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Contribution of National Government Constituencies Development Fund on Poverty Alleviation in Kibwezi West Constituency, Makueni County, Kenya

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Abstract

Development initiatives in rural areas help in poverty alleviation and strive to empower the marginalised rural communities to cope with hostile environments. Sustainable projects strengthen them to control their own social economic transformation. This study sought to examine the contribution of the National Government Constituencies Development Fund (NG-CDF) on poverty alleviation in Kibwezi East Constituency, in Makueni County. It adopted a mixed-methods research design and data were collected through content analysis, structural observation, face-to-face interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant discussions (KIDs). The qualitative data were analysed qualitatively by categorising them into key themes, while quantitative data was analysed using statistical techniques with the help of statistical package for social scientists (SPSS Version 23). The data were presented in frequency tables, pie charts, and comparative bar graphs. The study found that although the NG-CDF is presumed to have achieved a lot, it has not reached most of the member groups in the study area. Much of the fund has been invested in rehabilitation and construction of schools and healthcare structures, water projects; the purchase of learning materials; and food security; and the provision of seeds and emergency food relief during drought. The study concludes that: the NG-CDF kit is an essential safety net for the poor if it is managed well and targeted to the marginalised poor in society; the NG-CDF should never become a property of the area member of parliament, but should serve the very poor; the secretariat needs serious training and should be accountable for all the funds allocated to the NG-CDF; selection of beneficiaries should be done collectively in each sub-county; the National Government should consider increasing the NG-CDF to cater for more groups; There is need for a nationwide situational analysis to examine to what extent the fund has been able to transform the lives of the poor; and research should also look into what should be done to make the NG-CDF more open to, and inclusive of, the poor themselves but not their representatives.

Key Words: Poverty, National Government Constituencies Development Fund, Marginalised Poor, Empowerment, Sustainability, Poverty

Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

Poverty has become a daily life experience of many people in the developing world, particularly in Africa. According to UNDP (2009), most African countries are clustered at the bottom of the Human Development Index (HDI). The primary task of development programmes worldwide is to alleviate poverty and enhance livelihood of marginalised people. Substantial progress has been achieved over the past 25 years. Average consumption per capita in some developing countries has increased by 70 percent while average life expectancy has risen from 51 to 63 years and primary school enrollment rates have reached 89 percent. If these gains were evenly spread, much of the world's poverty would be eliminated. On the contrary, more than one fifth of humanity still lives in acute poverty (World Development Report, 1992).

The poor are more vulnerable since they do not have the ability to build food reserves for hard times and they hold fewer assets to draw upon during such times (White and Killick, 2001). The Rio Earth Summit (1992), affirms that much of the implementation of policies aimed at shifting economies to a sustainable development path have to take place not at the level of National Government but at international and local levels respectively. This explains why devolution of public funds such as the National Government Constituency Development Fund (NG-CDF) in Kenya is critical in attaining a sustainable development for alleviation of poverty at grassroot level. Even though livelihood of people in the world has increased and poverty decreased over the past 3 decades, 1.2 billion people are still living in extreme poverty (Olinto and Uematsu, 2010). As a result of this high level of poverty, development in many developing countries has been negatively affected particularly in Africa.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Since the establishment of the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in 2003, there has been no empirical investigation done to assess its contribution to poverty alleviation in Kibwezi West Constituency. The CDF Act was reviewed in 2016 and renamed the National Government Constituencies Development Fund (NG-CDF). The government of Kenya has established the NG-CDF to bring about socio economic development in the rural areas and thereby reduce inequality and eradicate poverty. According to Roxana (2009), the government has intensified the use of decentralized programmes in its strategy to tackle poverty and to reverse regional disparities. Despite this initiative by the government, there is doubt regarding whether poverty alleviation has taken place in Kibwezi West Constituency. This study intended to examine the impact of NG-CDF and whether it has generated benefits in improving the livelihoods of the poor in the Kibwezi West Constituency. More critical is the concern on the awareness and participation of the local communities in the planning and management of the fund. Although the allocation of NG-CDF has been increasing over time, there are areas that are in extreme poverty and underdevelopment. According to Musau (2013), the County is prone to frequent drought experienced in the extensive low lands which account for almost 90% of the total area. There is concern regarding how the people there are involved in the usage of this fund in the constituency. Poverty level is increasing as shown by the indicators of the main sectors of education, healthcare, road infrastructure, water, and security. This makes it a daily life experience of majority of the people in the constituency.

1.3 Research Objectives

Main Objective

To establish the contribution of NG-CDF on poverty alleviation in Makueni County, Kenya.

Specific Research Objectives

- i) To assess the contribution of NG-CDF funded healthcare projects on poverty alleviation in Kibwezi West Constituency.
- ii) To explore the contribution of NG-CDF funded water projects on poverty alleviation in Kibwezi West Constituency.
- iii) To examine the contribution of NG-CDF funded education projects on poverty alleviation in Kibwezi West Constituency.

- iv) To establish the contribution of NG-CDF funded road infrastructure projects on poverty alleviation in Kibwezi West Constituency.
- v) To assess the contribution of NG-CDF funded security projects on poverty alleviation in Kibwezi West Constituency.

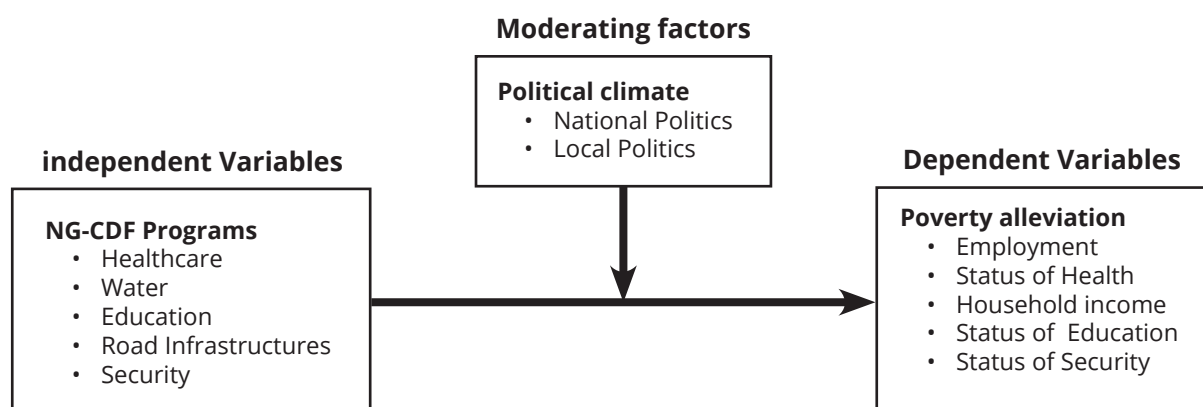
Significance of the Study

This study will re-awaken the people of Kibwezi West Constituency on the importance of active participation in eradication of poverty in the Constituency. This study aimed to be an eye opener to the NG-CDF Coordination Committee on areas where they have been going right or wrong in their coordination duties in the constituency. It was also to inform NG-CDF staff in other Constituencies on which aspects of the fund need to be treated with caution and which mistakes need to be avoided, among other concerns. The findings of this study were to help other constituencies in Makueni County to assess their development agenda and determine how effective NG-CDF has been in alleviating poverty.

1.4 Conceptual Framework

The NG-CDF programmes are the independent variables. The political climate is the moderating factor because politics both in national and local levels are more involved with NG-CDF programmes and therefore affect the projects.

Figure 1 | *Conceptual Framework*



Source: Researchers' conceptualisation, 2017

Poverty alleviation is the dependent variable. The NG-CDF programmes are influenced by the political climate of the constituency. This influence leads to poverty alleviation in terms of provision of quality education, availability of health services, transport accessibility, increasing employment, water is made available for the household, and security status is improved.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study relied on two theories: Empowerment Theory, which was developed by Paulo Freire in 1973; Decentralisation Theory as presented by Smith (1985) and developed further by Kochen & Deutsch (1980).

Empowerment Theory

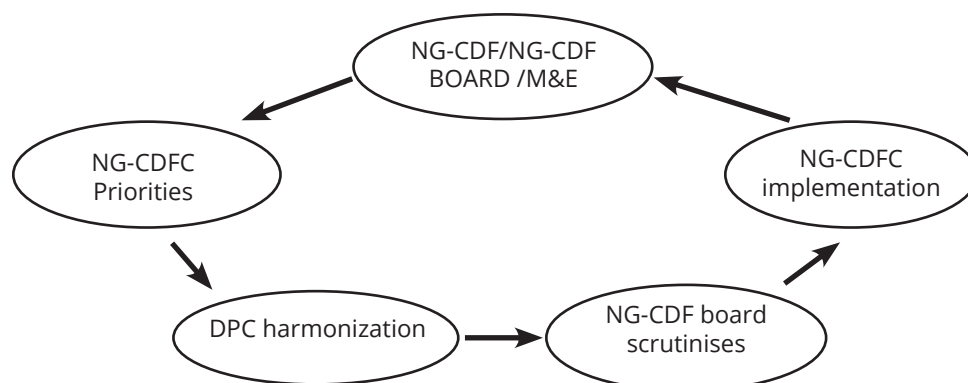
Empowerment Theory (Zimmerman, 2000) embraces notions of sociopolitical control (Rappaport, 1984; Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988), critical understandings of environments (Kieffer, 1984; Speer & Peterson, 2000), and democratic participation by people. Empowerment is a transformative process within human existence from the state of powerlessness to the state of relative control over one's overall existence, by taking control of one's destiny and making use of one's immediate environment for a sustainable improvement in livelihoods (Bandura, 2012). The theory illustrates mechanisms by which community organisations gather internal power from processes of team formation, capacity building, group dynamics, and team building (Bandura, 2012). This collaboration may be problematic in that it can lead to bias in result findings in favour of the evaluated group as it may likely answer questions in favour of itself (Bandura, 2012) given that perceptions of development are relative to restrictive considerations of value attributes within a given population. Despite these constraints, the contribution of Empowerment Theory on development cannot be over emphasized taking into consideration the type and number of projects that have been implemented through the use of NG-CDF funds, which has led to access to food, education, healthcare, water sanitation, and roads networks. Decision making capacity has increased leadership and mentorship roles, domestic violence reduction has also been achieved.

Decentralisation Theory

The Decentralisation Theory as presented by Smith (1985) and developed further by Kochen & Deutsch (1980). It regards the process of redistributing functions, powers, people, or things, away from a central location or authority. Conyers (1983) and Conyers (2006) describe decentralisation as any transfer of powers or functions of government from the national level to any sub-national level. As such, decentralisation is both a political and administrative phenomenon which focuses on transferring both decision making and administrative power to fewer tier governments. According to Rondinelli, Nellis, & Cheema (1983), decentralisation implies transferring or delegating authority to plan, make decisions, and manage public functions, from the Central Government and its agencies to field organisations of those agencies, subordinate units of government, semi-autonomous public cooperations, area-wide development authorities, functional authorities, autonomous Local Governments, or non-governmental organisations. Smith (1985) sees decentralisation as both reversing concentration of administration from a single center and concerning powers of local government. As such, decentralisation involves transferring decision making power and administration from the center to lower levels of government.

2.2 Review of Empirical studies

Literature was reviewed concerning the NG-CDF and its contribution on poverty alleviation in a rural set up. Further, to the researcher carried out a literature review on the subject of NG-CDF and the alleviation of poverty among people. This section transcends the examination of literature on NG-CDF, its contribution to poverty alleviation, and identifies the gaps left by existing studies. Rural development has been neglected for a long time in many African countries and the focus has been on urban development leading to a high level of poverty in rural areas which results from unequal distribution of resources within a country. Chambers (1984), argued that poor people are rarely met and when they are, they often do not speak, when they do, they are often cautious and differential, and what they say is often either not listened or brushed aside, or interpreted in bad light. According to Perret S, and Anseeuw (2005), rural people have long been denied their birthright of decent housing. According to Kimenyi (2005), the factors that challenge to effective participation of local people in the usage of public funds include: inadequate information on the devolved funds, exclusion from decision making regarding the funds, poor coordination resulting to project duplication, a culture of political patronage, inadequate citizen's capacity to demand accountability from the ruling elite, unresponsive government structures, an unaccountable political class, weak legislative regimes regarding devolved funds, apathy among citizens, and corruption, among others.

Figure 2 | NG-CDF Project Cycle

Source: Adopted from www.NG-CDF.go.ke

The chairman in every constituency is required to convene a meeting in each location of the constituency to deliberate on residents' development priorities. These are then forwarded to the NG-CDFC which in turn compiles and ranks them in a priority list of between 5 and 25 project proposals every financial year. The NG-CDFC submits the project proposal to the Board for approval. The Board approves projects and disburses funds. Funding priority is based on completion of on-going projects (www.NG-CDF.go.ke).

The National Government Constituency Development Fund (NG-CDF) and other Related Public Funds for Development

The government of India has a similar fund to the NG-CDF officially known as Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS). It was launched in 1993 with an allocation of 2 million rupees per MP/constituency, per year. The MP recommends projects which are approved and managed by the District Authority of MPLADS. The projects funded include: water treatment, healthcare, infrastructure, sanitation, and emergency assistance.

Causes of Poverty in Kibwezi West Constituency

According to the World Bank (2013), the main cause of world poverty include: poor people's lack of resources, an extremely unequal income distribution in the world, internal conflicts within specific countries, and hunger itself. In East Africa, poverty rates remained high by 2011 where 67% of Ugandans, 65% of Tanzanians, 44% of Rwandese, and 45.9% of Kenyans, are said to live under absolute poverty (World Bank, 2013). According to Wambugu (2010), the high level of poverty in rural areas in Kenya is largely explained by low access to physical assets, inadequate non-farm employment opportunities, low access to healthcare and schooling and low agricultural productivity. Makueni County experiences high levels of poverty which currently stand at 64.3 percent (Kenya Integrated and Household Budget Survey [KIHBS], 2006). Kibwezi West Constituency is located at the Eastern side of Makueni County where climate change and variability which include insufficient rain and prolonged dry spells are highly experienced there. As a result there has been crop failure affecting food security and worsening water scarcity. Poor people earn less than 1\$ per day and have less access to basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing, health, water, and education. The majority of the poor are women, children, and people living with disabilities.

Types of Poverty targeted by NG-CDF in Kibwezi West Constituency

The NG-CDF targets education, health, and water. Once these are funded the rate of poverty among the people is reduced since the resources that were used for these needs are channeled to other development sectors. These projects have been identified by the community on a priority basis and their completion and utilisation should satisfy genuine needs. Education as one of the key sectors funded by NG-CDF plays a significant role in reducing poverty. The more educated the head of the household is, the more likely other household members will escape from poverty. Water sector is another area targeted by NG-CDF. A Majority of the population in the county depend on surface and sub-surface dams for water, which often

do not hold sufficient water due to high evaporation rates during the dry season. The vast area of the county experiences inadequate supply of water for domestic use. Poor people walk long distances in search of water, which is mainly transported by donkeys and is often not enough. The roads sector is another area targeted by the NG-CDF where the conditions of the roads in the county are poor and consist of gravel and earth (555.2kms and 2194.6kms respectively), which is about 86 percent of the total road. These roads are rendered impassable during rainy seasons and have adversely affected agriculture and reduced market produce (Makueni County Integrated Development Plan, 2013).

Poverty alleviation

Governments around the world are obliged to provide services to their citizens. However, some governments are unable to do so due to poverty, corruption, and nepotism. Economic sustainability is essential because it helps in attaining a dignified livelihood and adequate standards of living. A good example is South Africa where according to the *Millennium Development Goals Country Report* (2013), nearly 20 years into democracy, South Africa is still battling with issues of poverty, inequality, unemployment, and hunger. The government's effort to address Millennium Development Goal 1 is through the provision of a "social wage" package intended to reduce the cost of living of the poor. The concept of livelihood has a close relationship with sustainability as argued by Chambers and Conway (1992). They assert that livelihood comprises capabilities, assets (both tangible and intangible resources), and activities required for living. Perret and Anseeuw(2005), assert that massive financial efforts have been made in South Africa by the public sector towards rural development and poverty alleviation, where the concern was on social grants, improved public services, healthcare, education, electricity, water, sanitation, and housing.

In Kenya for example, fighting poverty has been the government's main agenda since independence in 1963. Despite of this effort, it is noticeable that the gap between the poor and the rich continues to widen. The country was hit by severe drought in 2004-2005 where it was reported that in Kamba land at that time, people often collapsed and died from hunger while walking to work because their bodies were too weak (Barasa, 2007). In most cases, the livelihood of most rural people comes from agriculture produce, both as farmers or employed as workers. According to a poverty analysis study by Makueni (2005), Kenya is still poor. This was confirmed by the International Monetary Fund Report of 2009 which showed that more than 1/3 of Kenyans still live on less than 1\$ a day.

Knowledge Gap

Existing literature has left out the contribution of NG-CDF to poverty alleviation and has concentrated on other countries and other constituencies other than Kibwezi West Constituency, making it of importance to explore the constituency. Other literatures looks at the usage of NG-CDF fund but not at poverty alleviation as proved by the indicators of poverty alleviation such as health status, education status, employment, household income, provision of water, and good road network. The literature does not clearly show the impact of the Constituency Development Fund on people's livelihood in the constituency under study.

Materials and Methods

The research design used in this study is a mixed method approach. The study aimed at collecting information from respondents on the contribution of NG-CDF to poverty alleviation in Kibwezi West Constituency. A descriptive survey design was used in this study to assist the researcher to look at the problem at hand thoroughly and obtain pertinent information that could bring about solutions to the alleviation of poverty. According to Kombo and Tromp (2006), the major purpose of descriptive research is description of the state of affairs as they exist. Descriptive research design in this study involved getting information through interviews and administering questionnaires to a sample of individuals in the constituency in order to get the views of the population about the contribution of NG-CDF on poverty alleviation in the constituency. The information collected was analysed using qualitative and quantitative techniques and then data presented using frequency distribution tables, percentages, and narration. Kibwezi West Constituency has six wards from which the population was drawn: Emali/Mulala, Kikumbulyu North, Kikumbulyu South, Makindu, Nguu/Masumba, and

Nguumo wards. The population of this study comprised of all stakeholders involved in NG-CDF projects in Kibwezi West Constituency. The NG-CDF projects involves the community, NG-CDF staff, project managers of development sectors of health, education, water, roads, and security, through which the projects are implemented. The total population for the study comprised 1,000 people, male and female, aged between 30 and 65 years of age. Multi-stage sampling approach used in this study.

Table 1 | *Sampling Frame*

Strata	Population	Proportionate sample size	Disproportionate sample
NG-CDF Staff	40	8	Adjust to 10
Project managers	100	20	20
Community leaders	60	12	12
General public	800	160	158
Total	1000	200	200

20% of 1000 is 200. The sample size was 200

Source: Researcher, 2017

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2009), 10- 30% of a population can be used to get the sample size but the researcher has opted to use 20% formula in order to get a manageable sample size to work with, which has been adjusted to get a disproportionate sample that was used in the study. Out of the 40 NG-CDF staff, 10 of them were selected by simple random sampling for the study. Out of the 100 project managers, 20 of them were selected by simple random sampling. Out of the 60 community leaders 12 of them were selected by simple random sampling. Out of the 800 people of general public, 158 of them were selected by simple random sampling, then stratified random sampling by dividing them into 2 groups of men and women to get 79 men and 79 women.

The study used primary data by distributing questionnaires to the individual respondents selected randomly and collected them after they were filled. The researcher administered both structured and semi-structured interview questions to the key informants and the officers of the NG-CDF. One Focus group discussions were organized in each of the six wards of Kibwezi West Constituency where the participants. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected and the researcher used secondary data from constituency development reports, journals, empirical researches, the Internet and other relevant documents. The research tools/instruments include: questionnaires, interview schedules, observations guides, and focused group discussions guides. The selection of these tools was guided by the nature of data to be collected, the availability of time, as well as the objective of the study. Data analysis refers to examining what has been collected in a survey or an experiment and making deductions and inferences. It involves scrutinizing the acquired information and making inferences (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). The qualitative data was analysed using descriptive analysis where the findings of the views of the respondents was summarized and interpreted and presented in a table. The quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics with the help of the SPSS package.

Data Presentation and Discussion

Table 2 | *Respondent's Gender*

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	38	40.4
Female	56	59.6
Total	94	100.0

Source: Researchers, 2017

Table 2 above shows that 98 respondents took part in the study with 38(40.4%) being male and 56(59.6%) female as more females were available at the households during the interviews and most males work away from home in major towns.

Respondent's Age Group

Table 3 | Respondent's Age Group

Age-Group	Frequency	Percent
15-19	2	2.1
20-24	7	7.4
30-34	33	35.1
35 and above	51	54.3
No response	1	1.1
Total	94	100.0

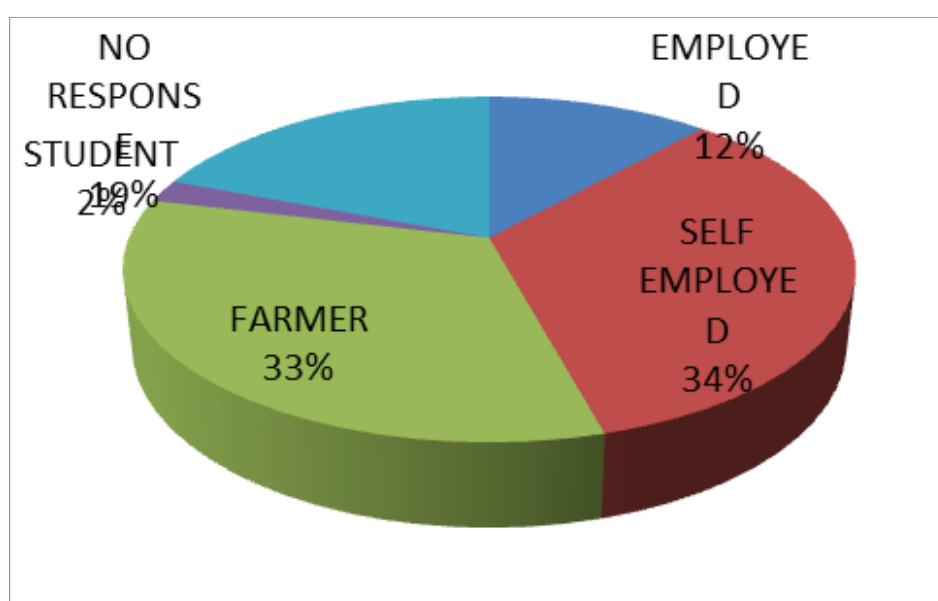
Source: Researchers, 2017

As reflected on table above, 51(54.3%) of the respondents were 35 years and above, while 33(35.1%) were aged between 30-34 years. However, 9(9.5%) were between 15 - 24 years which was the youngest category of youth in the study. This may be explained by the fact that the study targeted more mature respondents who understood how the County Government works in poverty alleviation support programmes.

Respondents Occupation

Figure 2 below reveals that a majority of the respondents 32(34%) were self-employed, followed by 31(33%) who are farmers. The employed respondents were 11(12%) and the minority of 2(2%) were students. This may be explained by the fact that majority of the respondents available in the area of study are self employed to provide for their livelihood due to lack of employment opportunities in the area.

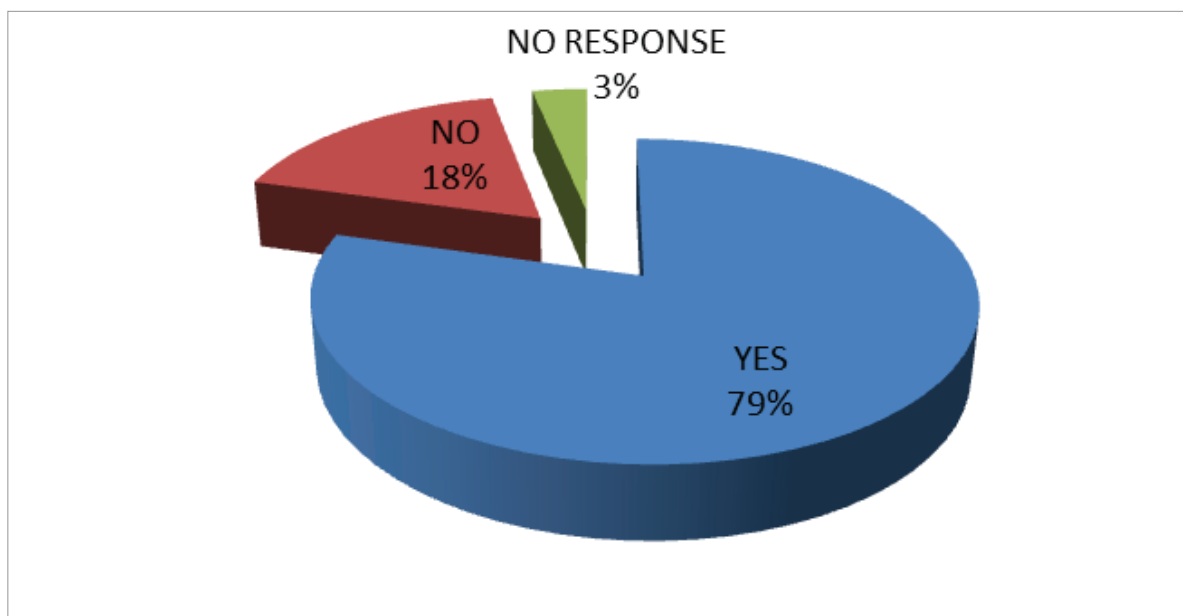
Figure 2 | Respondents Occupation



Source: Researchers, 2017

Anything done to alleviate poverty in the household

Figure 3 | *Whether the Respondent has done anything to Alleviate Poverty*

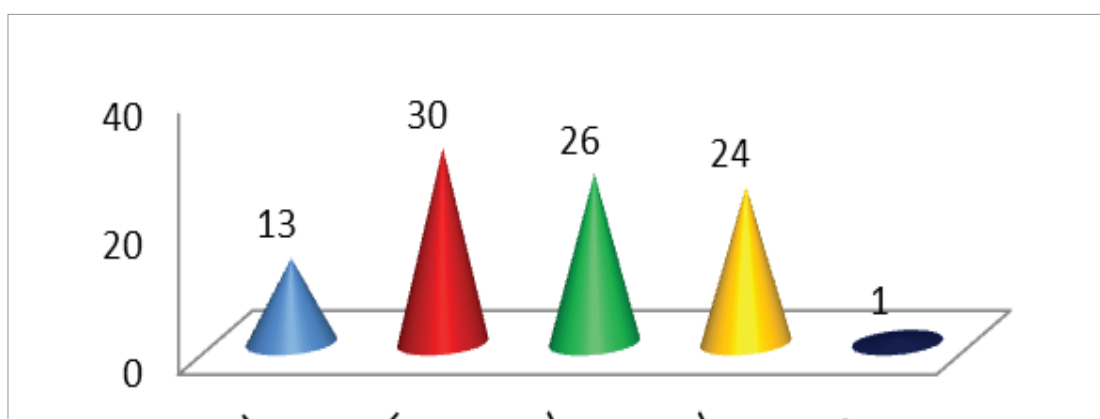


Source: Researchers, 2017

Figure 3 above, shows responses on whether respondents did anything to alleviate poverty in their household. Results indicates that: A majority of respondents 73(79%) have done something to alleviate poverty in their households; 18(18%) have not done anything to alleviate poverty in their households as a majority of the people have engaged in small businesses and in casual labour to earn their livelihood and alleviate poverty. A minority of the people have no capital to begin businesses, or lack of awareness on how to begin small income generating projects.

Level of understanding of NG-CDF

Figure 4 | *Level of understanding of NG-CDF*

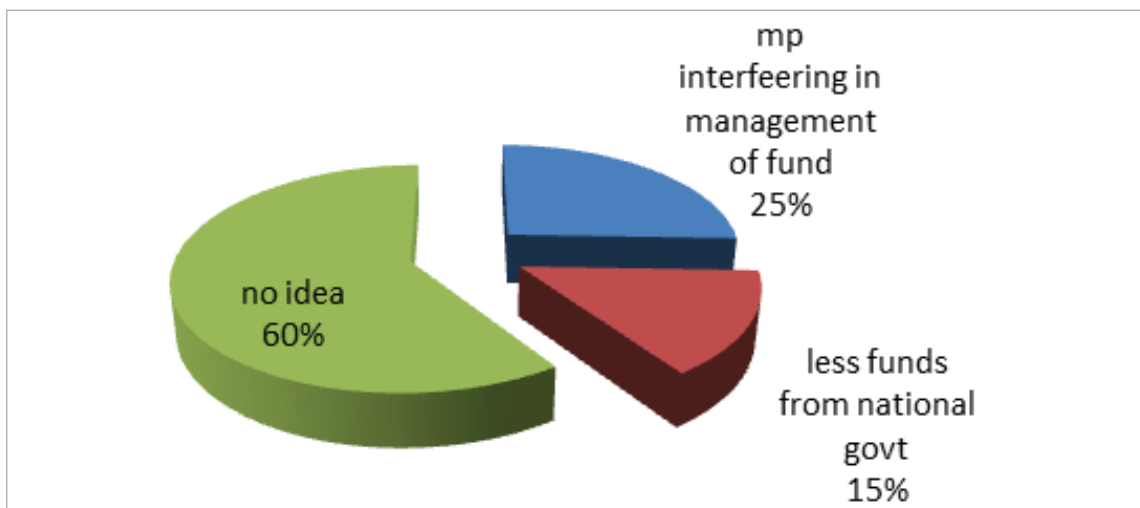


Source: Researchers, 2017

Figure 4 above shows that a majority of the respondents 30 (32%) had an average knowledge of National Government Constituency Development Fund (NG-CDF) while only 13(14%) had a high knowledge of National Government Constituency Development Fund (NG-CDF).

The Type of Problems Concerning NG-CDF

Figure 5 | Type of Problems concerning NG-CDF

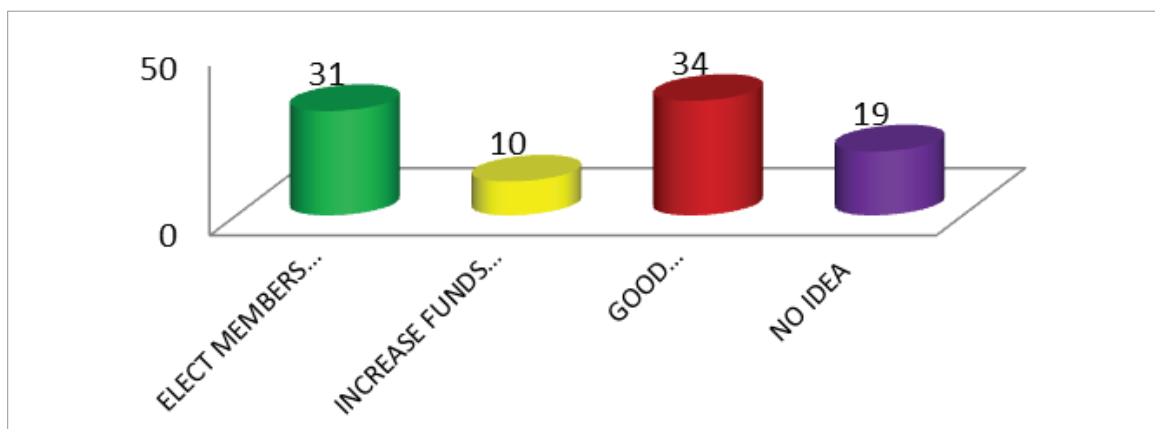


Source: Researchers, 2017

The figure above reveals that majority of the respondents 56 (60%) have no idea of the problem of NG-CDF in their wards; 24(25%) held that the problem faced by NG-CDF emanated from the MP interference in the management of the funds; 14(15%) respondents held that the funds allocated from National Government were inadequate. This may be explained by peoples’ lack of involvement in the project implementation process and in its financial accountability. Another reason is the MP interferes in the management of the Fund to gain political mileage.

Possible solutions to challenges on utilisation of NG-CDF

Figure 6 | Possible Solutions to Challenges on Utilisation of NG-CDF



Source: Researchers, 2017

The above figure shows that 34 (36%) of the respondents suggested that the possible solution to challenges facing NG-CDF utilisation was to have good governance in place; 31(33%) suggested that the possible solution was to elect members from all the wards to be in NG-CDF committee; a minority of respondents 10 (11%) suggested a possible solution was to increase the amount of NG-CDF allocation. This may be explained by the fact that NG-CDF funds have experienced poor governance in its management and usage. Individual interests may have prevailed more than those of the intended beneficiaries of the NG-CDF fund. A majority of the community members have been left aside in the decision making process creating challenges as to whether the NG-CDF funds are well utilized for the poor in the Constituency.

Conclusion

According to the findings, the NG-CDF was a major contributor to poverty alleviation in Kibwezi West Constituency. The NG-CDF funds were largely used to fund projects in key sectors of education, health, water, roads, and security. NG-CDF was therefore involved in addressing community needs through project implementation and creation of employment opportunities. Through NG-CDF, peoples' lives were improved in various aspects than before the fund was introduced in terms of: provision of good health, increased schools, reduced cost of education, roads and construction of police posts to many areas, and security to the general public. Before the introduction of NG-CDF poverty was highly prevalent among a majority of the households in the constituency, where basic facilities: water, healthcare, were lacking. The NG-CDF projects implemented were mainly anti-poverty projects in the households. For instance the relief of poor households from schools fees through bursary allocations to students has increased the enrollment of students in secondary schools, because poor and orphaned students who would have lacked school fees were catered for by the Fund's bursary. The poor who would not receive medical care were able to access medical facilities where they were treated, hence minimizing mortality rate among children and the aged.

Recommendations

The NG-CDF projects that were started should be funded to completion to avoid wastage of funds. There is need for: more awareness on knowledge, management, and prioritization of NG-CDF funded projects; NG-CDF Management Committee needs to intensify public awareness in the political wards within the constituency through workshops and public open-forums; to address the problem of management of NG-CDF funds, there is need to strictly follow the leadership structure based on academic qualification, leadership skills, and the stipulated number of committee members; it is of great importance to encourage people at grassroot level to actively be in touch with their NG-CDF leaders to minimize problems that affect the NG-CDF project implementation in the wards; the NG-CDF Fund should focus on projects that address real problems of the people such as modalities of how to reduce drought in the area through provision of water to the people; the political wards should have a representative at the NG-CDF Management Committees for a better representation of the area to avoid skewed development; politicians should be kept out of matters dealing with NG-CDF funds allocation; the NG-CDF Committee should demonstrate high moral integrity; the government should put in place independent structures at grassroot level to monitor the progress of the projects and lay down strong measures on how to safeguard the funds from misappropriation; regular monitoring and evaluation of implemented projects should be carried out; and funds audited by independent auditors who was present the reports on usage of funds to the general public

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