation

According to Kombo and Tromp (2006), Triangulation is a method used to increase the credibility and validity of research findings. Triangulation, by combining theories, methods or observers in a research study, can help ensure that fundamental biases arising from the use of a single method or a single observer are overcome. Triangulation is also an effort to help explore and explain complex human behaviour using a variety of methods to offer a more balanced explanation to readers. It is a procedure that enables validation of data and can be used in both quantitative and qualitative studies (Creswell, 2003) ^[20].

Triangulation can enrich research as it offers a variety of datasets to explain differing aspects of a phenomenon of interest. It also helps refute where one dataset invalidates a

supposition generated by another. It can assist the confirming of a hypothesis where one set of findings confirms another set. Finally, triangulation can help explain the results of a study. Central to triangulation is the notion that methods leading to the same results give more confidence in the research findings. In order to achieve more credibility and validity, this study used semi-structured questionnaires as well as focus group discussions in data collections to avoid bias.

Ethical Consideration

Ethical issues such as informed consent, confidentiality and consequences for the interviewee should be taken into account with any qualitative interview (Kvale, 1996) ^[126]. In this study, ethical issues were considered when carrying out this study as all the research participants were informed about the purpose of the investigation and the features of research design. Informed consent was obtained from the Youth Groups that were interviewed. All of the participants in this study were treated in accordance to the ethical guidelines of the Information Communication University Ethics Committee. Although there is no identifiable risks for participating in this study, a couple of considerations have been kept in mind when dealing with WDCs. Throughout the study, the following codes of conduct were adhered to:

1. The respondents' names were not written on the semi-structured interview guides and the information collected was treated with strict confidentiality and academic purposes only.
2. Participants were treated with respect and consent was obtained from participants before they participate in the study, they will be accorded the right to understand what the researcher is doing.
3. The ethical clearance was obtained from the Information Communication Ethics Committee.

Presentation of findings

Chapter four: presentation of research findings and discussion of results

Overview

This chapter presents the results of the study on the assessment of the effectiveness on community CDF adherence guidelines by local communities in Mkushi, Zambia. Both qualitative and quantitative data is presented and discussed with the incorporation of the findings on the same theme obtained through the focus group discussions and key informant interviews.

Background characteristics of respondents

There were a number of characteristics that were examined and these included gender, age, marital status and level of education.

Gender

Table 1: Gender characteristic of respondents

Characteristic	Number	Percentage
Gender		
Male	28	56.0
Female	22	44.0
Total	50	100

Source: Field data (2024)

Results from the study show that 56 percent of respondents were male. There were more male respondents in the study. Only 44 percent of the respondents were females. Gender was very important in this study as it shows how development committees are gender insensitive. This shows that any gender can be involved in CDF projects.

Age Distribution

Table 2: Age characteristic of respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18 - 25	6	12
26 - 35	9	18
36 - 45	14	28
46 - 55	11	22
Above 56 years	10	20
Total	50	100

Source: Field data (2024)

Results from the study show that 12 percent of respondents were between the ages of 18 and 25 years. Eighteen percent of the respondents were aged between 26 years and 35 years while 28 percent were aged between 36 years and 45 years. 22 percent of respondents were between 46 years and 55 years while 20 percent were over 56 years of age. Age distribution is an important parameter in determining an economically active population. Age analysis at national level indicates that about 68 percent of the household heads belongs to the age groups that are below 50 years, which is the economically active population (CSO, 2010) [23]. In this study, 88 percent of the respondents were in the age group of 26 and above meaning they belong to the economically active population and could be regarded as potentially productive individuals with capacity to contribute positively to economic development through small enterprises.

Marital Status of Respondents

The four categories of marital status in the study area were single, married, widowed and divorced. By far, the majority of the respondents were married (36 percent). 28 percent of the respondents were single while 20 percent widows/widower and 17 percent were divorced or separated. The marital status of the respondents were important in the study as it showed that marital status is not a hindrance to anyone wishing to be involved in CDF projects.

Table 3: Marital status

Characteristic	Number	Percentage
Marital status		
Single	14	28.0
Married	18	36.0
Widow/widower	10	20.0
Separated/Divorced	9	17.0
Total	50	100

Source: Field data (2024)

Level of Education

The level of education was very important as it helped to understand the kind of respondents the researcher was dealing with. Results show that 20 percent of respondents achieved only the primary level of education, while another 34 percent had gone up to secondary school level. 28 percent of the respondents had some kind of tertiary education or skills training so they understood the managements of service provision while only 18 percent had no formal education.

Table 4: Level of education

Level of Education	Number	Percentage
Primary	10	20.0
Secondary	17	34.0
Tertiary/Skills training	14	28.0
None	9	18.0
Total	50	100

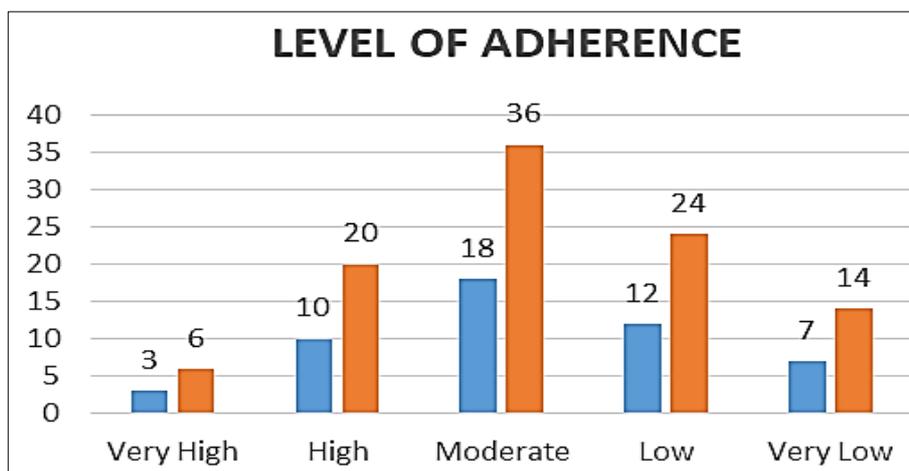
Source: Field data (2024)

To ascertain levels of adherence to outlined guidelines in CDF

Field data from respondents show that the adherence to outlined guidelines in the implementation of CDF projects is not always as guided. One of the key informants (Personal Communication: 2024) had this to say:

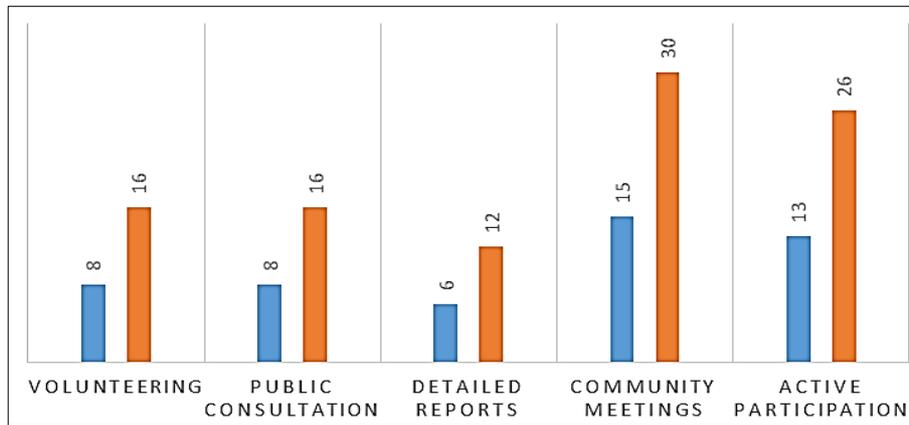
“The CDF guidelines are not always followed as the projects selected in many occasions are not the ones being implemented. Sometimes you find the Ward Councilor has another project in mind while the community also wants something else”.

When respondents were asked how they would rate the adherence to the outlined guidelines in CDF, 6 percent indicated very high, 20 percent indicated high, 36 percent indicated moderate, 24 percent indicated low while 14 percent indicated very low.



Source: Field data (2024)

Fig 1: Level of adherence

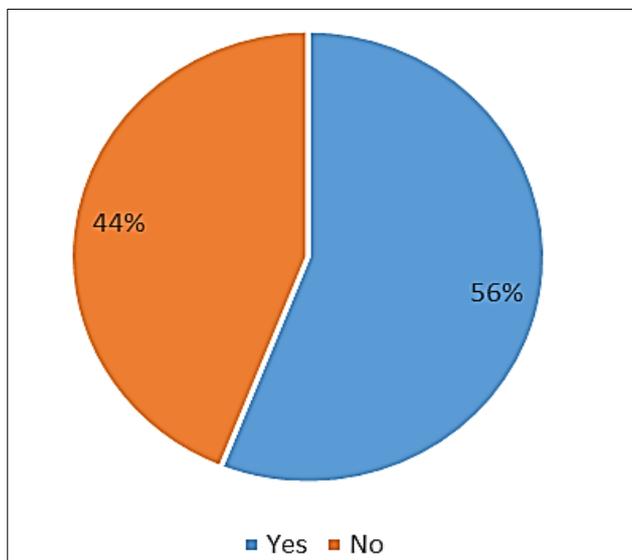


Source: Field Data (2024)

Fig 2: Instance where the community strictly followed the prescribed CDF guidelines during project implementation.

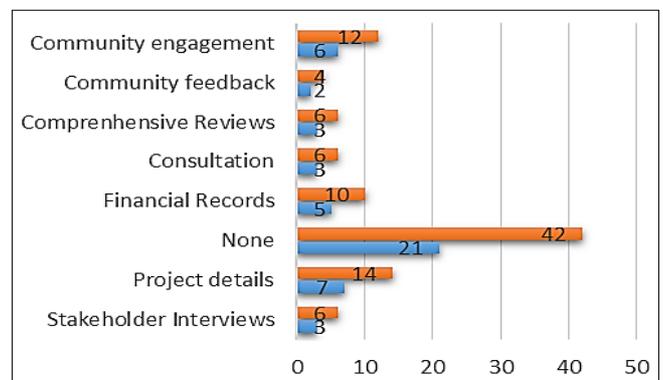
Respondents on instance where they strictly followed the CDF guidelines, 30% of the respondents indicated during community meeting, 26% indicated active participation, 16% indicated volunteering, 16% indicated public consultation while 12% indicated detailed reports.

Respondents were asked if they are areas where adherence to CDF guidelines could be improved and 56% of the respondents indicated Yes, while 44% indicated No.



Source: Field data (2024)

Fig 3: Are there in areas where adherence to CDF guidelines could be improved?

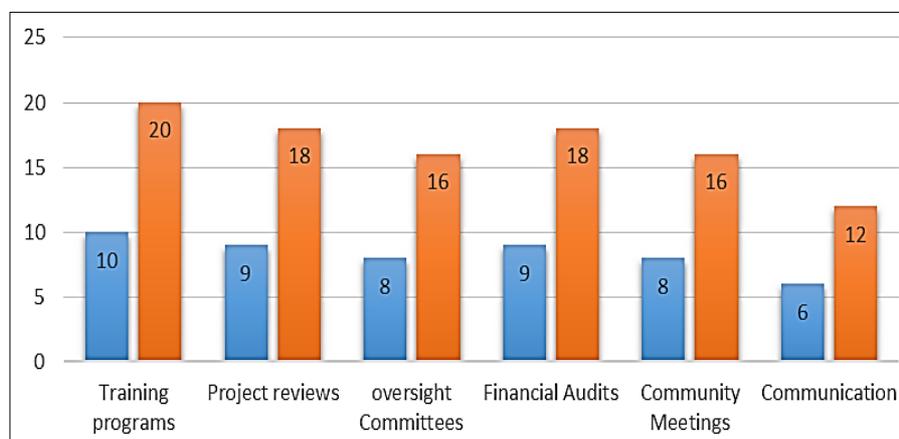


Source: Field Data (2024)

Fig 4: What areas of CDF guidelines could be improved?

Respondents were asked on areas of CDF guidelines that could be improved and 42% of the respondents indicated None, 14% indicated project details, 12% community engagement, 10% financial records, 6% stakeholder interview, 6% comprehensive review, 5% consultation while 4% indicated community feedback.

Mechanisms put in adherence to CDF place to enhance guidelines



Source: Field Data (2024)

Fig 5: What mechanisms or strategies has the community put in place to ensure strict compliance with established CDF guidelines during project implementation?

Respondents were asked on what mechanisms or strategies put in place and 20% indicated training programs, 18% project reviews, 18% financial audits, 16% community meetings, 16% oversight committees while 12% indicated communication.

Respondents were asked if they are any specific roles and responsibilities assigned to individuals and 95% indicated Yes while 5% indicated No.

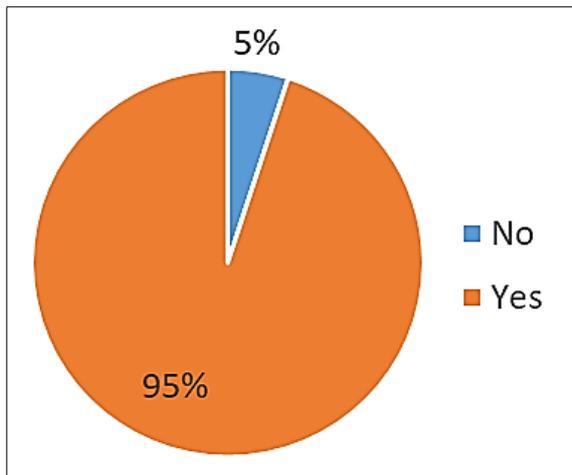
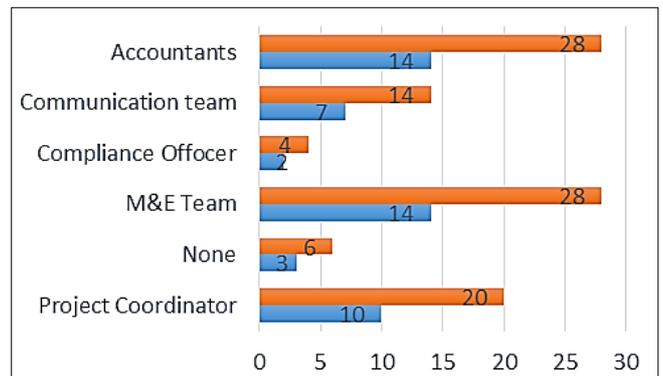


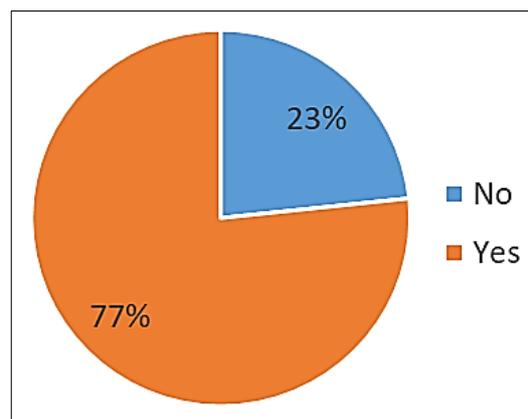
Fig 6: Are there any specific roles or responsibilities assigned to individuals or committees within the community to oversee adherence to CDF guidelines?



Source: Field Data (2024)

Fig 7: What are the roles or responsibilities assigned to individuals or committees within the community to oversee adherence to CDF guidelines?

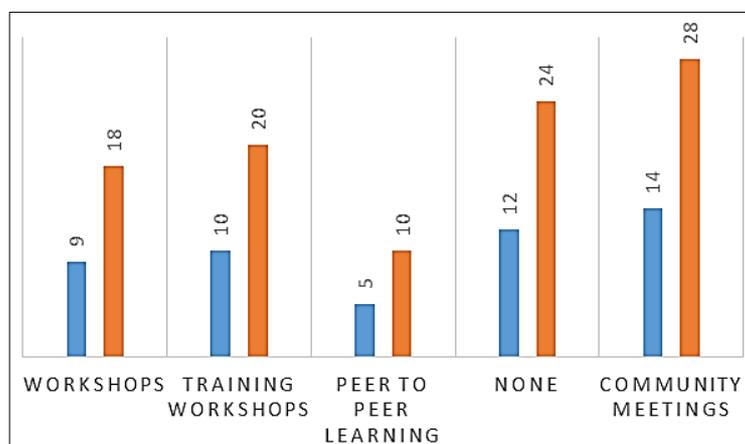
Respondents were asked on what roles or responsibilities are assigned to individuals and 28% indicated M&E team, 28% accountants, 20% project coordinator, 14% communication team, 6% None, while 4% indicated compliance officer.



Source: Field data (2024)

Fig 8: Have there been any initiatives to provide training or support to community members to enhance their understanding of CDF guidelines?

Respondents were asked if they have been initiatives to provide training or support to community members. 77% of the respondents indicated Yes, while 23% indicated No.

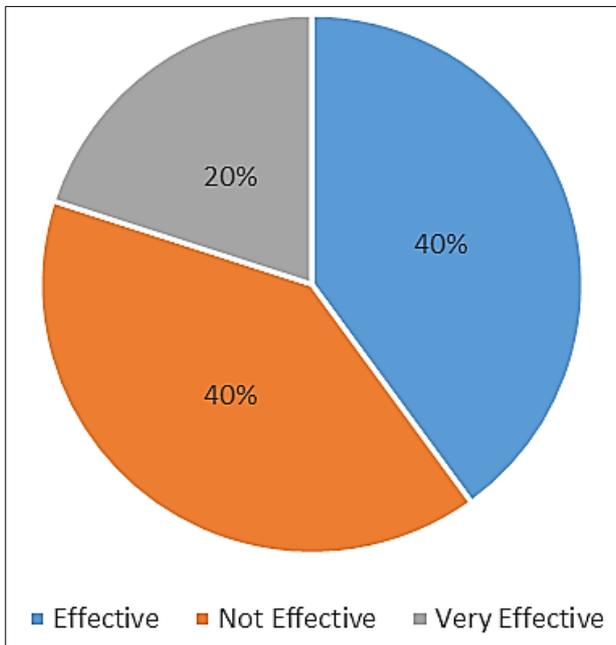


Source: Field data (2024)

Fig 9: If yes to the previous question, please provide details

Respondents were asked on what initiatives have been put in place to provide training or support to community members. 28% indicated community meetings, 24% said none, 20% training programs, 18% workshops, while 10% indicated peer-to-peer learning.

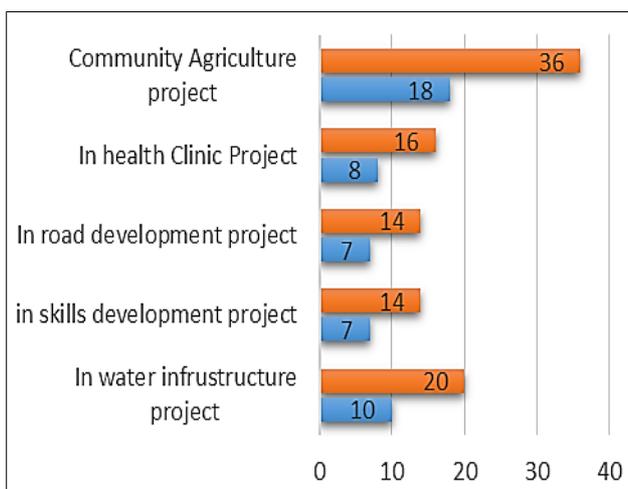
Effectiveness of oversight by local communities in CDF projects



Source: Field data (2024)

Fig 10: How would you evaluate the effectiveness of the community's oversight in ensuring compliance with CDF guidelines during project implementation?

Respondents on the effectiveness of the community's oversight in ensuring compliance with CDF guidelines. 40% indicated effective, 40% indicated not effective, while 20% indicated very effective.

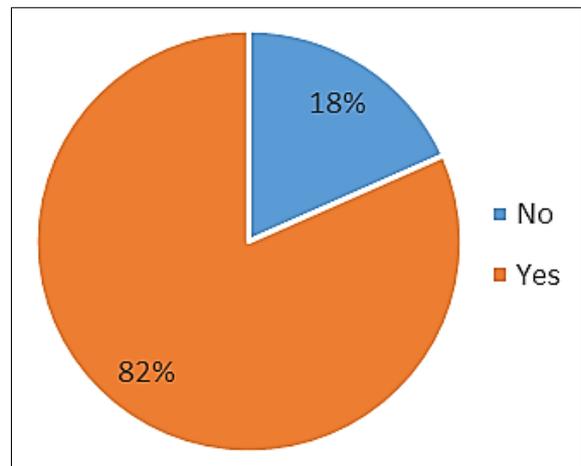


Source: Field data (2024)

Fig 11: Instances where the community's oversight led to successful adherence to CDF guidelines and project outcomes?

The respondents were asked on instances where the community's oversight led to successful adherence. 36% indicated community agriculture project, 20% in water

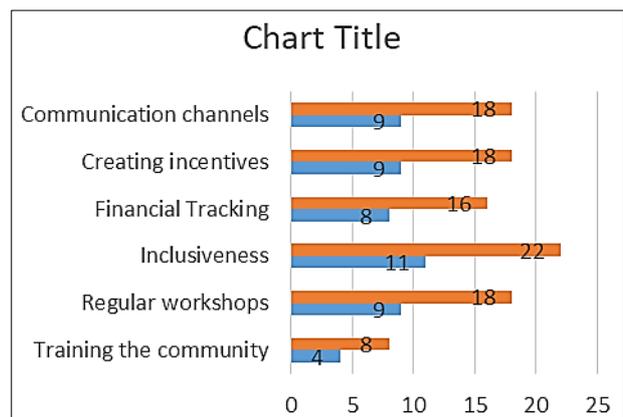
infrastructure project, 14% in skills development project, 14% in road development project, 16% in in health clinic project.



Source: Field data (2024)

Fig 12: Are there any challenges or areas where the community's oversight could be strengthened to improve adherence to CDF guidelines?

The respondents were asked if they are challenges or areas where the community's oversight could be strengthened and 82% said Yes while 18% said No.



Source: Field data (2024)

Fig 13: If yes to the previous question, what areas the community's oversight could be strengthened to improve adherence to CDF guidelines?

Respondents were asked on what areas the community's oversight could be strengthened. 22% said, inclusiveness, 18% regular workshops, 18% communication channels, 16% financial tracking, 18% creating incentives and 8% said training the community.

Discussion of research findings

In this study, it was established that adherence to outlined guidelines in the implementation of CDF projects is not always as guided. Sometimes the projects selected on many occasions are not the ones being implemented. The study further established that the majority 74 percent of the respondents perceived adherence of projects to be moderate, low to very low.

In the study, it was established that 35% of the respondents perceived the highest degree of adherence to the specified principles. This implies that a significant proportion of the

participants view the adherence as being in the median range, neither very high nor very low. 23% of respondents which was the second-largest group believed there are low level of adherence. This suggests that a sizeable portion of respondents think the rules are not strictly observed.

The varying perceptions of adherence levels indicate potential variations in the quality of implementation of CDF guidelines.

It was also observed that when asked on instances where they strictly followed the CDF guidelines, 30% of the respondents indicated during community meeting, 26% indicated active participation, 16% indicated volunteering, 16% indicated public consultation while 12% indicated detailed reports. In this study, it was observed that the majority of the respondents at 56% believe that adherence could be improved while 44% feel the situation cannot be changed for the better.

Mechanisms put in place to enhance guidelines adherence to CDF

In this study, it was observed that training programs, Review of Projects, Financial Audits, and Communication are among the most preferred methods that are believed to be a panacea for better adherence. The data showed that a significant proportion 18% of participants perceive training initiatives as a means of ensuring compliance. This implies that the significance of informing project stakeholders or members of the community about the principles has been acknowledged. Determining the precise topics covered in training sessions and their efficacy may shed light on stakeholders' level of familiarity with the standards.

It was also observed that 18% of participants' regard project reviews as an essential procedure. This suggests that adherence is aided by routine evaluations of project activity. Financial Audits also occupied a significant portion 18% of respondents as a means of ensuring compliance. This demonstrates how crucial it is to maintain financial compliance and openness. Analysing the frequency and comprehensiveness of financial audits, along with the actions that were done after the audit's conclusions, might yield important information.

It was also observed in the study that community meetings as well as oversight committees were also mentioned though were not among the most preferred methods to ensure compliance. This highlights the value of encouraging candid dialogue and active participation among community members. Analysing the format, frequency, and subjects covered in community meetings can provide information on how involved the community is in adhering to the guidelines. Oversight committees are important in that they are in charge of keeping an eye on and guaranteeing that rules are followed. Communication although it represented a somewhat smaller portion highlights the significance of an efficient and transparent flow of information. The function of communication in adherence can be clarified by examining the communication routes, the frequency of updates, and the responsiveness to community feedback.

In this study, it was observed that community's oversight is successful in guaranteeing adherence to CDF principles. This was signified by the sizable percentage of respondents thought that the supervision procedures in place are effectively promoting adherence to CDF projects. The study shows that Community oversight was highly preferred as

communities feel by being involved in the implementation of the project leads to adherence.

Although the majority 60 percent of respondents believed in community oversight as a tool for effective adherence, 40 percent still were not convinced of the effectiveness.

This implies that some respondents though they are in the minority think the oversight measures are remarkably good in guaranteeing compliance and go above and beyond simple effectiveness. The significant divide between those who perceive the oversight as effective and those who find it not effective indicates diverse perspectives within the respondent pool. Understanding the reasons behind these varying perceptions is crucial.

Moreover, respondents who perceive the oversight as not effective may offer insights into challenges or shortcomings in the current oversight mechanisms. These findings could inform strategies for improvement. Additionally, those who perceive the oversight as very effective can potentially offer insights into successful practices and strategies that contribute to the high level of compliance.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

From the analysis, it was concluded that adherence to outlined guidelines in the implementation of CDF projects is not always as guided. Sometimes the projects selected on many occasions are not the ones being implemented.

It was also concluded that training is the most preferred way of increasing CDF project guidelines adherence.

Recommendations

The findings underscore the complexity of factors influencing adherence to CDF guidelines, including demographic characteristics, perceived effectiveness of mechanisms, and the role of community oversight. Policymakers and implementers should consider these insights when designing and refining strategies for guideline adherence.

To enhance the effectiveness of CDF projects, it is recommended to conduct in-depth qualitative investigations to uncover the nuanced reasons behind varying perceptions. Additionally, fostering transparent communication, strengthening oversight committees, and tailoring training programs to address specific needs could contribute to improved adherence.

In this study, it can also be concluded that training is the most preferred method of increasing adherence to CDF project guidelines during selection and implementation stages.

Tailor Training Programs to Specific Needs:

Given the acknowledgment of training programs as a crucial mechanism for adherence, it is recommended to tailor these programs to address specific needs identified by respondents. Conduct a thorough analysis of the areas where training is most needed and customize programs to enhance stakeholders' understanding of CDF guidelines.

Enhance Transparency in Financial Audits:

Since financial audits are perceived as important for adherence, it is recommended to focus on enhancing transparency in financial processes. This includes ensuring that financial audits are conducted regularly, comprehensively, and that the findings are communicated

transparently to stakeholders. Addressing any concerns raised by respondents regarding financial compliance can contribute to increased confidence in the adherence process.

Strengthen Community Engagement through Meetings:

Recognizing the value of community meetings in promoting adherence, it is recommended to strengthen community engagement initiatives. Evaluate the format, frequency, and subjects covered in community meetings to ensure they effectively facilitate candid dialogue and active participation. Creating a platform for open communication can contribute to a shared understanding of and commitment to CDF guidelines.

Conduct In-Depth Analysis of Oversight Committees:

In response to the diverse perceptions of the effectiveness of community oversight, it is recommended to conduct an in-depth analysis of oversight committees. Examine the composition, authority, and efficiency of these committees to identify areas for improvement. Understanding the specific factors that contribute to effective oversight can guide enhancements in this critical aspect of guideline adherence.

Implement a Comprehensive Communication Strategy:

Acknowledging the significance of communication as a mechanism for adherence, it is recommended to implement a comprehensive communication strategy. This includes establishing clear communication channels, ensuring regular updates on project progress, and being responsive to community feedback. A well-structured communication strategy can foster transparency, address concerns, and keep stakeholders informed about adherence efforts.

These recommendations aim to address specific aspects identified in the research findings to enhance the overall effectiveness of adherence to CDF guidelines. Implementing targeted interventions based on these recommendations can contribute to a more robust and successful community development framework.

Acknowledgement

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