

**A CRITICAL APPRAISAL OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENT CONSTITUENCIES  
DEVELOPMENT FUND ACT 2015.**

**BY**

**MWAKUWONA DANSON MWASHAKO**

**152774**



**SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF  
MASTER OF PUBLIC POLICY AND MANAGEMENT AT STRATHMORE  
UNIVERSITY**

**Strathmore Business School**

**Strathmore University**

**Nairobi, Kenya**

**2025**

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this work has not been previously submitted for the award of a degree at this or any other university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, this Dissertation is my original work and contains no material previously published or written by another individual, except where proper citation and acknowledgment have been made.

**Name: Danson Mwakuwona Mwashako**

**Admission: 152774**

**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date**

21<sup>st</sup> May 2025

## APPROVAL

I confirm that as the University Supervisor, I have approved this research project to be submitted for examination. It has been submitted for examination with my approval as the university supervisor.

**Signature**

**Date**

  
\_\_\_\_\_

21<sup>st</sup> May 2025 \_\_\_\_\_

**Dr. Bernadette Wanjala**

**Strathmore University**

## ABSTRACT

This study provides a critical appraisal of the National Government Constituencies Development Fund (NG-CDF) Act, 2015, focusing on its implementation challenges, emerging issues and policy options within Kenya's devolved governance framework. The background and rationale underscore the NG-CDF's intended role in promoting grassroots development, while highlighting the persistent governance, legal, and operational gaps that have hindered its effectiveness. The study is framed by four objectives: to assess the challenges, to identify emerging implementation issues, examine factors undermining the Act's effectiveness and draw lessons from global best practices. The literature review is grounded in the Patron-Client and Fiscal Federalism theories, offering insight into how political relationships, institutional roles, and resource control influence fund administration. Empirical analysis from existing studies reveals widespread inefficiencies, political capture, weak oversight, and limited community participation issues also found in similar development funds globally. Methodologically, the study adopts a descriptive research design, using purposive sampling and thematic analysis. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with Members of Parliament, NG-CDF Board officials, Fund Account Managers, CDF Chairpersons and National Treasury official. The findings reveal persistent legal and institutional ambiguities, elite control over project selection, ineffective oversight systems, poor coordination with county governments, and minimal inclusion of marginalized groups in participatory processes. Funding delays and weak capacity among fund administrators also emerged as key impediments. The analysis further shows that while the NG-CDF is conceptually grounded in fiscal decentralization, its practice reflects patterns of political patronage and institutional fragmentation. It concludes that constitutional anchoring, digital transparency tools, professionalization, and intergovernmental collaboration are necessary to reform the Fund. Ultimately, the research contributes valuable insights to Kenya's development policy discourse, advocating for a reformed, transparent, and community-responsive NG-CDF that aligns with the 2010 Constitution and the aspirations of equitable and inclusive development.

## Table Of Content

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| <b>DECLARATION</b> .....   | <i>i</i>    |
| <b>ABSTRACT</b> .....  | <i>ii</i>   |
| <b>LIST OF FIGURES</b> .....   | <i>v</i>    |
| <b>LIST OF TABLES</b> .....  | <i>vi</i>   |
| <b>ABBREVIATIONS</b> .....   | <i>vii</i>  |
| <b>OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS</b> .....   | <i>viii</i> |
| <b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....  | <i>ix</i>   |
| <b>DEDICATION</b> .....  | <i>x</i>    |
| <b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY</b> .....  | <b>1</b>    |
| <b>1.1 Introduction</b> .....  | <b>1</b>    |
| <b>1.2 Background of the Study</b> .....   | <b>1</b>    |
| 1.2.1 Overview of Constituency Development Funds in Kenya .....  | 6           |
| <b>1.3 Problem Statement</b> .....   | <b>8</b>    |
| <b>1.4 Study Objectives</b> .....  | <b>10</b>   |
| 1.4.1 General Objective .....  | 10          |
| 1.4.2 Specific Objectives.....   | 10          |
| <b>1.5 Research Questions</b> .....  | <b>11</b>   |
| <b>1.6 Scope of the Study</b> .....  | <b>11</b>   |
| <b>1.7 Significance and Justification of the Study</b> .....   | <b>12</b>   |
| <b>CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW</b> .....  | <b>13</b>   |
| <b>2.1 Introduction</b> .....  | <b>13</b>   |
| <b>2.2 Theoretical Framework</b> .....   | <b>13</b>   |
| 2.2.1 Patron-client Theory .....   | 13          |
| 2.2.2 Fiscal Federalism Theory .....   | 15          |
| <b>2.3 Empirical Literature Review</b> .....   | <b>17</b>   |
| 2.3.1 Challenges in the implementation of NG-CDF Act (2015).....   | 17          |
| 2.3.2 Emerging issues that have arisen from the implementation of the NG-CDF Act (2015). .....                             | 19          |
| 2.3.3 Factors undermining the implementation of the NG-CDF Act (2015) in Kenya. ....                                       | 21          |
| 2.3.4 Measures that Can Be Put in Place to Enhance NG-CDF ACT (2015) - Drawing lessons from other country experiences..... | 24          |
| <b>2.4 Conceptual Framework</b> .....  | <b>30</b>   |
| <b>Chapter 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</b> .....   | <b>31</b>   |
| <b>3.1 Introduction</b> .....  | <b>31</b>   |
| <b>3.2 Research Philosophy</b> .....   | <b>31</b>   |
| <b>3.3 Research Design</b> .....   | <b>31</b>   |
| <b>3.4 Population and Sampling</b> .....   | <b>32</b>   |
| <b>3.5 Data Collection Methods</b> .....   | <b>34</b>   |
| <b>3.6 Data Analysis</b> .....   | <b>34</b>   |

|   |  |           |
|---|--|-----------|
| 3.7   | <b>Research Quality - Validity, Reliability and objectivity of the research.....</b>   | <b>35</b> |
| 3.8   | <b>Ethical Considerations .....</b>  | <b>36</b> |
| <b>CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS .....</b>                  |  | <b>37</b> |
| 4.1   | <b>Introduction.....</b>   | <b>37</b> |
| 4.2   | <b>Response Rate .....</b>   | <b>37</b> |
| 4.3   | <b>Challenges in the implementation of the NG-CDF Act (2015).....</b>  | <b>37</b> |
| 4.3.1   | Legal and Institutional Gaps .....   | 37        |
| 4.3.2   | Oversight Inefficiencies .....   | 38        |
| 4.3.3   | Limited and Unequal Public Participation .....   | 39        |
| 4.4   | <b>Emerging issues in the implementation of the NG-CDF Act (2015) .....</b>  | <b>41</b> |
| 4.4.1   | Political Influence and Elite Capture.....   | 41        |
| 4.4.2   | Role Confusion between National and County Governments.....  | 42        |
| 4.5   | <b>Factors undermining the implementation of the NG-CDF Act (2015).....</b>  | <b>43</b> |
| 4.5.1   | Funding and Disbursement Issues .....  | 43        |
| 4.5.2   | Limited Capacity of Fund Managers and Committees .....   | 44        |
| 4.5.3   | Project Misalignment and Selection Bias .....  | 45        |
| 4.5.4   | Poor Institutional Coordination.....   | 46        |
| 4.6   | <b>Lessons and best practices that can be identified from other contexts to improve the effectiveness of NG-CDF Act (2015) .....</b> | <b>47</b> |
| <b>CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b> |  | <b>51</b> |
| 5.1   | <b>Introduction.....</b>   | <b>51</b> |
| 5.2   | <b>Discussion and implications of Findings.....</b>  | <b>51</b> |
| 5.2.1   | Critical appraisal of the NG-CDF Act (2015) and its challenges .....   | 51        |
| 5.2.2   | Emerging Issues that have arisen from the implementation of the NG-CDF Act (2015) .....  | 54        |
| 5.2.3   | Factors that influence the implementation of the NG-CDF Act (2015) .....   | 56        |
| 5.2.4   | Lessons That Can Be Drawn Based on Best Practices.....   | 58        |
| 5.3   | <b>The contribution of this study is to theory, practice and policy.....</b>   | <b>60</b> |
| 5.4   | <b>Conclusion.....</b>   | <b>61</b> |
| 5.5   | <b>Recommendations.....</b>  | <b>62</b> |
| 5.6   | <b>Areas for further research.....</b>   | <b>63</b> |
| 5.7   | <b>Limitations of the study.....</b>   | <b>64</b> |
| <b>REFERENCES.....</b>  |  | <b>65</b> |
| <b>APPENDICES.....</b>  |  | <b>77</b> |
| Appendix 1: Interview Guide .....                                 |  | 77        |
| Appendix 2: Time schedule .....                                   |  | 78        |
| Appendix 3: Budget.....   |  | 79        |
| Appendix 4: Introduction Letter .....                             |  | 80        |
| Appendix 5: Ethics Approval .....                                 |  | 81        |
| Appendix 6: NACOSTI License.....                                  |  | 82        |

## LIST OF FIGURES

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Figure 1. 1 CDF Allocations over various years in Kenya ..... | 7  |
| Figure 2. 1: Conceptual Framework .....                       | 30 |



## LIST OF TABLES

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Table 2. 1: A Summary of Literature Review .....                                       | 27 |
| Table 4. 1 Challenges in NG-CDF Act (2015) Implementation.....                         | 40 |
| Table 4.2 Emerging issues in the implementation of NG-CDF Act 2015 .....               | 43 |
| Table 4. 3 Factors that affect the implementation of NGCDF Act (2015).....             | 47 |
| Table 4. 4 Lessons and best practices that can be identified from other Contexts ..... | 50 |



## ABBREVIATIONS

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| CDFCs  | Constituency Development Fund Committees                         |
| CDCs   | Constituency Development Committees                              |
| EACC   | Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission                            |
| KIPPRA | Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis          |
| M&E    | Monitoring and Evaluation  |
| MIG    | Municipal Infrastructure Grant (South Africa)                    |
| MPs    | Members of Parliament  |
| MPLADS | Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (India)      |
| NG-CDF | National Government Constituencies Development Fund              |
| NIES&R | National Institute for Educational Studies and Research (Brazil) |
| NMC    | National Management Committee                                    |
| PDAF   | Priority Development Assistance Fund (Philippines)               |
| PMCs   | Project Management Committees                                    |
| SDGs   | Sustainable Development Goals                                    |



## OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

**National Government Constituencies Development Fund (NG-CDF)** – A fund established under the NG-CDF Act, 2015, to facilitate equitable grassroots development by allocating a percentage of the national government’s revenue to constituencies for development projects.

**Project Management Committees (PMCs)** – Constituency-level committees responsible for overseeing the implementation of NG-CDF-funded projects, ensuring that funds are used appropriately, and projects align with community needs.

**Constituency Development Fund Committees (CDFCs)** – Local committees that manage the selection, planning, and execution of projects funded by NG-CDF at the constituency level.

**Oversight Mechanisms** – Structures and processes established to monitor and ensure accountability, transparency, and compliance with regulations in the use of public funds, such as audits by the Auditor General and parliamentary committees.

**Public Finance Management (PFM)** – The system of budgeting, revenue collection, expenditure management, and financial oversight designed to ensure the efficient and transparent use of public funds.

**Financial Mismanagement** – The improper use of public funds due to poor planning, corruption, lack of oversight, or inefficiencies in financial administration, often leading to wasteful expenditure or misappropriation.

**Best Practices in Decentralization** – Lessons drawn from successful models of decentralized governance and funding mechanisms in other countries, which can inform improvements to Kenya’s NG-CDF framework.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Strathmore University for providing me with the opportunity and resources to undertake this study. I extend my sincere appreciation to my supervisor, Dr. Bernadette Wanjala, for her invaluable guidance, constructive feedback, and unwavering support throughout the research process. Her expertise and insights have been instrumental in shaping the direction and depth of this study.

I extend special thanks to my family, friends, colleagues and the people of Wundanyi Constituency, whose encouragement, patience, and moral support have been a source of motivation throughout this research journey. Their unwavering belief in my abilities has been instrumental in completing this work.

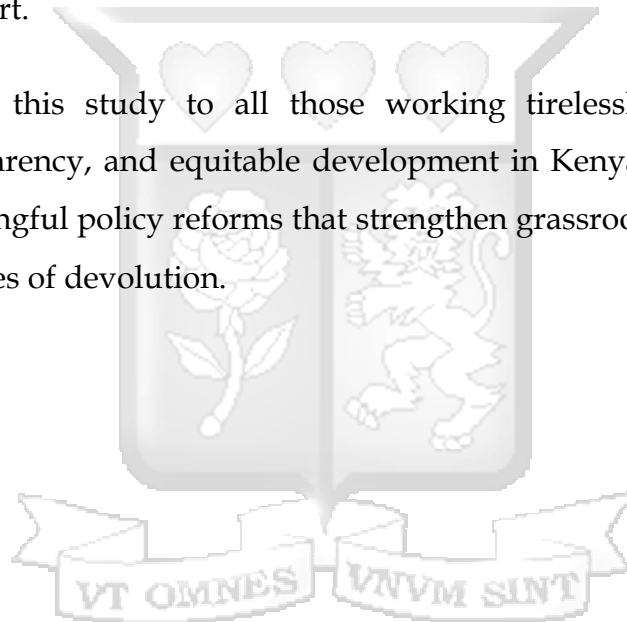


## DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my wife, Priscilla, and my children, whose unwavering support, encouragement, and sacrifices have been the foundation of my academic and professional journey. Your belief in my abilities has been a constant source of motivation. To my late parents, who instilled in me the values of perseverance, integrity, and the pursuit of knowledge—this achievement is a testament to their unconditional love.

To my friends and mentors, who have walked with me through this journey, offering invaluable advice, inspiration, and encouragement—I am deeply grateful for your presence and support.

Finally, I dedicate this study to all those working tirelessly to advance good governance, transparency, and equitable development in Kenya. May this research contribute to meaningful policy reforms that strengthen grassroots development and uphold the principles of devolution.



# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

## 1.1 Introduction

This chapter provided a comprehensive overview of the topic's background, examined the problem statement and identified the research gap. It also outlined the research objectives, defined the scope of the study, and discussed both the justification and significance of the research.

## 1.2 Background of the Study

Devolution is a form of decentralization that involves the transfer of authority and responsibility from the central government to lower levels for a range of public functions (McCoubrey & Morris, 2000). It is a distinct and more advanced form of decentralization, as it entails the transfer of political, administrative, and fiscal powers to sub-national units. Unlike other forms of decentralization, devolution grants greater autonomy and control to these lower units, allowing them to make independent decisions on governance, resource allocation, and service delivery (Kanyinga, 2016).

International Budget Partnership (2010) defines a Constituency Development Fund (CDF) as “a government budget allocation mechanism that channels a specific portion of the national budget to the constituencies of Members of Parliament (MPs) to finance development projects such as the construction of school facilities, health clinics and water supply systems” CDF is a distinctive mechanism in that MPs are vested with a degree of authority in the selection of projects, a function that can be considered as a new form of constituency service by MPs. As such, CDFs are not merely a means of transferring public funds from central to local governments, but a strategic tool for the redistributive game by MPs in electoral politics; MPs use the funds to respond to the development needs of their constituents, cultivate personal votes and enhance their chances of re-election (Tsubura, 2013.)

Existing literature consistently indicates that developed nations tend to exhibit more advanced and entrenched forms of fiscal decentralization compared to developing

countries. While there is broad consensus regarding the disparity in levels of fiscal decentralization between countries, interpretations of this phenomenon vary considerably. Some scholars view fiscal centralization as a contributing factor to slow economic growth, whereas others argue that it is a natural outcome of the early stages of economic development (Sima et al., 2023). Ozili (2022) opines that public funds allocated for decentralized development often face challenges related to governance, accountability, and efficiency. Across the world, Constituency Development Funds (CDFs) and similar decentralized funding mechanisms have been adopted to enhance grassroots development by allocating resources directly to local constituencies or districts. However, in many cases, these funds have been mismanaged due to weak oversight, political interference, corruption, and inefficiencies in fund utilization.

In countries like India and the Philippines, constituency-based funds have been marred by allegations of misappropriation, lack of transparency, and diversion of resources for political gain rather than genuine community development. For instance, in the Philippines, the Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF) was abolished in 2013 after a major corruption scandal revealed that billions of pesos had been funnelled into fake non-governmental organizations instead of funding local project (Espiritu, 2014). Similarly, in India, the Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS) has been criticized for poor oversight, delays in fund disbursement, and lack of community participation in project selection (de Xavier et al., 2021)

Fiscal decentralization has increasingly attracted attention across Africa. However, the pace and nature of progress have varied widely among countries, with none following a straightforward or linear trajectory. Following independence in the 1960s, most African nations adopted highly centralized fiscal systems (Sima et al., 2023). Several countries are either exploring or adopting federal systems, while many others are evaluating or already implementing decentralized forms of governance. Additionally, the African Union underscored the importance of decentralization by adopting the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Decentralization, Local Governance, and Local Development in 2014 (Alliance, 2022). According to (Sima et al., 2023), the current state of fiscal decentralization in developing countries is markedly lower than

that of their developed counterparts. Academic discourse often debates whether economic development is a precursor to, or a consequence of, fiscal decentralization.

Throughout Africa, decentralized development funds often face governance deficits and financial mismanagement. In Uganda, for example, the CDF was introduced to finance small-scale development projects at the constituency level, but it was disbanded in 2011 due to concerns over poor accountability, corruption, and weak implementation structures (Awortwi, 2011). A study by the International Budget Partnership (IBP) found that many African countries struggle with weak monitoring mechanisms, leading to funds being diverted away from their intended purpose. In South Africa, the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG), designed to support local development, has been criticized for underutilization and misallocation, with reports indicating that funds often remain unspent or are used inefficiently due to lack of technical capacity and bureaucratic delays (Tsubura, 2013).

Kenya's history of fiscal decentralization dates to independence, with successive governments implementing various strategies to promote equitable development, stimulate economic growth, and reduce poverty across different regions. Since 1963, the government has introduced several decentralization initiatives aimed at improving living standards, including the Majimbo (devolved) system of 1963, the District Development Grant Plan of 1966, and the Special Rural Development Program of 1970. Other efforts, such as the District Development Planning initiative (1971), the Rural Development Fund (1983), and the District Focus for Rural Development (1984), sought to bring governance and resource allocation closer to the people. However, most of these strategies fell short of their objectives due to inefficiencies within line ministries, technical incompetence, inadequate staffing, and bureaucratic hurdles that hindered their implementation (Ayuma Okello et.al 2016). These challenges underscored the need for a more structured and effective framework, culminating in Kenya's current devolved system under the 2010 Constitution.

In Kenya, "The National Government Constituencies Development Fund (NG-CDF) is established pursuant to the NG-CDF Act 2015 as amended in 2016 with the objective

of addressing poverty at grassroots level and enhancing regional equity in development by dedicating a minimum of 2.5% of all the National Government's share of annual revenue towards projects identified by the community in each constituency. The Fund is managed by the National Government Constituencies Development Fund Board which is a body corporate established pursuant to Sections 14, 15 and 16 of the NG- CDF Act 2015. At the constituency level, the day-to-day management of the Fund is vested on the National Government Constituencies Development Fund Committees established under Section 43 of the Act 2015" (Republic of Kenya, 2015).

The objectives of the NG-CDF Act (2015), include ensuring the proper establishment and governance of the Fund to finance development projects in constituencies. It supports national government functions by facilitating equitable development and encourages citizen participation in identifying, planning, and implementing constituency projects. The Act also establishes mechanisms to promote transparency and accountability through financial oversight. In terms of project identification and implementation, the Act requires all funded projects to align with national government functions and demonstrate tangible community benefits. Citizen participation is integral, with project identification conducted through public meetings at the ward level. Constituency Committees are responsible for overseeing the submission and prioritization of project proposals, which are then approved by the Board (NG- CDF Act, 2015)

The Act ensures prudent disbursement and financial management by disbursing funds in tranches to constituency accounts managed by project committees. Any unspent funds are either carried forward to the next financial year or reallocated to other projects. Additionally, a 5% emergency reserve is maintained for urgent, unforeseen needs, ensuring the Fund remains responsive to emergencies. For oversight and accountability, the Fund is subject to audits by the Auditor-General, and financial records must be meticulously maintained at both constituency and national levels. The National Assembly exercises oversight through a Select Committee, which reviews reports and proposes amendments to the Act as needed. Strict penalties, including fines or imprisonment, are prescribed for misappropriation

of funds. The Act includes special provisions that allow counterpart funding for projects co-financed by other entities to promote collaboration. However, it prohibits projects that provide personal benefits or support political or religious activities, except in emergencies, ensuring funds are used solely for public benefit.

Under regulations and transition, the NG-CDF Board is empowered to draft regulations to facilitate the Act's implementation. Transitional provisions ensure continuity by carrying forward initiatives from the earlier Constituency Development Fund Act (2013), maintaining the momentum of grassroots development efforts. Eligible projects under the National Government Constituencies Development Fund (NG-CDF) are those that align with the exclusive functions of the National Government as outlined in the Constitution of Kenya. These projects must also be community-based, ensuring that the benefits reach a broad cross-section of citizens within the constituency, thereby promoting inclusivity and widespread impact.

On the other hand, certain projects are deemed ineligible under the NG-CDF framework. These include projects that are recurrent in nature, with the exception of administrative costs incurred by the Board, NG-CDF Committees, and related entities. Additionally, projects that fall within the devolved functions of county governments are excluded, as are projects that support religious bodies or activities. Similarly, projects with a political agenda or those supporting political activities are not eligible for funding under the NG-CDF. These exclusions are intended to uphold the principles of equity, neutrality, and alignment with the Act's objectives (Das & Ngacho, 2017).

There is considerable debate regarding whether the National Government Constituencies Development Fund (NG-CDF) has effectively achieved its stated objectives, highlighting that its success remains a contentious issue. A study conducted by Mwangi et al., (2015) across all Kenyan constituencies revealed that allocating devolved funds is often challenging due to various grassroots-level problems and the lack of robust mechanisms to ensure transparency and accountability in the distribution of CDF projects. Consequently, some locations have felt sidelined and disadvantaged. Additionally, critical components such as project

selection, initiation, monitoring, and evaluation have yet to be effectively and prudently managed by the Constituency Development Fund Committees (CDFCs).

The NG-CDF Act (2015) further stipulates that 2% of the total CDF allocation can be utilized for monitoring, evaluation, and capacity building. The monitoring and evaluation process is a vital tool for ensuring that the primary objectives and goals of CDF projects are effectively achieved. According to the NG-CDF Act 2015, the responsibility for monitoring and evaluating CDF projects lies with the Constituency Development Fund Committees (CDFCs) and the CDF Board. These entities may also delegate supervision responsibilities to Project Management Committees (PMCs) for ongoing projects, requiring them to report on their progress. As such, it is essential to focus on how effectively these projects are monitored and evaluated across the country to ensure accountability and success (Mwangi et al., 2015).

Robertson et al., (2020) highlight that the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) is an innovative initiative by the government, granting local Members of Parliament (MPs) the authority to determine the criteria for selecting development projects within their constituencies. Misuko (2016) observes that CDFs serve not only as a channel for transferring funds from the central government to the local level but also as a strategic tool for MPs to engage in redistributive politics, particularly during election periods. Consequently, CDFs are not immune to political patronage. According to Baskin (2010), while MPs use these funds to address the developmental needs of their constituents, they simultaneously leverage the projects to garner personal political support and enhance their chances of re-election.

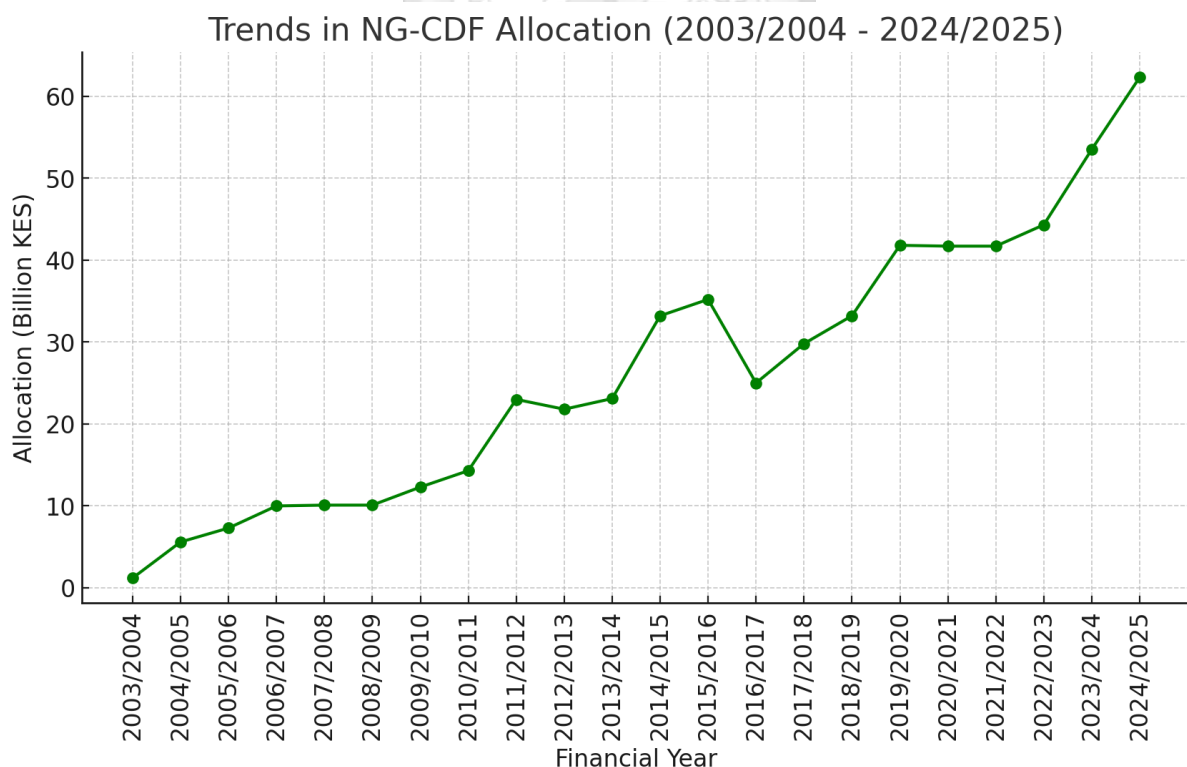
### ***1.2.1 Overview of Constituency Development Funds in Kenya***

In its first financial year (2003/2004), a total of Ksh.1.26 billion was allocated, with each of the 210 constituencies receiving Ksh.6 million. Over the years, Kenya's economic growth, spurred by structural reforms introduced during President Mwai Kibaki's first term, led to an expansion in national revenue, allowing for increased allocations to the fund. By the 2007/2008 financial year, the NG-CDF had grown to Ksh.10.1 billion, reflecting the positive impact of economic policies on public sector financing.

With sustained economic growth and an increasing national budget, NG-CDF allocations continued to rise, reaching Ksh.23.06 billion in 2013/2014, Ksh.33.2 billion in 2018/2019, and Ksh.41.75 billion in 2019/2020. In the current financial year (2024/2025), the fund has grown to Ksh.53.53 billion.

In response to emerging challenges in project planning and fund management, the Parliamentary Committee overseeing the fund, then known as the Constituencies Fund Committee (CFC), conducted a comprehensive review in 2005. The committee recommended key improvements, including the establishment of a structured complaint-handling system and clearer guidelines for fund allocation, enhancing transparency and accountability.

Figure 1.1 illustrates the growth trajectory of NG-CDF from its inception in 2003/2004 as CDF Act to the projected figures for 2024/2025, highlighting its evolution as a key instrument for equitable development.



**Figure 1. 1 CDF Allocations over various years in Kenya**

Source: National Government Constituencies Development Fund Board Website

While the concept of Constituency Development Funds is widely embraced as a strategy for local development, international and regional evidence reveals that such mechanisms are often undermined by governance weaknesses, elite capture, and inadequate oversight (Sima et al., 2023). Kenya's NG-CDF stands out in Africa due to its legal foundation, nationwide coverage, and continued political support despite mounting concerns over transparency and efficiency. Unlike many African counterparts, which have either disbanded similar funds or faced severe operational issues, Kenya has institutionalized its CDF model, making it a compelling case for study.

This research focused on the NG-CDF in Kenya due to its unique position as a persistent and influential form of devolved funding with significant implications for local development and governance. The study aimed to evaluate the implementation of the NG-CDF framework, exploring how effectively it promotes accountability, transparency, and the achievement of development goals. By examining Kenya's experience, this study contributes to the broader discourse on the efficacy of devolved funds and the conditions necessary for their success in the African context and beyond.

### **1.3 Problem Statement**

Kenya's adoption of The National Government Constituencies Development Fund (NG-CDF) Act (2015), as amended in 2016, marked a transformative milestone in decentralizing development efforts and enhancing resource allocation to grassroots levels. By establishing a robust legislative framework for the administration and utilization of constituency funds, the Act reinforced the country's commitment to equitable and inclusive development. It sought to bridge resource gaps and address local development priorities effectively, aligning with Kenya's constitutional vision of devolution and participatory governance

Despite the implementation of the NG-CDF Act (2015), which was designed to decentralize resources and foster equitable development across Kenya, systemic challenges persist. These include inadequate oversight mechanisms, delays in disbursements, limited public awareness of project priorities, and inefficiencies in

fund utilization. While the Act envisions a framework that promotes citizen participation, transparency, and equitable resource distribution, achieving these objectives has been hindered by operational, structural, and governance-related barriers. For instance, cases of fund mismanagement and a lack of capacity within some Constituency Committees undermine the Act's objectives. While the NG-CDF Act provides for public participation, transparency, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E), several studies suggest that these provisions are inadequately implemented or inconsistently applied. For instance, mechanisms intended to ensure community involvement and oversight are often compromised by political patronage, weak institutional capacity, and limited technical expertise at the constituency level. The result is frequent project delays, incomplete infrastructure, and misallocation of resources which ultimately undermine the fund's credibility and long-term developmental impact (Robertson et al., 2020).

According to (Ayuma Okello et al., 2016), the concentration of resources in certain constituencies and the failure to fully engage marginalized and underserved communities in project identification and implementation exacerbate disparities. Weak monitoring and evaluation frameworks, coupled with limited technical expertise at the constituency level, further hinder the effective execution of development projects. The ruling on September 20, 2024, in the case of *Gikonyo & Another v National Assembly of Kenya & 4 Others; Council of Governors (Interested Party)* marks an emerging issue concerning the NG-CDF Act, 2015. The petitioners argued that the Act violated constitutional principles related to devolution, separation of powers, and prudent financial management. They highlighted concerns about the involvement of Members of Parliament in fund oversight, the duplication of county government functions, and the bypassing of Senate consultation (*Gikonyo & Another v National Assembly of Kenya & 4 Others; Council of Governors & 3 Others (Interested Parties) (Constitutional Petition 178 of 2016) [2024] KEHC 10886 (KLR) (Constitutional and Human Rights) (20 September 2024) (Judgment)*, 2024).

Given these challenges, objectives of the NG-CDF Act (2015) remain unmet, and this could undermine several key Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It would particularly impact SDG 1 (No Poverty) by perpetuating local poverty, SDG 10

(Reduced Inequalities) through exacerbating regional disparities, and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) by limiting community development. Additionally, SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) would be compromised as weak governance and lack of accountability undermine the effectiveness of participatory democratic processes.

This research, therefore, sought to evaluate the implementation of the National Government Constituencies Development Fund (NG-CDF) Act 2015, assess its policy framework, and identify the challenges and emerging issues hindering its effective implementation. It examined the factors undermining the success of the Act and proposed policy design options, drawing from international best practices and the experiences of other countries in decentralized development. Given that most previous studies on the NG-CDF in Kenya have relied predominantly on quantitative analyses, focusing on budget allocations, disbursement rates, and completion rates of funded projects, they often lack qualitative depth necessary to understand the underlying governance dynamics, stakeholder perceptions, and institutional behaviours influencing implementation outcomes. There is a noticeable gap in in-depth qualitative research that examines how the implementation of the framework functions in practice.

## **1.4 Study Objectives**

### **1.4.1 General Objective**

The general objective of this study is to do a critical appraisal of the National Government Constituencies Development Fund (NG-CDF) Act (2015).

### **1.4.2 Specific Objectives**

1. To appraise the NG-CDF Act (2015) and its challenges
2. To identify emerging issues that have arisen from the implementation of the NG-CDF Act (2015)
3. To assess the factors undermining the implementation of the NG-CDF Act (2015) in Kenya.
4. To identify lessons that can be drawn based on international best practices.

## 1.5 Research Questions

1. What are the challenges encountered in the implementation of the NG-CDF Act (2015)?
2. What emerging issues have manifested since the implementation of the NG-CDF Act (2015)?
3. What are the factors undermining the implementation of the NG-CDF Act (2015)?
4. What lessons and best practices can be identified from other contexts to improve the effectiveness of NG-CDF Act (2015)?

## 1.6 Scope of the Study

This study focused on an appraisal of the National Government Constituencies Development Fund NG-CDF Act, (2015), specifically addressing the challenges in its implementation. The study relied on primary data from key informant interviews and secondary data on the Act's implementation from 2015 to 2024 to evaluate its impact.

Geographically, the study was limited to Kenya, with a focus on selected constituencies representing diverse regions to provide an inclusive and balanced assessment of NG-CDF implementation. It engaged key stakeholders, including the NG-CDF Board, Members of Parliament, members of public, constituency development fund committees - fund managers and chairs to examine governance challenges, transparency, and fund utilization.

The study covered the period from 2015 to 2024, analyzing the evolution of NG-CDF since the enactment of the NG-CDF Act, 2015 and assessing its effectiveness in achieving its intended objectives. This timeframe was crucial in evaluating both the fund's successes and challenges, particularly in light of the September 2024 High Court ruling, which declared the Act unconstitutional due to conflicts with Kenya's devolution principles. By reviewing data over this period, the study provided a comprehensive evaluation of the fund's governance, financial management, and policy implications, offering insights into necessary reforms to ensure greater

accountability, transparency, and alignment with Kenya's long-term development priorities.

### **1.7 Significance and Justification of the Study**

Assessing the effectiveness of the National Government Constituencies Development Fund (NG-CDF) Act, 2015, is critical to ensuring equitable resource allocation and grassroots development across Kenya. By addressing challenges and the emerging issues in the Act's implementation, the study explored how the NG-CDF can better promote devolution, reduce regional disparities, and strengthen participatory governance. This analysis contributes to policy discourse on decentralized development by identifying barriers to success and providing actionable recommendations. The findings will inform future strategies to enhance the Act's impact, fostering socio-economic growth and sustainable development.

The government and policymakers will benefit from evidence-based recommendations to improve the fund's transparency, accountability, and efficiency, ensuring better alignment with Kenya's devolution framework and national development goals. Parliament and legislators will gain insights into legislative challenges, helping them make informed policy decisions on future amendments and alternative grassroots funding models. Oversight bodies will use the findings to enhance monitoring, auditing, and accountability mechanisms for better fund management. Citizens and local communities will benefit from increased public awareness and participation, empowering them to hold leaders accountable and advocate for needs-based project selection. Lastly, civil society organizations, researchers, and development partners will leverage the study's findings to strengthen community engagement, advocate for policy reforms, and support sustainable development initiatives at the constituency level.

The findings from this study provide critical insight into how political dynamics, administrative capacity, and legal ambiguities intersect to influence NG-CDF's outcomes. The study thus extends beyond mere documentation of issues to offer actionable policy recommendations aimed at reforming the Fund in alignment with Kenya's constitutional and developmental aspirations.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the existing theoretical literature and relevant studies that have been conducted in relation to the research problem. It aims to provide a deeper understanding of the issues under investigation by offering insights into previous work. The chapter outlines the theoretical frameworks that underpins the study, alongside the empirical studies that inform the research. It concludes by presenting the conceptual framework that guides the study's approach and analysis.

### 2.2 Theoretical Framework

#### 2.2.1 *Patron-client Theory*

The Patron-Client Theory provides a critical framework for analyzing governance challenges within the National Government Constituencies Development Fund (NG-CDF) Act, 2015. Initially developed in political anthropology, the theory was first articulated by James Scott (1972) and later expanded by Eisenstadt and Roniger (1984). It describes a system where a powerful patron provides resources, opportunities, or protection in exchange for loyalty and political support from clients (Eisenstadt & Roniger, 1980). Over time, the theory has evolved beyond its early applications in agrarian societies and is now used to examine informal political and economic relationships in modern governance structures. Scholars such as Medina and Stokes (2002) have applied the theory to explain how state resources can be leveraged for political gain, influencing electoral outcomes and public administration. Patron-client politics refers to the interaction between politicians and electorates, characterized by a transactional relationship where both parties seek to safeguard their interests. This relationship exists in systems where incumbent elected officials hold a monopoly over public resources that are valued by voters. In this dynamic, patrons (politicians) offer benefits or resources to clients (voters) in exchange for their loyalty and electoral support (Shore, 2016).

Patron-client relationships are characterized by key features: inequality between the patron and the client serves as the foundation of the relationship; trust within the relationship is driven by reciprocity, with the cycle of exchange reinforcing its continuity; and the relationship is inherently complex, often rooted in personal

connections, tenancy, friendship, previous exchanges of services, or kinship ties (Eisenstadt & Roniger, 1980).

Furthermore, the reliance on bureaucratic structures to allocate scarce resources often leads clients to prioritize personal affinity as a means of securing benefits from patrons. To secure electoral advantage, a candidate (patron) must maintain a reciprocal relationship with the electorate (client) by providing benefits in exchange for their support and loyalty. Consequently, the sustainability of voter support relies on the patron's consistent delivery of these benefits. Setiawan (2024) refers to elections in such systems as "competitive clientelism," where elites compete for exclusive access to limited public resources that they can distribute to their clients, shaping political behaviour in predictable ways and allowing ruling elites to exert control over elections. (Eisenstadt & Roniger, 1980) argue that either party in a clientelist relationship can terminate it and establish new ties if their interests are not being adequately met. He further identifies two key dimensions of the patron-client relationship: the power dynamic and the exchange aspect. Similarly, (Ebrey, 1983) asserts that all goal-oriented social interactions are inherently based on exchange. Although such relationships are often not openly acknowledged, they tend to be stable, defined by clear commitments, and intentionally maintained by the involved parties. Patrons, in particular, leverage their control over resources—often public resources—as a bargaining tool in these relationships (Eisenstadt & Roniger, 1980).

This study applies the Patron-Client Theory to explore how political actors may influence NG-CDF resource allocation, potentially leading to financial mismanagement, weak oversight, and the prioritization of projects that serve political rather than developmental interests. The issue of whether constituency project funds contribute to entrenching incumbents in office is critical to this discussion. In a clientelist system, resources that voters value can be leveraged as rent. As such, constituency project funds can be strategically used to sustain the patron-client relationship. As long as voters perceive the benefits they receive as sufficient compensation for their votes, the incumbent is likely to secure re-election (Setiawan, 2024).

However, the theory has faced criticism for its tendency to oversimplify political dynamics by focusing primarily on dyadic relationships between patrons and clients, while neglecting broader institutional and structural influences. Additionally, it assumes that clients have limited agency, overlooking cases where they actively resist or shape patronage systems (Ebrey, 1983). Despite these limitations, the theory remains useful in explaining the persistent governance challenges that hinder NG-CDF from achieving its intended purpose of equitable grassroots development.

### 2.2.2 *Fiscal Federalism Theory*

The Fiscal Federalism Theory provides an important lens for analyzing the governance and financial management of decentralized public funds such as the National Government Constituencies Development Fund (NG-CDF) Act, 2015. First introduced by Richard Musgrave (1959) and later expanded by Wallace Oates (1972, 1999), the theory focuses on the allocation of fiscal responsibilities between different levels of government. Musgrave argued that fiscal functions—such as resource allocation, income distribution, and economic stabilization—should be assigned to various levels of government to enhance efficiency and accountability. Oates further developed the theory by introducing the Decentralization Theorem, which posits that local governments are better suited to deliver public services efficiently because they have a clearer understanding of local needs and priorities (Wright, 1974).

Over time, Fiscal Federalism Theory has evolved to address emerging governance challenges, particularly in developing countries where decentralization policies are often hindered by weak institutional capacity, corruption, and political interference. The theory has been instrumental in shaping fiscal decentralization policies by emphasizing the need for revenue autonomy, expenditure responsibility, and intergovernmental fiscal transfers (Wright, 1974). Scholars such as Bird and Smart (2002) and Rodden (2004) have examined how fiscal decentralization affects economic governance, highlighting both the benefits—such as increased efficiency and local accountability—and the risks, including elite capture and misallocation of resources (Oates, 1999).

Applying Fiscal Federalism Theory to this study provides a framework for understanding the structural challenges of NG-CDF implementation. The fund was designed to support constituency-level development projects, aligning with the principle of fiscal decentralization, which aims to bring decision-making closer to the people. However, despite its decentralization intent, NG-CDF is still largely controlled at the national level, with Members of Parliament exerting significant influence over project selection and fund allocation. This undermines the theoretical expectation that decentralized funds should be managed by locally elected bodies, such as county governments, rather than national representatives. The study examines how NG-CDF aligns with the principles of fiscal federalism and whether it enhances local service delivery, financial accountability, and participatory governance or instead fosters political patronage and inefficiency.

Despite its relevance, Fiscal Federalism Theory has been criticized for assuming that lower levels of government always act in the best interest of their constituents, ignoring the risks of elite capture, corruption, and administrative inefficiencies at the local level. Additionally, the theory does not fully account for the institutional weaknesses that often characterize decentralized systems, particularly in developing countries. (Prud'homme, 1995) and (Treisman et al., 2002) argue that in contexts with weak regulatory frameworks, decentralization may exacerbate mismanagement rather than improve service delivery (Musgrave, 1971). These critiques are particularly relevant to NG-CDF, where political interference, inadequate oversight, and lack of transparency have hindered the fund's effectiveness.

By integrating Fiscal Federalism Theory into this study, a deeper understanding of NG-CDF's governance and financial challenges can be achieved, allowing for a more evidence-based approach to policy recommendations aimed at improving the fund's alignment with Kenya's devolution framework.

## 2.3 Empirical Literature Review

### 2.3.1 *Challenges in the implementation of NG-CDF Act (2015)*

Constituency Development Funds (CDFs) have been implemented in various parts of the developing world for many years. For instance, Uganda had a CDF-like mechanism as early as 1969. In the Philippines, the practice of politicians using national funds to finance constituency projects dates back to the 1930s, inspired by the "pork barrel" politics of the United States, which later influenced the establishment of a formal CDF in 1989 (Felitse & Owusu-Mensah, 2024). Papua New Guinea introduced its CDF in 1984, and since then, CDFs have become widespread, particularly in Asia and Africa (Tsubura, 2013).

The Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in Kenya was introduced in 2003 with the aim of bringing development closer to the people by empowering communities through active involvement in project management processes. This decentralized initiative allocates a portion of the National Government's budget to constituencies, ensuring that a significant share of national resources reaches the jurisdictions of Members of Parliament (MPs) (Tsubura, 2013). The fund is used to finance local, small-scale development projects, such as constructing schools, and water supply systems, among other essential initiatives. The management of the Fund is overseen by the NG-CDF Board, a corporate entity established under the NG-CDF Act. The Board consists of a Board of Directors and a Secretariat at the national level. At the constituency level, the daily administration of the Fund is entrusted to the National Government Constituency Development Fund Committees, which operate in each of the 290 constituencies across the country.

Constituency Development Funds (CDFs) can have positive effects on electoral democracy in developing countries. In many of these countries, Members of Parliament (MPs) often raise funds to directly assist their constituents, which can foster clientelism. However, if CDFs are not designed and implemented with transparency and accountability, they could fail at reducing the influence of political finance on electoral competition and create a lower level playing field in elections.

According to (Tsubura, 2013) the CDF is an innovative mechanism that grants MPs the authority to determine the criteria for selecting local development projects within their constituencies. Baskin et al., (2010) highlights that the CDF serves not only as a channel for transferring funds from the central government to the local level but also as a strategic tool for MPs to engage in redistributive activities, particularly during election periods. Consequently, CDFs are not immune to political patronage, as MPs often use the funds to address their constituents' development needs while simultaneously bolstering their personal political support and enhancing their chances of re-election. Additionally, from a public finance management perspective, CDFs may serve as a safeguard by earmarking a portion of public funds for MPs, thereby helping to protect local government development budgets from potential misuse by politicians or political parties for electoral gain (Mwangi et al., 2015).

The absence of effective monitoring and evaluation (M&E) can hinder the successful achievement of project activities within the specified timelines and budget. Despite the allocation of 2% of CDF funds for M&E, it has been observed that many stakeholders lack the necessary M&E skills and technical expertise, resulting in significant shortcomings (Mwangi et al., 2015). This underscores the need for capacity building among CDF participants to ensure that projects are delivered within the established timelines and budget (Said & Gakuu, 2020). Nzioka (2023) in the study *"Factors Influencing Monitoring and Evaluation Practices and Performance of National Government Constituency Development Fund Projects in Mbooni Constituency, Makueni County, Kenya"* emphasizes that for NG-CDF projects to achieve their intended objectives, there must be a concerted effort to allocate adequate resources, involve stakeholders, provide training, and ensure sufficient time is dedicated to monitoring and evaluation activities.

The CDF Social Audit Guide highlights that some Constituency Development Fund Committees (CDFCs) attempt to bypass lengthy procurement regulations by funding smaller projects with limited budgets spread over multiple financial years (Abimbola et al., 2019). Naivasha -NG-CDF (2021-2022) report by Auditor General stipulated that

“In the circumstances, the accuracy and completeness of use of goods and services expenditure of Kshs.7,818,000 could not be confirmed.” In Makueni Constituency, in the same year, the Auditor General concluded that “In the circumstance, accuracy and completeness of the amounts of Kshs.193,886,453 and Kshs.56,797,574 in respect of transfers from NG-CDF Board and budget adjustments respectively could not be confirmed” (*Makueni-NG-CDF-2021-2022*).

### **2.3.2 *Emerging issues that have arisen from the implementation of the NG-CDF Act (2015).***

According to (*Kenya Law Reports, 2024*), in the case of “Gikonyo & another v National Assembly of Kenya & 4 others; Council of Governors & 3 others (Interested Parties) (Constitutional Petition 178 of 2016) [2024] KEHC 10886 (KLR)” the petitioners filed a constitutional challenge questioning the legality of the National Government Constituencies Development Fund Act, 2015 (the 2015 Act/the Act), which was enacted to replace the Constituencies Development Fund Act, 2013, previously declared unconstitutional. They argued that the 2015 Act violated several constitutional principles, including the separation of powers, the principle of devolution, and the prudent management of public finances. The petitioners claimed that the Act facilitated the allocation of funds to the National Government Constituencies Development Fund (NG-CDF) before the vertical division of revenue between the National and County Governments, contrary to Articles 201 and 203 of the Constitution, which outline principles of public finance. They also contended that the Act improperly involved Members of Parliament in managing public funds, thereby breaching the doctrine of separation of powers and creating conflicts between different levels of government.

Furthermore, the petitioners argued that the Act duplicated functions assigned to county governments under the Fourth Schedule of the Constitution. This duplication, they claimed, led to inefficiencies in the use of public resources and caused confusion in governance structures. The judgment “1.That the National Government Constituencies Development Fund Act of 2015 as amended in 2022 and 2023 is hereby declared unconstitutional. 2. That the National Government Constituencies

Development Fund and all its programmes, projects and activities shall cease to operate at the stroke of midnight on 30th June 2026. 3. That this petition having been filed in the public interest, each party shall bear their own costs.” (*Kenya Law Reports*, 2024).

In Kenya, the implementation of the NG-CDF in recent years reveals a gap between the local design of capital spending decisions and the allocation of funds for the operations and maintenance of projects with localized benefits (Kimani & Kamaara, 2019). Due to the discretionary nature of capital expenditure and the emphasis placed on political significance, new programs are often initiated while existing ones are neglected or underfunded (Mwangi et al., 2015). Additionally, when local officials are replaced following elections, their successors often refuse to fund or maintain projects initiated by their predecessors for two primary reasons (*Collins, 2020*). First, they use their authority to make a political statement by launching new initiatives that highlight their own capabilities. Second, newly elected leaders tend to initiate projects that reward their supporters while disregarding those initiated by their opponents, effectively diminishing the political legacy of their predecessors (*Biggins et al., 2017*).

Consequently, Project Management Committees (PMCs) are often unable to utilize the allocated funds effectively, leading to delays in project completion within the intended funding year (*Yeheskel & Globerson, 2020*). Delays in project initiation are also a common risk, often caused by factors such as procrastination, legal or planning issues, insufficient details, or a lack of funds and other resources (*Mahamud et al., 2019*). To ensure the success and sustainability of CDF-funded projects, objective and strategic funding decisions are essential to guarantee their continuity and long-term viability (*Barchok & MIROGA (Ph.D), 2020*). If funds are depleted before a project is completed, the project may have to be abandoned entirely, resulting in wasted resources and efforts that must be written off. *Oisanga (2022)* in his study “*Assessment of the Ng-cdf Project Management Structure on Performance of Ng-cdf Projects in Kenya; a Case Study of Public Secondary Schools in North Mugirango Constituency in Nyamira County*” concluded that for NG-CDF projects to achieve their intended objectives, there must be a concerted effort to allocate adequate resources, involve stakeholders,

provide training, and ensure sufficient time is dedicated to monitoring and evaluation activities.

Additionally, projects that continue beyond their expected timelines can disrupt the implementation of other ongoing or planned initiatives (Das & Ngacho, 2017). Overcoming financial challenges presents significant opportunities to enhance the quality of local service delivery through decentralization. The effectiveness of CDF as a decentralized funding mechanism will largely hinge on the sufficient allocation of resources to projects and the adoption of prudent financial management practices (Yehekel & Globerson, 2020).

The implementation of CDF projects is designed to be participatory, with beneficiaries actively involved in the process (Mahamud et al., 2019). However, (Theesfeld et al., 2010) note that the lack of incentives and skills among project workers to adopt participatory methods remains a significant barrier to effective participation in decentralized funds. Social and economic characteristics of a constituency also influence community involvement, with factors such as social capital playing a pivotal role (Collins, 2020). For instance, the average education level in an electoral area impacts community participation and their ability to monitor fund usage (Kanyinga, 2016). CDF projects are often prioritized in areas with higher average education levels (OYALO, 2015).

In the study titled "*Factors Influencing Community Participation in NG-CDF Projects in Kitui County, Kenya: A Case of Mwingi West Sub County*" by Robert N. Maluki (2018), the findings underscore the importance of addressing demographic, cultural, informational, and governance-related factors to enhance public participation in NG-CDF projects in Kitui County.

### **2.3.3 *Factors undermining the implementation of the NG-CDF Act (2015) in Kenya.***

In democratic systems, the legislature is tasked with policymaking through legislation and oversight of the executive, while the executive is responsible for implementing these policies to deliver public services. The CDF approach, however, is criticized for

blurring the boundaries between these distinct functions of governments (Robertson et al., 2020). Constituency Development Funds (CDFs) have sparked controversy due to the direct involvement of Members of Parliament (MPs) in the utilization of public resources. Scholars, civil society organizations, and Western donors have expressed concerns that CDFs undermine the separation of powers between the legislative and executive branches of government, which is essential for maintaining checks and balances in democracies.

One significant factor hindering the progress of decentralization is the shortage of well-trained, experienced, and open-minded managers who can effectively lead and administer institutions, especially in rural areas of Kenya. (Hermansson, 2019). Limited knowledge of CDF regulations among community members and committee members has led to instances of mismanagement, such as the disregard for district project committees in project submissions and non-compliance with the CDF Act (Kimani & Kamaara, 2019). Misunderstanding of regulations has also resulted in fund reallocations between projects and discrepancies between ground-level proposals and those submitted to headquarters (Andhoga et al., 2018).

Corruption remains another major factor undermining decentralization efforts in Kenya. Malala et al. (2014) observed that the Constituency Development Fund (CDF), rather than reducing corruption as originally intended, has actually contributed to its rise. The lack of strong accountability mechanisms and poor governance has allowed for widespread malpractice and embezzlement of public funds. Cerezo-Narváez et al. (2020) highlight that Members of Parliament (MPs) often create rules and regulations that align with their political interests. In addition to legislating on matters concerning the CDF, MPs also appoint members to the Constituency CDF Committees, which oversee the fund's management. This centralization of power increases the likelihood of manipulation within the National Management Committee (NMC), as pointed out by Jawuor (2017). Consequently, project implementation becomes subject to the MP's personal discretion, leading to biased prioritization or neglect of certain projects. It is essential for policymakers, practitioners, and leaders to establish and enforce effective strategies that ensure strict compliance with the established guidelines for the

implementation and management of CDFs, as this is key to achieving sustainable rural development (Matete et al., 2023).

An additional contributing factor hindering decentralization is the Limited recognition of the roles and responsibilities of community members and fund managers in fund governance. This has contributed to poor performance and, in some cases, the complete failure of funds, as highlighted by KIPPRA's Democratic Governance Support Program (DGSP) (Kimani & Kamaara, 2019). Areas with higher average education levels are more likely to prioritize CDF projects (OYALO, 2015). To enhance participation, training and guidance on the proper use of forms and other documentation should be provided. When participants understand the protocols and the rationale behind them, they are more likely to engage effectively (Das & Ngacho, 2017), therefore, there is an urgent need for comprehensive training of Constituency Development Fund Committees (CDFCs) and Project Management Committees (PMCs) in project planning and management to improve the execution of CDF projects (Jawuor, 2017)

The lack of alignment and cooperation between project committees and the government's technical arm often leads to substandard work or outright rejection by district line ministry heads. consequently, a lack of awareness and training in project planning among community and committee members has significantly hindered the planning process (Eboreime et al., 2018). Illiteracy among Constituency Development Committee (CDC) members has further limited their ability to execute projects effectively and formulate work plans, resulting in project delays (Das & Ngacho, 2017). Keya et al., (2020) underscore the critical role of robust governance structures, transparency, and standardized practices.

### 2.3.4 *Measures that Can Be Put in Place to Enhance NG-CDF ACT (2015) - Drawing lessons from other country experiences*

Constituency Development Funds (CDFs) are referred to by different names across various countries and are structured based on national institutional practices. They differ significantly in size, program type, and organizational approach. Despite these variations, CDFs have gained popularity as governance tools, allowing Parliamentarians to play a role in delivering services at the district and constituency levels. These funds support initiatives such as providing student bursaries, developing small-scale infrastructure projects, and financing the construction of clinics, schools, and community centres. Unsurprisingly, Parliamentarians strongly advocate for these programs, recognizing their potential to enhance the quality of life within their constituencies (*Cdfs-Handbook,2016*). Kenya could Strengthen the NGCDF's legal framework to clarify governance structures, responsibilities, and processes for fund allocation and monitoring through a constitution amendment. In many countries, decentralization is either underway or in its early stages. To support this shift, training is essential to promote a reorientation toward community-based approaches (Said & Gakuu, 2020).

The Philippines' Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF) was initially designed as a decentralized funding mechanism for local development projects but became plagued by political patronage, corruption, and lack of transparency. In response, the government introduced strict fund allocation guidelines, mandated independent oversight by the Commission on Audit (COA), and launched public tracking portals to enhance transparency. Additionally, direct political control was removed, transferring project implementation to local government agencies. Following the 2013 Napoles Scandal, the Philippine Supreme Court declared PDAF unconstitutional, leading to significant governance reforms that improved accountability and fund management (Delfin & Garcia, 2016).

Empowering communities with control mechanisms, such as rule-making and implementation, encourages local citizens to actively participate in resource management, utilizing their expertise and skills (Franz et al., 2015). In India,

community participation is a critical element in the allocation and management of local funds. Panchayati Raj institutions (local governments) actively involve communities in the planning and monitoring of development projects Centre of Excellence for Local Governance (2010 ). Identifying the right individuals and the optimal combination of skills is critical to achieving the desired outcomes and this principle applies to the CDF as well. Key competencies include levels of expertise, creativity, mechanisms for skill enhancement, IT proficiency, human capital efficiency, and investment in education and training within the country(Sugal, 2017). (Sangwan & Parkash (2024) observe that India's Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS) is designed to empower Members of Parliament (MPs) to propose developmental projects within their constituencies. However, the actual implementation and financial management of these projects are entrusted to local government agencies, thereby preventing direct MP control over funds. This structure reduces opportunities for mismanagement and ensures that projects align with local development plans.

(Nankoris & Gakuo, 2018) observed that international organizations, governments, and NGOs have increasingly recognized that the lack of active, efficient, and sustained involvement by intended beneficiaries remains a primary reason for the failure of many development projects. Consequently, various organizations, often through pilot-based programs, have been motivated to facilitate the participation of individuals, including marginalized women and men(Miano & Nairobi, 2016). Numerous international financial organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and civil society organizations (CSOs) have closely examined the development and operations of these funds with a critical perspective to ensure they do not devolve into politicized "slush funds" prone to misuse and corruption. This scrutiny highlighted the importance of addressing these concerns openly and proactively(*Cdfs-Handbook,2016*).

The concept of participation has numerous meanings and interpretations. At its core, it involves raising awareness about development programs and fostering local initiatives and self-help efforts (Biggins et al., 2017). It also entails actively engaging individuals in decision-making processes that directly impact their growth (Tsofa et

al., 2017). In some contexts, participation extends to organizing collective actions aimed at empowering disadvantaged individuals by granting them control over resources, access to services, and negotiation power, thereby encouraging their involvement in development planning and implementation while ensuring they share in the benefits (Karia, 2015). More broadly, participation can be described as involving a large number of people in activities or circumstances that enhance their overall well-being, including their livelihoods, security, or self-esteem (Kipkoech, 2019). Additionally, investing in capacity-building programs for Constituency Development Committees (CDCs) and local officials to enhance their skills in project management, financial oversight, and accountability could help enhance the implementation of the Act.

A key rationale for Constituency Development Funds (CDFs) is that incorporating local input enhances the alignment of projects with constituents' needs, ensures greater focus on implementation, and provides a mechanism to hold government officials accountable. By empowering Members of Parliament (MPs) with development responsibilities, CDFs should link their performance to locally determined electoral outcomes (Cdfs-Handbook, 2016). The effective functioning of any Constituency Development Fund (CDF) relies heavily on the active involvement and leadership of Members of Parliament (MPs). South Africa's Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) fund has an independent oversight body that monitors the fund's usage and ensures transparency. This helps detect misuse of funds and increases accountability (*Municipal Infrastructure Grant, 2015*) As representatives of their constituents, MPs play a pivotal role in fostering citizen participation and advocating for access to government services. Through their leadership, MPs can ensure that CDF resources are allocated efficiently, transparently, and in alignment with the public interests of their constituencies. Therefore, the success of CDFs is closely tied to the initiative of MPs and their commitment to empowering citizens to engage in their own development (Kiura, 2017)

Brazil's National Fund for Education Development (FNDE) employs robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure effective fund utilization. These include periodic public audits and impact assessments, which are integral to tracking

the allocation and use of educational resources. Such practices are essential for maintaining transparency and accountability within the educational funding framework (Pinto, 2021). The FNDE's approach aligns with broader trends in Brazil's educational system, where there is a significant emphasis on the use of assessments and evaluations to inform policy and practice. For instance, the National Institute for Educational Studies and Research (INEP) conducts various assessments to monitor educational quality and outcomes, contributing to the overall evaluation landscape in Brazil. These comprehensive monitoring and evaluation strategies are designed to ensure that educational funds are utilized effectively, ultimately aiming to enhance the quality of education across the country (Pinto, 2021).

The effective operation of Constituency Development Funds (CDFs) requires adherence to fundamental principles of good governance, which include responsiveness, transparency, effective administration and management, accountability, and robust monitoring and evaluation. Brazil has implemented strong monitoring and evaluation (M&E) mechanisms for funds like the "Fundo Nacional de Desenvolvimento da Educação" (National Fund for Education Development). When these principles are consistently applied, CDFs can significantly contribute to improving service delivery and enhancing the quality of life within constituencies (Misuko, 2016).

**Table 2. 1: A Summary of Literature Review**

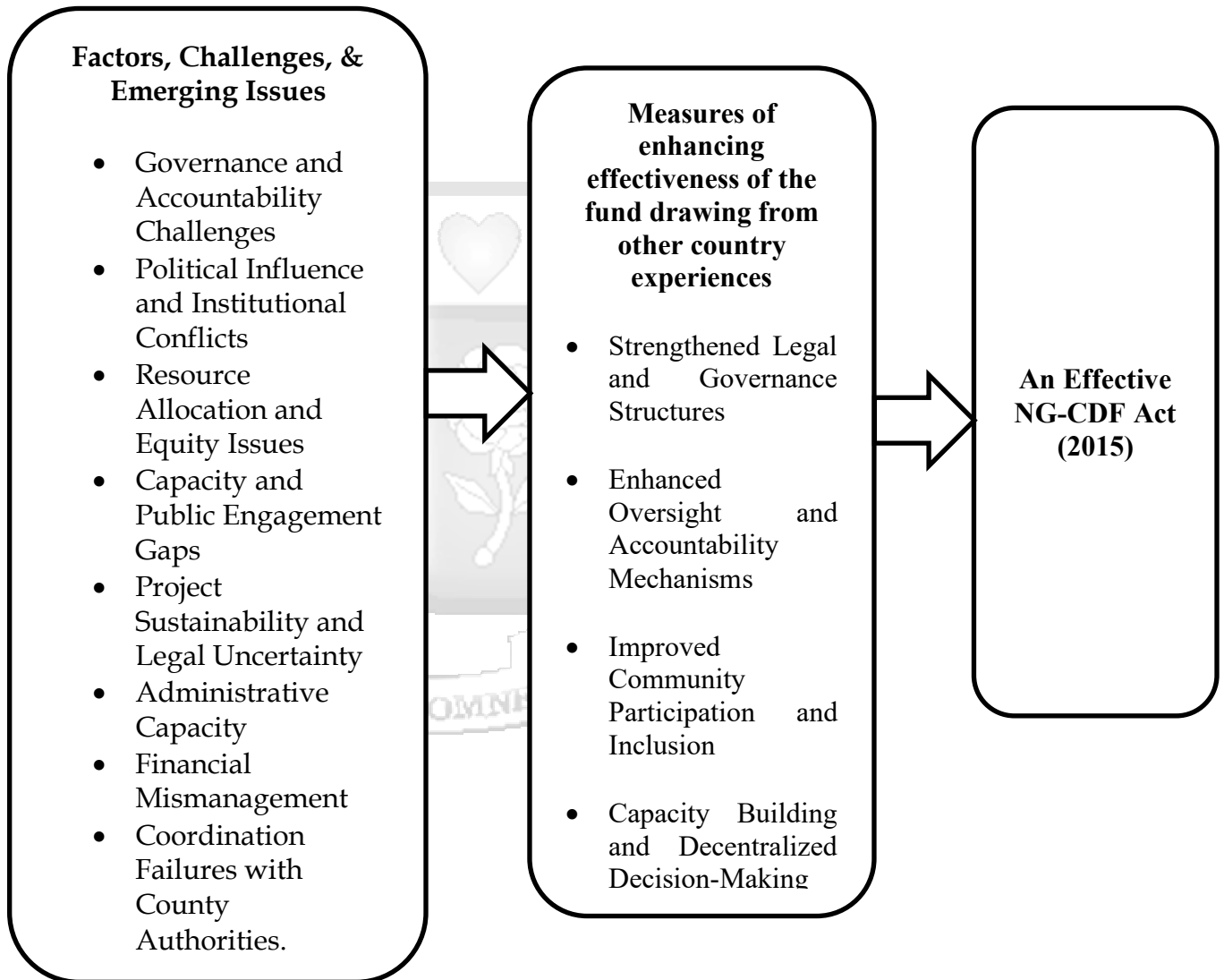
| Author(s)            | Objectives/Purpose  | Key Findings  | Focus of This Study  |
|----------------------|---|---|--|
| (Keya et al., 2020b) | - To establish the relationship between governance practices and the performance of NG-CDFs in Kenya. | - Identified a positive correlation between effective governance practices – such as transparency, accountability, and community participation – and improved performance of NG-CDF projects. | - Investigate which governance practices most significantly impact NG-CDF project success. |

|                              |   |  |   |
|------------------------------|---|--|---|
| <p>Matete et al., 2023</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To examine the utilization of the Constituency Development Fund as an instrument of rural development in Kakamega County, Kenya.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Highlighted issues such as mismanagement and inadequate community involvement hindering rural development through NG-CDF projects.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Explore strategies to enhance community engagement and reduce mismanagement in NG-CDF projects.</li> </ul> |
| <p>Kiura, Harun M (2019)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Influence of Monitoring and Evaluation Strategies on the Implementation of Ng-cdf Projects: a Case of Ngariama Njukiini Water Project Gichugu Constituency Kirinyaga County</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Found that active community participation positively influences the success and sustainability of NG-CDF projects.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify and address obstacles hindering community involvement in NG-CDF initiatives.</li> </ul>           |
| <p>(Boyani, (2021)</p>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Factors influencing the effectiveness of M&amp;E of government projects in Kenya: A case study of NG-CDF Fund projects in Dagoretti North sub-county Nairobi Kenya</li> </ul>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Established that stakeholder participation, competence of monitoring and evaluation bodies, methodology choice, and resource allocation significantly influence the effectiveness of NG-CDF project monitoring and evaluation.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Propose capacity-building initiatives to enhance monitoring and evaluation of NG-CDF projects.</li> </ul>  |

|                                    |  |  |   |
|------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| <p>(Miano &amp; Nairobi, 2016)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To investigate factors influencing community participation in NG-CDF projects in Mwingi Central Constituency.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Demographic characteristics and accountability significantly influence community participation; cultural beliefs have minimal impact; low awareness and perceived corruption discourage involvement.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enhance community engagement through awareness campaigns and transparency measures.</li> </ul>   |
| <p>Nzioka, K. M. (2023)</p>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To assess monitoring and evaluation practices and performance of NG-CDF projects in Mbooni Constituency.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Budget allocation, stakeholder participation, training levels, and time allocation in M&amp;E practices significantly influence project performance.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strengthen M&amp;E practices through adequate budgeting, training, and stakeholder involvement.</li> </ul>   |
| <p>Oisanga, Shadrack N (2022)</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assessment of the Ng-cdf Project Management Structure on Performance of Ng-cdf Projects in Kenya; a Case Study of Public Secondary Schools in North Mugirango Constituency in Nyamira County</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Efforts to allocate adequate resources, involve stakeholders, provide training, and ensure sufficient time is dedicated to monitoring and evaluation activities.</li> </ul>                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evaluating how the structure of project management within the National Government Constituencies Development Fund (NG-CDF) influences the performance of projects, specifically in public secondary schools</li> </ul> |

## 2.4 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework offers a holistic and integrated perspective on the problem under investigation (Liehr & Smith, 1999). Statistically, it represents the relationships between the study's key concepts in a logically organized manner, visually demonstrating their interconnectedness (Grant & Osanloo, 2014).



**Figure 2. 1: Conceptual Framework**

## **Chapter 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter outlines the research methods used in the study, including the research design, target population, sampling techniques, sample size determination, data collection tools and methods, data analysis procedures, and ethical considerations. It provides a detailed description of the approach adopted to conduct the research, ensuring clarity and coherence in the methodology.

### **3.2 Research Philosophy**

Research philosophy refers to the belief system underlying how data about a phenomenon is gathered, analyzed, and applied. It serves as the foundation of knowledge, helping researchers expose, understand, and minimize biases in their studies (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010).

This study was guided by a constructivist research philosophy, which viewed reality as socially constructed and context dependent. Knowledge was understood as co-created through interaction between the researcher and participants, rather than objectively discovered. Constructivism emphasized the subjective meanings individuals assigned to their experiences, making it well-suited for qualitative research that sought an in-depth understanding of human perspectives. This approach supported flexible, interpretive methods such as interviews and acknowledged the active role of the researcher in the meaning-making process.

### **3.3 Research Design**

To gain in-depth insights and provide a comprehensive understanding of the research topic, a descriptive design was adopted. According to Boddy, (2019), this study adopted a descriptive research design, which was well-suited for systematically capturing and presenting information about the phenomenon under investigation. Descriptive research focused on observing, describing, and documenting various aspects of a situation as they naturally occurred, without attempting to influence or alter any variables.

According to (Garira et al., 2019) the study design aimed to establish a systematic approach for addressing the research questions, objectives, problem of interest, target population, and sampling procedures giving more insights on the challenges affecting the implementation of the NG-CDF Act. Descriptive research is particularly useful when the aim is to gain an accurate and detailed understanding of current conditions, behaviours, practices, or attitudes related to a specific population or setting. It is commonly employed in the early stages of research to establish foundational knowledge, identify patterns or trends, and provide direction for future analytical or experimental studies.

### **3.4 Population and Sampling**

According to (Cooper & Schindler, 2014) the target population of a study consists of individuals with specific characteristics or a reliable understanding of the research problem. (Banerjee & Chaudhury, 2010) define the target population as “a specific subset or segment within the larger population that is the primary focus of a study, intervention, or marketing strategy.” Purposive sampling, as described by (Campbell et al., 2020), is “used to select respondents that are most likely to provide relevant and useful information.”

The decision to use a purposive sampling strategy was based on the assumption that “certain individuals, due to the aims and objectives of the study, may have unique and valuable perspectives on the issues being investigated and should therefore be included in the sample” (Robinson, 2014). This sampling technique was instrumental in identifying and selecting cases that maximize the effective use of limited research resources. The study population participated in in-depth interviews and key informant interviews.

As a qualitative study, the sample size was determined based on the principle of saturation, which is reached when additional participants no longer provide new or significant information, a concept referred to as the "power of information" (Dworkin, 2012). The researcher continued conducting interviews until saturation was achieved. While saturation is the ideal benchmark, numerical guidelines suggest an average of 20 participants for a master's thesis and 50 for a PhD (Baker & Edwards, 2012).

To ensure a comprehensive and balanced representation of stakeholders involved in the implementation of the NG-CDF Act (2015), the study adopted a multi-sectoral sampling approach. The study examined a population comprising 290 Members of Parliament (MPs), each representing one of the 290 constituencies. In every constituency, there is also a Fund Account Manager and a Chairperson of the National Government Constituency Development Fund Committee (NGCDFC). Instead of selecting only MPs, the study purposively selected 5 MPs, 6 Fund Account Managers, and 5 NGCDFC Chairpersons as respondents. This approach was adopted because additional MPs were likely to reach saturation quickly, as their perspectives and concerns often tend to be similar or closely related.

The study also included 3 NG-CDF Board Officials out of the 9 board members and interviewed 1 senior official from the National Treasury, who oversees fund allocation and policy implementation. Respondents were selected to maximize understanding of the research problem. MPs were included due to their critical role in legislative oversight and governance; Fund Managers for their responsibility in the day-to-day administration of the fund; and NGCDFC Chairpersons for their role in monitoring and evaluating NG-CDF-funded projects.

To ensure a broad and diverse representation, the study divided the country into eight regions: Western, Nyanza, Coast, Mt. Kenya, Eastern, Rift Valley, Nairobi, and North Eastern. It was further ensured that no two respondents within the same region came from the same county. This strategy enabled the study to capture diverse perspectives from across all regions of Kenya.

By drawing from these diverse stakeholders, the study ensured a holistic understanding of NG-CDF's effectiveness, challenges, and areas for improvement, ultimately leading to actionable policy recommendations for enhanced grassroots development.

### **3.5 Data Collection Methods**

A well-designed study with a representative sample size is essential for producing accurate results that reflect the target population. To ensure reliability, adequate time must be allocated for data collection, as insufficient or inaccurate data can undermine the validity of the findings (Kabir, 2016). While selecting an appropriate data collection method is a critical aspect of research planning, it alone does not guarantee the overall success of a research project (Olsen, 2012).

Data collection instruments refer to the tools used to gather information, and the processes involved in their development (Saunders et al., 2014). Primary data was gathered through key informant interviews by utilizing a semi-structured interview guide. Secondary data was obtained through review of literature. By adopting a comprehensive data collection approach, the study aimed to provide valuable insights into human behavior, attitudes, and the key challenges being investigated. Before embarking on the data collection, a pilot was conducted, where the study interviewed 3 MPs. This offered valuable insights on the interview tool. From the pilot the study had to undertake some adjustment on the interview guide to make it more comprehensive.

### **3.6 Data Analysis**

Data analysis involved identifying patterns within the data and interpreting those patterns by explaining their underlying causes (Creswell, 2014). The data collected from the researchers' write-up was transcribed and organized following each interview. The data was then coded through the transcripts, while the researcher took note of key remarks and observations, which contributed to the development of themes. This process resulted in a list of guiding words informed the researcher's interpretation. The codes were analyzed to determine if multiple codes describe the same phenomenon, if the codes relate to categories in the literature review, or if the interviewees perceive links between multiple codes. The coding units were categorized by assigning the relevant data to their respective codes until saturation was achieved. This enabled the researcher to generate general theoretical ideas based on the emerging patterns and relationships. Data from document analysis was then

integrated by identifying cross-cutting codes and themes, was grouped under the same codes. Themes, patterns, and relationships were derived from the data.

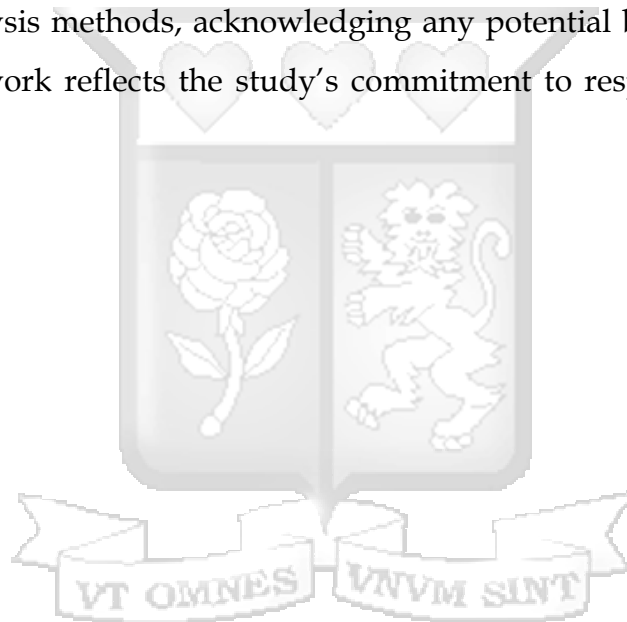
The thematic analysis in this study adopted a deductive approach, where themes were derived from existing theories, policy frameworks, and past research on the National Government Constituencies Development Fund (NG-CDF) Act, 2015. This approach ensured that data analysis was structured and theory-driven, aligning with key themes such as governance challenges, financial accountability, political influence, public participation, and transparency mechanisms. However, while the study is primarily deductive, it allowed for some inductive flexibility to capture emerging patterns and unexpected insights from the data. This hybrid approach strengthens the analysis by ensuring that findings are both grounded in established knowledge and open to new contextual realities identified during data collection.

### **3.7 Research Quality - Validity, Reliability and objectivity of the research**

In qualitative research, reliability ensures the consistency of findings, while validity focuses on their truthfulness and accuracy, both of which contribute to enhancing transparency and reducing researcher bias (Roberts & Priest, 2006). The primary objective of establishing both reliability and validity is to guarantee that the data is sound and replicable, leading to accurate results. To achieve these, the study employed several techniques: first, by clearly defining and identifying all variables, ensuring the findings are accurate, reliable, and easily understood, which facilitates a comprehensive analysis. The study also determined an appropriate sample size. A pilot study with a smaller sample (3) was conducted before the main study to identify and resolve potential issues with the research instrument, ensuring its effectiveness and accuracy in data collection. This allowed for adjustments to be made to the interview guide. Finally, the study openly acknowledges constraints and weaknesses in the research design and methodology, thus enhancing the credibility, transparency, and validity of the findings.

### 3.8 Ethical Considerations

The study sought ethical clearance from NACOSTI (National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation) and the Strathmore Research Ethics Committee before data collection. Strict ethical guidelines were followed throughout the process, including obtaining informed consent from participants and providing clear pre-study briefings to explain the study's purpose and potential implications. Confidentiality and anonymity were prioritized, with participants' personal information protected through anonymization and coding systems. Participation was voluntary, and individuals had the right to withdraw from the study without any negative consequences. Transparency was maintained by clearly reporting data collection and analysis methods, acknowledging any potential biases or limitations. This ethical framework reflects the study's commitment to responsible and ethical research practices.



## CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research findings based on a thematic analysis of qualitative data collected from key stakeholders involved in the implementation of the National Government Constituencies Development Fund (NG-CDF) Act, 2015. The purpose of the study was to appraise the NG-CDF Act (2015) and its challenges, identify emerging issues that have arisen from the implementation of the NG-CDF Act (2015), to assess the factors undermining the implementation of the NG-CDF Act (2015) and to identify lessons that can be drawn based on international best practices. The findings presented reflect the perspectives, experiences, and observations of the various stakeholder groups interviewed.

### 4.2 Response Rate

In modern research, attaining high survey response rates is essential for ensuring the reliability and validity of data, with a response rate of around 60% generally recommended as a standard benchmark (Morton et al., 2012). In this study, 17/20 respondents were interviewed representing a response rate of 85%.

### 4.3 Challenges in the implementation of the NG-CDF Act (2015)

#### 4.3.1 *Legal and Institutional Gaps*

The implementation of the NG-CDF Act 2015 is hampered by significant legal and institutional gaps, particularly in relation to constitutional clarity, legal enforcement, and jurisdictional boundaries. The 2024 High Court ruling that declared the NG-CDF unconstitutional has intensified concerns about the fund's alignment with the principles of the 2010 Constitution, especially the separation of powers. This ruling has created a climate of uncertainty around the fund's legal status, casting doubt on its future and prompting calls for urgent legislative reforms.

In addition to constitutional concerns, weak enforcement of the Act's provisions presents a major challenge. Although the law sets out comprehensive reporting and accountability requirements, enforcement mechanisms remain largely ineffective. As one Fund Account Manager observed, the Act's provisions are well-defined, but

compliance is poorly monitored and rarely enforced. This lack of accountability has allowed for inconsistencies and irregularities in project implementation, undermining public trust and weakening the integrity of the NG-CDF framework.

Jurisdictional ambiguity between national and county governments further complicates the fund's operations. Stakeholders reported ongoing confusion over whether certain development functions—such as health, infrastructure, and early childhood education—fall under the purview of NG-CDF or county governments. This overlap often leads to duplication of projects, inefficient resource use, and strained relationships between NG-CDF committees and county authorities. Addressing these legal and institutional gaps is essential for improving coordination, ensuring constitutionality, and enhancing the fund's effectiveness in delivering grassroots development. Persistent legal and advocacy challenges from civil society actors continue to disrupt the institutional stability of the NG-CDF, creating uncertainty around its legitimacy and long-term viability.

*“The fund has been declared unconstitutional more than once. This puts its future in question.” – FAM1*

#### **4.3.2 Oversight Inefficiencies**

The effectiveness of NG-CDF oversight mechanisms is significantly undermined by institutional fragmentation, procedural delays, and the absence of meaningful enforcement. Multiple oversight bodies, including the Auditor General, the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC), the NG-CDF Board, and internal audit units within the National Treasury, are all mandated to monitor the fund's operations. However, their roles often overlap without adequate coordination, leading to duplication, gaps in accountability, and confusion about enforcement responsibilities.

One of the most persistent challenges is the delay in audit reporting and weak follow-up on findings. Interviews revealed that audits are often released years after the financial year in question, by which time key personnel may have changed, or the damage is already done. Even when irregularities are identified, the response is typically administrative such as requesting clarifications, rather than corrective or

punitive. This lack of urgency and weak institutional memory limits the value of audit reports as accountability tools.

Compounding the problem is the lack of deterrent action for financial mismanagement or abuse of office. Stakeholders noted that few, if any, prosecutions arise from audit findings, regardless of the severity of violations. In most cases, mismanagement is quietly settled or left unresolved, fostering a culture of impunity. Without clear consequences, fund administrators and political actors face little pressure to adhere to financial rules or ethical standards. As a result, the oversight system, while elaborate on paper, fails to deliver credible accountability in practice.

*“One of the most pressing issues facing NG-CDF is poor accountability and oversight..”-MP1*

*“...the fund is Over audited AoG, Internal Auditors from the Board, Treasury department audit, KRA etc most of the time the FAM is busy preparing for the visit”-CHR1*

### **4.3.3 Limited and Unequal Public Participation**

Despite the NG-CDF Act’s emphasis on community involvement, public participation in the fund’s implementation remains limited and uneven—particularly among vulnerable and marginalized groups. Interviews revealed that youth, women, and persons with disabilities (PWDs) are consistently underrepresented in key decision-making processes. While formal guidelines encourage inclusivity, there is little evidence that these guidelines are meaningfully enforced. In many constituencies, participation remains tokenistic, with only a few individuals invited to forums that are often dominated by politically connected elites.

Logistical and geographic barriers further hinder participation, especially in remote or rural areas. Public engagement forums are frequently held in urban centres or constituency offices, far from the communities most affected by NG-CDF projects. As a result, residents in hard-to-reach areas are effectively excluded from shaping project priorities or providing oversight. Several interviewees noted that even when meetings are announced, they often lack sufficient notice or are conducted in formats that are inaccessible to certain populations, such as PWDs or non-literate residents.

Additionally, a widespread lack of civic education has contributed to low levels of public awareness about the right to participate and the mechanisms through which this can be done. Many community members are unaware that they are entitled to attend public forums, propose projects, or hold the CDFC accountable. This knowledge gap leaves space for local power brokers to dominate the process and undermines the goal of equitable, community-driven development. Without stronger efforts to promote inclusion, decentralize participation processes, and enhance civic education, the NG-CDF risks reinforcing existing inequalities rather than addressing them.

*“In most cases the long distances to central meeting places limit the various groups in the community and lack of finances to facilitate participants in attending the meetings”-CHR1*

*“These include lack of public awareness on project selection and prioritization, inadequate resources to facilitate public participation”-Treasury Officer.*

**Table 4. 1 Challenges in NG-CDF Act (2015) Implementation**

| <b>Themes</b>                                   | <b>Specific Challenges</b>  | <b>Respondents</b> |
|---|---|--------------------|
| <b>Legal and Institutional Gaps</b>             | 2024 High Court ruling questioned NG-CDF’s constitutionality        | 24%                |
|   | Lack of enforcement of audit/reporting mechanisms                   | 47%                |
|   | Confusion over whether some functions fall under counties           | 59%                |
| <b>Limited and Unequal Public Participation</b> | - Youth, women, and PWDs underrepresented                           | 59%                |
|   | - Public meetings held far from rural/remote areas                  | 24%                |
|   | - Low awareness of participation rights/processes                   | 65%                |
| <b>Oversight Inefficiencies</b>                 | - Multiple institutions (AG, EACC, Board) conduct audits separately | 65%                |
|   | - Audit findings delayed or ignored                                 | 35%                |
|   | - Few prosecutions or consequences for mismanagement                | 29%                |
|   | - No clear framework for coordination or co-financing               | 53%                |

Source: Author Compilation

## 4.4 Emerging issues in the implementation of the NG-CDF Act (2015)

### 4.4.1 Political Influence and Elite Capture

Political interference is a major theme in the implementation of the NG-CDF, with interviews revealing that Members of Parliament (MPs) hold disproportionate influence over nearly every stage of the fund's operations. This influence extends from determining which projects get prioritized to appointing key members of the Constituency Development Fund Committee (CDFC), the body mandated to oversee project planning and implementation. Stakeholders consistently noted that this control enables MPs to shape the NG-CDF to serve political rather than developmental objectives.

One of the most striking patterns is the tendency for MPs to steer project selection toward initiatives that offer high public visibility – such as school renovations or road grading – often timed to coincide with election cycles. While these projects may meet surface-level community expectations, they are rarely the result of inclusive or participatory needs assessments. Instead, they are selected for their ability to generate political capital, with several respondents noting that MPs “use NG-CDF to campaign” or “channel projects to loyal zones.” This politicization reduces the responsiveness of NG-CDF to actual community development needs, particularly in underserved or opposition-aligned areas.

Moreover, the lack of effective oversight allows this political capture to persist largely unchecked. The NG-CDF Act prescribes a degree of separation between MPs and fund administration, but in practice, enforcement is weak or nonexistent. Interviewees described CDFC appointments as “rubber-stamped by the MP,” with some community members viewing the committee as an extension of the MP's office rather than an independent oversight body. Without credible checks – whether from the NG-CDF Board, the National Treasury, or civil society – MPs continue to dominate the fund's operation, blurring the lines between public service and political strategy.

*“NGCDF is political by nature... most decisions favor the MP.” – CHR1*

*“MPs may prioritize projects that have political benefits, such as those that serve as visible symbols of their work or that help them gain favor with voters”-MP1*

#### **4.4.2 Role Confusion between National and County Governments**

The implementation of NG-CDF projects continues to be complicated by unresolved tensions between the national and county governments, particularly in relation to development planning and service delivery. Since the advent of devolution, there has been significant duplication of functions, especially in sectors such as education and infrastructure, areas where both the NG-CDF and counties claim responsibility.

A major contributor to this confusion is the lack of a clear framework for coordination or co-financing between the NG-CDF and county governments. Despite operating in the same constituencies, the two systems rarely engage in joint planning or budgeting. Interviews revealed that in many cases, county officials are not even aware of NG-CDF project lists until implementation is already underway. This absence of structured intergovernmental collaboration weakens the potential for synergies and fosters fragmentation in local development.

These blurred lines have given rise to growing tension between NG-CDF committees and county executives, with each side perceiving the other as encroaching on its mandate. In politically competitive environments, this has led to rivalry rather than cooperation, with communities caught in the middle. Without a legally defined mechanism to harmonize roles and responsibilities post-devolution, NG-CDF risks undermining the coherence of county-level planning, and by extension, the broader goals of decentralization and equitable development.

*“There are possible areas of duplication between County Government and NG-CDF that may require coordination including in roads, education (bursaries) and public utilities”. Treasury Officer*

*“...in fact, the bursary for counties was declared unconstitutional. Yes. You understand? Because they were coming to do the job of the national government”-MP5*

**Table 4.2 Emerging issues in the implementation of NG-CDF Act 2015**

| <b>Themes</b>   | <b>Specific Challenges</b>  | <b>Respondents</b> |
|---|---|--------------------|
| <b>Political Influence and Elite Capture</b>                  | - MPs control project selection and CDFC makeup                         | 41%                |
|   | - Selection favors visibility and re-election, not community priorities | 24%                |
| <b>Role Confusion between National and County Governments</b> | - NG-CDF projects overlap with county mandates (e.g., roads, water)     | 47%                |
|   | - Emerging tension in development planning                              | 41%                |

Source: Author Compilation

## **4.5 Factors undermining the implementation of the NG-CDF Act (2015)**

### **4.5.1 Funding and Disbursement Issues**

One of the factors affecting the effective implementation of NG-CDF Act (2015) is the unpredictability and inadequacy of funding and disbursement mechanisms. A key concern raised by stakeholders is the consistent delay by the National Treasury in releasing NG-CDF funds. These delays are often unexplained and occur without prior communication, making it difficult for constituencies to plan or execute projects on schedule. The absence of a legally binding disbursement timeline leaves Fund Account Managers (FAMs) and Constituency Development Fund Committees (CDFCs) operating in uncertainty, leading to stalled projects and eroded community trust.

Another significant factor is the lack of a structured and transparent disbursement schedule. In many cases, constituencies receive funds in unpredictable tranches, which disrupts procurement planning and implementation cycles. This irregularity compromises the ability to complete projects within a financial year and increases the risk of cost overruns or abandonment. Fund managers reported that this unpredictability also affects contractors and suppliers, who may be hesitant to engage with NG-CDF projects due to delayed payments.

Beyond timing, the statutory allocation of 2.5% of national revenue is widely viewed as insufficient to meet the growing development demands at the constituency level. Interviewees emphasized that while expectations from constituents continue to rise, the funding available through NG-CDF remains constrained and spread thin across competing needs such as education bursaries, infrastructure, water, and social programs. This mismatch between resource availability and local needs limits the fund's capacity to deliver impactful development and often forces trade-offs that leave critical gaps in service delivery.

*"In my opinion, we have experienced late disbursements which have obstructed operations. Especially the disbursement of materials to the students and also to critical development groups which depend on the NGCDF. You see, there are constituencies" MP5*

*"Project implementation is negatively affected by delays in funds disbursement from the treasury, bureaucratic channels in the procurement process and NGCDF has to use other Government departmental staff like treasury, public works, Public health, Procurement officers to manage in managing the process "-CHR1*

*"Delays in disbursement of funds from the National Treasury disrupt project timelines and can lead to cost overruns"-FAM2*

#### **4.5.2 Limited Capacity of Fund Managers and Committees**

The successful implementation of NG-CDF projects heavily depends on the competency of key actors at the constituency level, particularly Fund Account Managers (FAMs), Constituency Development Fund Committees (CDFCs), and Project Management Committees (PMCs). However, interviews revealed that these actors often operate with limited technical capacity, which significantly undermines the quality, efficiency, and accountability of fund utilization. In many cases, FAMs and PMCs lack formal training in critical areas such as project planning, monitoring, and evaluation, leading to gaps in project design and delivery.

A recurring concern is the inadequate understanding of public finance management (PFM) and procurement laws, which exposes the fund to procedural errors and, in some instances, legal non-compliance. Without a strong grasp of procurement

regulations or financial reporting requirements, fund managers may unintentionally breach legal protocols or become vulnerable to political pressure and mismanagement. This lack of capacity also delays procurement processes and compromises the transparency of project implementation.

Moreover, the absence of standardized monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems further weakens the ability of committees to track project outcomes or ensure value for money. Where M&E mechanisms exist, they are often inconsistent across constituencies and reliant on manual or ad hoc methods. As a result, project oversight is reactive rather than proactive, with issues often detected only after implementation. Without regular, targeted training and institutional support, the full potential of the NG-CDF as a tool for local development cannot be realized.

*".... the staff and officials managing NG-CDF funds at the constituency level may lack or experience in financial management, which could lead to inefficiencies or misuse of funds adequate training "MP1*

*"To improve project management, several measures can be adopted. Strengthening the capacity of PMCs through training and technical assistance is essential"-FAM2*

#### **4.5.3 Project Misalignment and Selection Bias**

Project selection under the NG-CDF often lacks a structured, evidence-based approach, with many initiatives implemented without proper feasibility studies or thorough needs assessments. As a result, projects are frequently misaligned with actual community priorities, leading to inefficiencies and limited developmental impact. In several cases, the absence of technical planning has resulted in poorly executed or underutilized projects that fail to address the most pressing local challenges.

Political influence plays a central role in distorting project prioritization. Respondents reported that MPs often favour high-visibility projects that enhance their political profile, sidelining community-driven proposals in the process. This has led to duplication of efforts, especially where NG-CDF projects overlap with county government responsibilities, and has contributed to unmet needs in critical sectors.

The lack of inclusive planning and coordination continues to undermine the fund's effectiveness as a tool for equitable and impactful grassroots development.

*"One of the most significant challenges affecting NG-CDF projects is political interference. Political leaders often exert influence over the selection and prioritization of projects".MP1*

#### **4.5.4 Poor Institutional Coordination**

The effective implementation of NG-CDF projects is often undermined by poor institutional coordination among key actors and levels of government. One recurring issue is the conflict between Constituency Development Fund Committees (CDFCs) and Fund Account Managers (FAMs). While both are mandated to play vital roles in the management of NG-CDF resources, interviews revealed that unclear delineation of responsibilities frequently leads to tension and mistrust. In many constituencies, CDFCs feel that FAMs overstep their role by dominating decision-making, while FAMs, as accounting officers, view some committee actions as politically driven or outside legal procedures. These frictions slow down project planning and create a disjointed working environment.

Another layer of complexity arises from the NG-CDF's reliance on technical officers from other government departments, particularly engineers from the Ministry of Public Works, and procurement or legal officers from the National Treasury. While these departments provide essential expertise, they are not under the direct control of NG-CDF structures and often face competing priorities. This dependency leads to delays in project approvals, substandard supervision, or inconsistent technical input. Compounding the challenge is the lack of structured coordination with county governments, despite operating in overlapping jurisdictions. Constituency-level projects are often developed independently of county plans, resulting in duplication, missed opportunities for joint investment, and fragmented service delivery. Without a formal mechanism for intergovernmental planning and coordination, NG-CDF efforts remain isolated, limiting their long-term impact and sustainability.

**Table 4. 3 Factors that affect the implementation of NGCDF Act (2015)**

| <b>Themes</b>   | <b>Specific Challenges</b>                                       | <b>Respondents</b> |
|---|--|--------------------|
| <b>Funding and Disbursement Issues</b>                  | - No defined timeline for fund release                           | 71%                |
|   | - Inconsistencies disrupt project timelines                      | 29%                |
|   | The 2.5% allocation often insufficient for community needs       | 59%                |
| <b>Limited Capacity of Fund Managers and Committees</b> | - FAMs and PMCs not regularly trained                            | 47%                |
|   | - Inadequate understanding of procurement/PFM laws               | 18%                |
|   | - Monitoring and evaluation systems not standardized             | 24%                |
| <b>Project Misalignment &amp; Selection Bias</b>        | - Most projects are not based on feasibility or needs assessment | 24%                |
|   | - Political interests override grassroots priorities             | 35%                |
|   | Projects sometimes duplicate other government efforts            | 59%                |
| <b>Poor Institutional Coordination</b>                  | - Conflicting roles create friction on the ground                | 29%                |
|   | - No harmonized development plans with counties                  | 29%                |

Source: Author Compilation

#### **4.6 Lessons and best practices that can be identified from other contexts to improve the effectiveness of NG-CDF Act (2015)**

Responses from participants were systematically triangulated with relevant secondary data sources to enhance the credibility and reliability of the findings, and to identify best practices that can enhance the effectiveness of NG-CDF Act (2015)

To secure the future of the NG-CDF and resolve ongoing legal disputes, stakeholders have increasingly called for constitutional anchoring and comprehensive legal reforms. Embedding the NG-CDF in the Constitution would provide it with the legitimacy and permanence needed to ensure continuity, shield it from future litigation, and affirm its role within Kenya’s governance framework. Clear legal provisions distinguishing NG-CDF functions from those of county governments are essential to eliminate jurisdictional confusion and foster cooperative development

planning. By clarifying its legal mandate and aligning it with the devolved structure, constitutional anchoring would not only strengthen the fund's operational stability but also end the cycle of recurring court challenges that continue to threaten its effectiveness.

*"Anchor the fund into the constitution, Include an aspect of resource mobilization, donor funding and partnerships for future sustainability"-FAM1*

*We need more legislation and amendments on some various chapters so as to align well with the constitution"-MP4*

*".. Enshrining The NG-CDF into the constitution"-MP2*

Digitalization and e-transparency present a critical opportunity to enhance accountability and efficiency in the management of NG-CDF. The adoption of real-time fund tracking systems, e-procurement platforms, and online public dashboards has the potential to transform how projects are monitored, funds are disbursed, and information is shared with citizens. Automating procurement processes would reduce delays, curb corruption, and ensure compliance with financial regulations, while digital reporting tools can streamline oversight and improve data accuracy. Most importantly, providing the public with accessible, up-to-date information on project status, budgets, and outcomes would strengthen transparency, build trust, and encourage more meaningful citizen participation in the fund's operations.

*"To improve on financial accountability and prevent corruption -NGCDF can digitalize their procurement processes, Frequent audits and digitalize their payment processes" FAM4*

Inclusive participation models are essential for ensuring that NG-CDF decision-making reflects the needs of all community members, especially marginalized groups. Strengthening outreach to youth, women, and persons with disabilities (PWDs) through reserved quotas and formal inclusion policies can promote more equitable representation in project identification and oversight. Additionally, providing budget support for transport, venue access, and facilitation helps eliminate

the logistical barriers that often prevent vulnerable groups from attending public forums. By decentralizing engagement through ward-level meetings held closer to communities, the NG-CDF can foster deeper grassroots involvement, increase legitimacy, and ensure that projects are truly community-driven.

*“People don’t show up when you call them. They also want to be paid and we don’t have such provisions “-MP3*

Enhancing institutional autonomy and professionalization of the NG-CDF is vital for improving project quality, efficiency, and accountability. Employing independent, in-house technical staff, including procurement officers, engineers, and internal auditors—would reduce the fund’s heavy reliance on external ministries such as Public Works and the National Treasury, which often causes delays and coordination challenges. Establishing a dedicated professional workforce within NG-CDF structures would ensure more consistent technical support and strengthen compliance with financial and procurement regulations. Additionally, structured and continuous capacity-building programs for Constituency Development Fund Committees (CDFCs) and Project Management Committees (PMCs) would enhance local expertise, improve oversight, and promote more effective service delivery at the grassroots level.

Lessons from international experiences provide important insights for enhancing the NG-CDF, revealing not only the risks to be avoided but also effective practices that can guide improvements. Programs like the Philippines' Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF), which was abolished following major corruption scandals, and India's Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS), criticized for inefficiencies and poor targeting, underscore the risks of politically controlled funds without strong safeguards. In contrast, global best practices emphasize the importance of aligning local development initiatives with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), embedding citizen-led oversight mechanisms, and establishing clear performance benchmarks. By focusing on transparency, community ownership, and measurable impact, NG-CDF can evolve into a more accountable and development-oriented tool within Kenya’s decentralized governance system.

**Table 4. 4 Lessons and best practices that can be identified from other Contexts**

| <b>Themes</b>   | <b>Specific Challenges</b>   | <b>Respondents</b> |
|---|--|--------------------|
| <b>Constitutional Anchoring and Legal Reforms</b>     | Anchoring would ensure continuity and legitimacy                   | 53%                |
|   | Clear differentiation from county government functions             | 41%                |
|   | Eliminate recurring court battles                                  | 24%                |
| <b>Digitalization and E-Transparency</b>              | Systems for digital reporting and monitoring of projects           | 41%                |
|   | Automation of procurement processes                                | 47%                |
|   | Improved public access to project and fund data                    | 47%                |
|   | Reserved quotas and inclusion policies for underrepresented groups | 24%                |
|   | Holding meetings closer to the community                           | 47%                |
| <b>Institutional Autonomy and Professionalization</b> | NG-CDF to have in-house procurement, engineering, and audit staff  | 24%                |
|   | Less reliance on Public Works, Treasury, etc.                      | 24%                |

Source: Author Compilation



## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion of the key findings, conclusions drawn from the study, and policy recommendations aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of the NG-CDF Act, 2015 in Kenya. The discussion is structured around the study's objectives, which focused on conducting a critical appraisal of the NG-CDF Act. Specifically, to appraise the NG-CDF Act (2015) and its challenges, identify emerging issues that have arisen from the implementation of the NG-CDF Act (2015), to assess the factors undermining the implementation of the NG-CDF Act (2015) and to identify lessons that can be drawn based on international best practices. By addressing these objectives, the study provided evidence-based insights that can inform reforms to strengthen the governance, sustainability, and impact of the NG-CDF in supporting equitable constituency-level development.

### 5.2 Discussion and implications of Findings

This section interprets and critically evaluates the key findings of the study, aligning them with the research objectives, research questions, literature review, and the theoretical framework underpinning the study. The discussion explores the significance of the findings and contextualizes the results within existing literature and national policy frameworks, while considering alternative interpretations and implications. The discussion is structured around the four specific research objectives.

#### 5.2.1 *Critical appraisal of the NG-CDF Act (2015) and its challenges*

This study set out to critically appraise the implementation of the NG-CDF Act, 2015 by exploring the challenges experienced across constituencies. The findings reveal several recurring issues, including legal and institutional gaps stemming from court challenges to the Act's constitutionality, weak enforcement of accountability mechanisms, unequal public participation.

While the Act clearly outlines procedures for fund management and oversight, the enforcement of these provisions remains weak. Several respondents cited the lack of

clear consequences for violations, delayed audit reports, and inconsistent enforcement of rules by the NG-CDF Board and other oversight agencies legal and institutional gaps persist. In line with findings by Wanjiru (2018), the study affirms that the legal foundation of the fund remains vulnerable, particularly in the absence of constitutional anchoring. The 2024 court ruling, like previous ones, exposed the fragility of the NG-CDF's legal standing, reinforcing the need for policy reforms that resolve the contradictions between the Fund's operational design and the Constitution's devolution framework.

The ongoing legal uncertainty and weak enforcement mechanisms surrounding the NG-CDF Act (2015) pose a significant threat to the Fund's long-term viability and credibility. Without constitutional anchoring or legal harmonization, the Fund remains vulnerable to judicial nullification, creating unpredictability in funding cycles and undermining development continuity at the constituency level. This legal fragility erodes public trust and limits the government's ability to plan and implement grassroots projects effectively. The situation underscores the urgent need for institutional reforms, including stronger oversight, clearer legal alignment with devolved governance frameworks, and enhanced capacity within the NG-CDF Board to ensure consistent enforcement and legal compliance. Such reforms would help secure the Fund's legitimacy, promote stability, and strengthen its contribution to equitable and accountable development at the constituency level.

A dominant theme was the outsized influence of MPs in nearly every aspect of fund management, from project selection to committee appointments. Contrary to the principles of participatory development, MPs were seen to bypass community priorities in favour of politically strategic projects. This supports the assumptions of the Patron-Client Theory, which suggests that political actors often use public resources to consolidate power and reward loyalty. The findings also align with study by (Robertson et al., 2020), which documented how constituency development funds can be used as tools of political patronage. While MPs are expected to provide oversight, the study found that many operate more like executive agents within their constituencies, creating conflicts of interest and undermining transparency.

Political overreach transforms a public good into a private political resource, distorting development priorities and creating project inequalities. Reforms must include legal separation between the roles of legislators and implementers. Without structural safeguards, NG-CDF may continue to reinforce elite control at the expense of marginalized groups, hindering efforts to democratize development at the local level.

Respondents noted that women, youth, and people with disabilities were rarely consulted in meaningful ways, echoing findings by Kimani, J. (2022) on the exclusion of vulnerable groups from local governance mechanisms. These findings challenge the core principle of inclusive development and suggest that procedural compliance like calling for public forums does not automatically translate into effective or equitable engagement.

Public participation that excludes women, youth, and remote communities contributes to uneven development and entrenches historical marginalization. Simply ticking boxes on attendance sheets doesn't guarantee inclusion. Legal and operational reforms should shift participation from being procedural to being truly empowering and inclusive. Civic education and logistical facilitation are equally very essential to democratize the process and allow more equitable input.

Although the NG-CDF Act outlines mechanisms for audits, project monitoring, and reporting, these systems were found to be poorly coordinated, with overlapping responsibilities shared by the Auditor General, Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC), and the Board. The resulting fragmentation diminishes the impact of accountability efforts. This contradicts the expectations of the Fiscal Federalism framework, which emphasizes transparent, accountable, and results-oriented subnational spending. These findings are consistent with (Robertson et al., 2020), who argued that decentralization mechanisms in Kenya suffer from institutional duplication and weak follow-through.

The lack of real consequences for financial mismanagement sends the wrong message to fund administrators, that one can act with impunity. This undermines deterrence

and promotes systemic abuse. This also affects public trust that when communities perceive that audit findings are ignored, they disengage from monitoring efforts and lose faith in governance processes.

d interface between NG-CDF and county planning mechanisms.

### **5.2.2 *Emerging Issues that have arisen from the implementation of the NG-CDF Act (2015)***

The study identified political influence and elite capture and role confusion between national and county governments. The study found frequent duplication and friction between NG-CDF operations and county government mandates, especially in areas like education infrastructure, roads, and water projects. This confusion stems from a lack of policy alignment between the NG-CDF Act and the County Government Act. Some respondents even noted instances where NG-CDF and county funds were unknowingly allocated to the same project, leading to redundancy. These results echo the observations of Ndubi (2020), who warned that uncoordinated development planning at multiple levels leads to inefficient use of public resources.

The absence of structured collaboration weakens Kenya's broader decentralization agenda. It fosters territorialism between MPs and governors, disrupting service delivery at the constituency level. Without a clear policy or legal framework for cooperation, opportunities for resource pooling, co-financing, and joint monitoring are lost, limiting both efficiency and impact. To enhance local development outcomes, there must be a formal, institutionalize.

The Patron-Client Theory, as discussed by Eisenstadt & Roniger (1980) and Medina & Stokes (2002), explains the informal and hierarchical relationships where patrons (in this case, Members of Parliament) provide material resources or development projects in exchange for political support from constituents. This dynamic is clearly evident in the emerging issue of political elite capture of NG-CDF resources. MPs were found to exercise disproportionate control over project prioritization, timing, and geographical allocation, often aligning development activities with electoral interests rather than community needs.

Emerging issues such as jurisdictional overlap, project duplication, and fragmentation between NG-CDF and county governments are well explained by the Fiscal Federalism Theory. As articulated by Oates (1972) and Musgrave (1959), fiscal federalism advocates for a clear division of responsibilities and functions among different levels of government to enhance efficiency and responsiveness in service delivery.

The lack of a structured framework for collaboration between Members of Parliament (who oversee the NG-CDF) and County Governors (who manage devolved functions) undermines Kenya's broader decentralization objectives. The resultant territorialism fuels tensions between political actors at the constituency level, with negative implications for accountability, participatory planning, and development impact.

The implications of these findings are far-reaching. Without a formalized policy or legal mechanism for collaboration, opportunities for resource pooling, co-financing, and joint monitoring are lost, thereby limiting the effectiveness of public investments. Furthermore, this disconnect not only exacerbates fragmentation but also weakens the legitimacy of development efforts in the eyes of constituents, who perceive service delivery as politicized and inconsistent.

To address these issues, the study recommends the institutionalization of intergovernmental planning frameworks that explicitly define the boundaries and complementarities between NG-CDF and county governments. Such frameworks should be anchored in law and supported by joint technical committees, participatory development plans, and shared monitoring and evaluation systems. Aligning the NG-CDF Act with the County Government Act would be a necessary first step in restoring coherence, accountability, and efficiency in Kenya's devolved development architecture.

### 5.2.3 *Factors that influence the implementation of the NG-CDF Act (2015)*

The study explored the underlying factors that influence the implementation of the NG-CDF Act, 2015. The findings highlight several underlying factors, funding and disbursement challenges, capacity limitations of fund actors, project misalignment and prioritization issues, and poor institutional coordination.

One of the most persistent barriers to effective NG-CDF implementation is the unpredictable and delayed disbursement of funds by the National Treasury. This study found that Treasury lacks a standardized release calendar, resulting in financial uncertainty that affects project timelines and completion. In line with the findings of (Kanyinga, 2016), the current research confirms that budget disbursement delays are a chronic problem in Kenya's public financial management ecosystem. These delays limit the ability of NG-CDF committees to plan effectively and often force constituencies to operate reactively, compromising project quality and continuity.

This issue also reflects a limitation in the practical application of Fiscal Federalism, which assumes timely and formula-based transfers from the central government to subnational entities. The results therefore suggest a deviation from theory, as the central government's unpredictability in fund release undermines the autonomy and responsiveness that NG-CDFs are supposed to provide at the local level. A possible alternative explanation could lie in broader macroeconomic instability and Treasury cash flow constraints, but the consequences are disproportionately felt at the constituency level where projects stall and community trust declines.

The implication is that without predictable and timely disbursement of funds, the NG-CDF loses its effectiveness as a decentralized development tool, resulting in stalled projects, eroded public trust, and diminished capacity for strategic constituency-level planning.

The study also revealed a significant gap in technical and managerial capacity among Fund Account Managers (FAMs), Constituency Development Fund Committees (CDFCs), and Project Management Committees (PMCs). Respondents cited a lack of training in procurement, financial management, and monitoring and evaluation

(M&E). These findings are consistent with those (Das & Ngacho, 2017), who found that weak institutional capacity undermines the effectiveness of devolved funds. The results are also aligned with the core claims of Fiscal Federalism Theory: decentralized funds are only effective when matched with corresponding administrative capacity at the local level.

However, contrary to the claims of Ndirangu (2016) that capacity-building efforts have been substantially implemented, this study found that such efforts remain patchy, and uncoordinated. A more plausible explanation for the persistent capacity deficits may lie in the politicization of appointments and high staff turnover at the constituency level, which dilute institutional memory and skills retention. Thus, institutional strengthening, particularly in technical training and professional recruitment, is critical if NG-CDF is to fulfil its mandate. Without sustained and depoliticized capacity-building for NG-CDF personnel, the Fund will continue to suffer from inefficient project management, weak accountability, and underperformance in delivering grassroots development.

This study found that project selection processes are often influenced by political interests rather than structured community needs assessments or feasibility studies. These findings support the central tenets of the Patron-Client Theory, which posits that political elites channel public resources toward projects that enhance their electoral appeal rather than maximize social utility. In line with previous work by (A. J. Malala et al., 2015), the results reinforce concerns that political incentives often distort development priorities under the NG-CDF.

Politically driven project selection undermines the equitable distribution of resources and results in development outcomes that do not reflect genuine community priorities. Without empowering PMCs and CDFCs to make independent, evidence-based decisions, NG-CDF risks reinforcing patronage networks at the expense of inclusive and needs-driven development.

A critical barrier to implementation identified by this study is the lack of structured coordination between the NG-CDF and county governments. Overlapping mandates

in education and infrastructure have led to duplication of projects, wastage of resources, and intergovernmental tension. These findings are consistent with the observations of (Kimani & Kamaara, 2019), who noted that Kenya's intergovernmental relations often suffer from turf wars and fragmented planning.

This role confusion directly contradicts the expectations of Fiscal Federalism, which emphasizes clarity in vertical and horizontal fiscal roles. An unexpected finding was that coordination between NG-CDF and counties often depends on the personal relationships between MPs and governors rather than institutional frameworks. While some might attribute this to the transitional nature of devolution in Kenya, the findings indicate a more systemic issue: the NG-CDF Act has not been harmonized with the Intergovernmental Relations Act or/and the County Government Act, thereby creating parallel systems of development planning that rarely intersect. Without formal coordination frameworks between NG-CDF and county governments, development efforts will remain fragmented, leading to duplication of projects, inefficient resource use, and weakened overall impact at the local level.

The findings, in the factors affecting the implementation of NG-CDF Act 2015, challenge the practical assumptions of both Fiscal Federalism and Patron-Client theories by showing how de jure frameworks are often undermined by de facto political behaviour and institutional fragmentation. Addressing these challenges requires a multi-pronged approach involving policy harmonization, institutional reform, and political will to depoliticize development planning.

#### **5.2.4 Lessons That Can Be Drawn Based on Best Practices.**

Respondents consistently called for the constitutional anchoring of the NG-CDF as a long-term solution to recurring legal challenges. Anchoring the NG-CDF within the Constitution would safeguard it from future litigation, establish its legitimacy in the devolved framework, and ensure policy continuity. This is consistent with Kanyinga's (2016) argument that clarity in institutional mandates is a prerequisite for effective devolution. It also aligns with Fiscal Federalism Theory, which emphasizes the need for clearly defined subnational fiscal roles.

India's MPLADS, operates under a clear legal framework where MPs propose projects, but local government agencies handle implementation. This separation of roles has minimized political interference, reduced mismanagement, and serves as a best practice for enhancing accountability and curbing elite capture.

Digital tools such as e-procurement platforms, online dashboards, and real-time fund tracking systems were widely recommended by respondents as essential for promoting transparency and accountability. This supports Mwangi's (2015) observation that weak monitoring systems compromise the effectiveness of NG-CDF projects. By leveraging digital solutions, NG-CDF can enhance public access to financial information, curb corruption, and foster civic trust. The finding reaffirms the centrality of transparency in decentralized governance systems, a core tenet of Fiscal Federalism Theory, and positions digitalization as a structural rather than technological reform.

Following major corruption scandals in the PDAF scheme, the Philippine government introduced key reforms focused on transparency and accountability. These included public online fund tracking systems to enable real-time monitoring of development funds and e-procurement platforms to automate procurement, reduce manual interference, and curb corruption.

Despite the NG-CDF Act requiring public participation, the study found that community engagement remains limited, particularly among women, youth, and persons with disabilities. This confirms Kamau's (2019) assertion that marginalized groups are often excluded from public decision-making. While participation frameworks exist in theory, they are poorly executed in practice. To address this gap, the Fund should implement decentralized, ward-level forums and provide logistical support such as transport and translated materials. Such inclusive models ensure that projects are community-driven, not elite-imposed, aligning with the democratic principles outlined in both Patron-Client Theory and Kenya's Vision 2030.

International cases such as the Philippines' abolished Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF), as documented by Espiritu (2014), serve as cautionary tales

on the dangers of political interference and corruption in decentralized funding. In contrast, successful models globally emphasize structured community oversight, alignment with development goals, and strong legal and audit frameworks. These lessons reinforce the urgency of institutional reform for Kenya's NG-CDF and validate the need for citizen-centric and outcome-oriented development funds.

### **5.3 The contribution of this study is to theory, practice and policy.**

*Contribution to Theory;* This study contributes to the theoretical discourse by applying and expanding the Patron-Client Theory and Fiscal Federalism Theory within the context of Kenya's devolved governance and public fund management. It illustrates how political patronage and elite capture influence the implementation of NG-CDF, offering empirical support for the relevance of clientelism in shaping development outcomes. Additionally, it interrogates the assumptions of fiscal federalism by showing that despite the decentralization of funds, central political actors retain disproportionate control. The study thus enriches our understanding of how political economy dynamics interact with decentralization frameworks in developing democracies.

*Contribution to Practice;* this study offers evidence-based insights that are directly applicable to stakeholders engaged in the implementation of the NG-CDF, including Fund Account Managers, Constituency Development Fund Committees (CDFCs), and Members of Parliament. By identifying operational challenges—such as limited administrative capacity, inadequate oversight mechanisms, and insufficient community participation the study underscores critical areas requiring institutional strengthening. It advances practical recommendations including the professionalization of fund management roles, systematic capacity-building in project monitoring and evaluation (M&E), and the adoption of digital tools to enhance transparency and accountability. These interventions are intended to support more efficient, participatory, and accountable fund administration at the constituency level.

*Contribution to Policy;* At the policy level, the study informs ongoing and future reforms of the NG-CDF framework by identifying critical legal and institutional gaps

that hinder alignment with Kenya's constitutional principles of devolution, public participation, and prudent financial management. It provides evidence-based recommendations for legislative amendments, stronger intergovernmental collaboration, and clearer separation of powers between Members of Parliament and fund managers. The findings are especially relevant in light of the 2024 High Court ruling declaring the NG-CDF Act unconstitutional, making the study a timely input into national policy discourse on alternative grassroots development financing models.

#### **5.4 Conclusion**

This study set out to critically appraise the implementation of the National Government Constituencies Development Fund (NG-CDF) Act, 2015 by examining key implementation challenges and emerging issues, assess factors affecting its implementation and exploring lessons and best practices from both national and international experiences. Drawing on insights from a broad range of stakeholders; including Members of Parliament, Fund Account Managers, NG-CDF Board officials, CDF Committee members, Treasury representatives, and members of the public, the study established that while the NG-CDF plays a vital role in supporting grassroots development, its effectiveness continues to be undermined by recurring legal uncertainties, political interference, weak institutional oversight, limited public participation, and poor coordination with devolved county governments. The findings also revealed structural gaps in capacity, project alignment, and accountability, highlighting the disconnection between the Fund's legal framework and its operational realities. In interpreting these findings, the study reinforced key insights from Fiscal Federalism and Patron-Client Theories, both of which provided critical lenses for understanding how power dynamics, institutional design, and financial flows shape development outcomes at the constituency level.

Despite these challenges, the study also identified clear pathways for reform. Anchoring the NG-CDF in the Constitution, enhancing institutional autonomy, professionalizing fund administration, investing in digital transparency tools, and ensuring inclusive community participation were all recognized as viable strategies for improving the Fund's governance and impact. Furthermore, lessons from

international contexts underscored the importance of aligning development funds with accountability mechanisms, citizen-led oversight, and sustainable development goals. While the study acknowledged limitations in scope and generalizability, it nonetheless contributes to the ongoing policy discourse by providing evidence-based recommendations that, if adopted, could transform the NG-CDF into a more effective, transparent, and community-centered mechanism for constituency-level development. In doing so, it offers a critical foundation for legal reform, policy dialogue, and future research on public funds and decentralized governance in Kenya.

## **5.5 Recommendations**

The study strongly recommends the facilitation of a structured peer-learning forums between high-performing and low-performing constituencies to share best practices, tools, and lessons on fund management, inclusive participation, and project innovation. This could be institutionalized as a national learning exchange supported by the NG-CDF Board and development partners.

The NG-CDF model has inspired calls to establish a similar mechanism at the county level specifically, the creation of a Ward Development Fund. Members of County Assemblies (MCAs) have been advocating for the devolution of a portion of the county government budget to the ward level. This would promote localized development and enhance community participation in decision-making thus promoting devolution.

The current practice where Members of Parliament (MPs) serve as patrons of NG-CDF requires critical reconsideration. While MPs still play a significant role in the administration of the fund, from influencing the selection of members to the Constituency Development Fund Committee (CDFC) to participating in the identification and implementation of projects, this arrangement poses governance and accountability concerns. Their extensive influence can potentially blur the lines between oversight and implementation, undermining the principles of transparency and separation of powers.

The timely implementation of NG-CDF projects is frequently hampered by a lack of internal capacity. The fund relies heavily on officers from the State Department for Public Works and the National Treasury – specifically engineers, quantity surveyors, procurement, and accounting personnel—who are concurrently responsible for serving other national government functions at the constituency level. This overstretching of human resources further delays project delivery. Therefore, the NG-CDF board may consider building internal capacity to cure delays in project implementation.

To address the fragmentation and duplication of development efforts between NG-CDF and county governments, it is recommended that a clear legal and institutional framework be established to define the roles and responsibilities of each entity. This framework should include specific provisions for managing overlaps and resolving conflicts in development planning and implementation. In cases of duplication or jurisdictional conflict, the law should clearly stipulate which entity takes precedence and outline formal mechanisms for resolution through intergovernmental coordination structures. Such clarity will reduce inefficiencies, prevent resource wastage, and ensure more coherent and impactful development outcomes at the local level.

## **5.6 Areas for further research**

Evaluating the Impact of Digital Monitoring Tools on NG-CDF Project Oversight Capacity. This area of research would explore the extent to which tools such as online dashboards, GIS mapping, mobile-based data collection apps, and e-procurement platforms, can enhance the oversight and transparency of NG-CDF-funded project.

Assessing the Role of Intergovernmental Collaboration in Strengthening Local M&E Capacity. This area of research would investigate how collaboration between national institutions such as the NG-CDF Board and the National Treasury, county governments, and independent oversight bodies such as the Auditor-General or Kenya’s M&E Directorate contributes to building strong M&E frameworks at the constituency level.

## 5.7 Limitations of the study

While this study provides valuable insights into the implementation and governance of the National Government Constituencies Development Fund (NG-CDF) Act, 2015, several limitations are acknowledged.

First, although the study drew from diverse stakeholders, including Members of Parliament, Fund Account Managers, NG-CDF Board representatives, and members of the public, the sample was limited to selected constituencies. As such, the findings may not be fully generalizable to all 290 constituencies in Kenya, particularly those in remote or underserved areas where implementation dynamics may differ significantly.

Second, the study primarily relied on qualitative data, including self-reported experiences and perceptions, which may be subject to response bias or selective disclosure, especially on politically sensitive issues such as fund misuse, political interference, or accountability failures. Some respondents may have withheld or moderated their responses due to fear of repercussions, political affiliations, or personal interests.

Despite these limitations, the study successfully met its objectives, engaged a wide range of NG-CDF stakeholders, and generated evidence-based recommendations for legal reform, institutional strengthening, capacity building, and enhanced public participation. These insights contribute meaningfully to the ongoing discourse on decentralized development and fiscal governance in Kenya.

## REFERENCES

- Alliance, L. P. S. (2022, August 30). Fact sheets on decentralization in Africa. *Decentralization Net*. <https://decentralization.net/2022/08/fact-sheets-on-decentralization-in-africa/>
- Analysis of the Constitutional Validity of Member of Parliament – Local Area Development (MPLAD) Scheme and Its Suspension amidst Covid-19 | International Journal of Law Management & Humanities*. (n.d.). Retrieved May 22, 2025, from <https://ijlmh.com/analysis-of-the-constitutional-validity-of-member-of-parliament-local-area-development-mplad-scheme-and-its-suspension-amidst-covid-19/>
- Andhoga, W. O., Mose, D. G. N., & Mavole, D. J. N. (2018). *Role of Political Influence on the Effective Management of National Government Constituency Development Funded Projects in Kasipul Constituency, Homa Bay County, Kenya*. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Role-of-Political-Influence-on-the-Effective-of-in-Andhoga-Mose/c72c2a7a23852015e700859185ae2e4d51bcfe4f>
- Baker, S., & Edwards, R. (2012). *How many qualitative interviews is enough? [THIS PAPER IS OPEN ACCESS. YOU CAN USE THE LINK IN THE ABSTRACT BELOW. THERE IS NO NEED TO CONTACT ME FOR ACCESS]*.
- Banerjee, A., & Chaudhury, S. (2010). Statistics without tears: Populations and samples. *Industrial Psychiatry Journal*, 19, 60–65. <https://doi.org/10.4103/0972-6748.77642>
- Barchok, P. K., & MIROGA (Ph.D), D. J. (2020). DETERMINANTS OF SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROJECTS IN

- ELGEYO MARAKWET COUNTY. *Strategic Journal of Business & Change Management*, 7(3), Article 3. <https://doi.org/10.61426/sjbcm.v7i3.1697>
- Baskin, T., Wampold, B., Quintana, S., & Enright, R. (2010). Belongingness as a Protective Factor Against Loneliness and Potential Depression in a Multicultural Middle School. *Counseling Psychologist - COUNS PSYCHOL*, 38, 626–651. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000009358459>
- Biggins, D., Holley, D., & Zezulkova, M. (2017). Digital Competence and Capability Frameworks in Higher Education: Importance of Life-long Learning, Self-Development and Well-being. *EAI Endorsed Transactions on E-Learning*, 4, 152742. <https://doi.org/10.4108/eai.20-6-2017.152742>
- Boddy, C. R. (2019). Causality in qualitative market and social research. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 22(3), 405–413. <https://doi.org/10.1108/QMR-02-2018-0027>
- Boyani, O. P. (n.d.). *Factors Influencing the Effectiveness of Monitoring and Evaluation of Government Projects in Kenya: A Case of the National Government Constituency Development Fund Projects in Dagoretti North Sub-county, Nairobi County, Kenya.*
- Campbell, S., Greenwood, M., Prior, S., Shearer, T., Walkem, K., Young, S., Bywaters, D., & Walker, K. (2020). Purposive sampling: Complex or simple? Research case examples. *Journal of Research in Nursing: JRN*, 25(8), 652–661. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1744987120927206>
- Cdfs-handbook-updated-2016.pdf*. (n.d.). Retrieved January 28, 2025, from <https://www.cpahq.org/media/cc4alwaf/cdfs-handbook-updated-2016.pdf>
- Centre of Excellence for Local Governance: Detailed Project Report. (n.d.). *Final Report.*

- (Collins, 2020) funding – Google Search. (n.d.). Retrieved April 8, 2025, from [https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=\(Collins%2C+2020\)+funding&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8](https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=(Collins%2C+2020)+funding&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8)
- Constituency-Development-Funds-Scoping-Paper.pdf*. (n.d.). Retrieved January 28, 2025, from <https://internationalbudget.org/wp-content/uploads/Constituency-Development-Funds-Scoping-Paper.pdf>
- Cooper, D. R., & Schindler, P. S. (2014). *Business Research Methods*. McGraw-Hill Education.
- Das, D., & Ngacho, C. (2017). Critical success factors influencing the performance of development projects: An empirical study of Constituency Development Fund projects in Kenya. *IIMB Management Review*, 29(4), 276–293. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iimb.2017.11.005>
- de Xavier, F. A., Lodayekar, A. P., & Mukhopadhyay, P. (2021). Decentralization and Its Impact on Growth in India. *Journal of South Asian Development*, 16(1), 130–151. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09731741211013210>
- Delfin, A. B., & Garcia, J. N. (2016). Covering Corruption: Frames of Broadsheets on the Philippine Government’s Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF) Scandal. *Online Journal of Communication and Media Technologies*, 6(3). <https://doi.org/10.29333/ojcm/2559>
- Dr. Caroline Ayuma Okello David Chesang & Baruet John Kimitei. (2016). *The Role of Constituency Development Fund in Achieving Equitable Distribution of Resources to Constituencies in Kenya: A Case Study of Baringo Central Constituency*. 5(10).

- Dworkin, S. L. (2012). Sample Size Policy for Qualitative Studies Using In-Depth Interviews. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 41(6), 1319–1320.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-012-0016-6>
- Eboreime, E., Eyles, J., Nxumalo, N., Eboreime, L., & Ramaswamy, R. (2018). Implementation process and quality of a primary health care system improvement initiative in a decentralized context: A retrospective appraisal using the quality implementation framework. *The International Journal of Health Planning and Management*, 34. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hpm.2655>
- Ebrey, P. (1983). Patron-Client Relations in the Later Han. *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 103(3), 533–542. <https://doi.org/10.2307/602034>
- Eisenstadt, S. N., & Roniger, L. (1980). Patron – Client Relations as a Model of Structuring Social Exchange. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 22(1), 42–77. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417500009154>
- Espiritu, B. (2014). The Public Sphere, Blogs, and the Pork Barrel Scam: Online Citizens' Voices on Corruption and Governance in the Philippines. *Media Asia*, 41, 343–354. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01296612.2014.11726910>
- Felitse, K., & Owusu-Mensah, I. (2024). Who spends what, and why? The constituency project fund and electoral politics in Ghana. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 10, 100973. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2024.100973>
- Franz, Y., Tausz, K., & Thiel, S.-K. (2015). Contextuality and Co-Creation Matter: A Qualitative Case Study Comparison of Living Lab Concepts in Urban Research. *Technology Innovation Management Review*, 5, 48–55.  
<https://doi.org/10.22215/timreview/952>

Garira, E., Howie, S., & Plomp, T. (2019). An analysis of quality of education and its evaluation: A case of Zimbabwean primary schools. *South African Journal of Education*, 39(2), Article 2. <https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v39n2a1644>

*Gikonyo & another v National Assembly of Kenya & 4 others; Council of Governors & 3 others (Interested Parties) (Constitutional Petition 178 of 2016) [2024] KEHC 10886 (KLR) (Constitutional and Human Rights) (20 September 2024) (Judgment).* (2024). <https://new.kenyalaw.org/akn/ke/judgment/kehc/2024/10886/eng@2024-09-20>

Grant, C., & Osanloo, A. (2014). UNDERSTANDING, SELECTING, AND INTEGRATING A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK IN DISSERTATION RESEARCH: CREATING THE BLUEPRINT FOR YOUR “HOUSE.” *Administrative Issues Journal*, 4(2). <https://dc.swosu.edu/aij/vol4/iss2/4>

Hermansson, H. (2019). Challenges to Decentralization of Disaster Management in Turkey: The Role of Political-Administrative Context. *International Journal of Public Administration*, 42(5), 417–431. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01900692.2018.1466898>

Kabir, S. M. (2016). *BASIC GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCH: An Introductory Approach for All Disciplines.*

Kanyinga, K. (2016). Devolution and the New Politics of Development in Kenya. *African Studies Review*, 59(3), 155–167. <https://doi.org/10.1017/asr.2016.85>

Karia, S. L. (2015). *Factors affecting implementation of projects fund Constituency Development Funds: A case study of Narok North CDF Office.* <http://localhost:8080/xmlui/handle/123456789/2837>

- Keya, C. T., Aduda, J., Nyamute, W., & Pokhariyal, G. (2020a). Governance and Performance of National Government-Constituencies Development Funds in Kenya. *European Scientific Journal, ESJ*, 16(10), 154.  
<https://doi.org/10.19044/esj.2020.v16n10p154>
- Keya, C. T., Aduda, J., Nyamute, W., & Pokhariyal, G. (2020b). Governance and Performance of National Government-Constituencies Development Funds in Kenya. *European Scientific Journal, ESJ*, 16(10), 154.  
<https://doi.org/10.19044/esj.2020.v16n10p154>
- Kimani, P. M., & Kamaara, D. M. (2019). Effect of risk management strategies on the implementation of CDF projects in Starehe constituency, Nairobi County. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Project Management*, 4(1), Article 1.  
<https://www.iprjb.org/journals/index.php/IJEPM/article/view/866>
- Kipkoech, K. S. (2019). CHALLENGES FACING STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION OF COUNTY INTERGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLANS AMONG COUNTY GOVERNMENTS IN KENYA: A CASE OF BARINGO COUNTY. *IJRDO - Journal of Business Management*, 5(9), Article 9.  
<https://doi.org/10.53555/bm.v5i9.3192>
- Kiura, H. M. (2017). *Influence of Monitoring and Evaluation Strategies on the Implementation of Ng-cdf Projects: A Case of Ngariama Njukiini Water Project Gichugu Constituency Kirinyaga County* [Thesis, University of Nairobi].  
<http://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke/handle/11295/101548>
- Liehr, P., & Smith, M. J. (1999). Middle Range Theory: Spinning Research and Practice to Create Knowledge for the New Millennium. *Advances in Nursing Science*, 21(4), 81.

[https://journals.lww.com/advancesinnursingscience/fulltext/1999/06000/The\\_Perception\\_and\\_Judgment\\_of\\_Senior.11.aspx](https://journals.lww.com/advancesinnursingscience/fulltext/1999/06000/The_Perception_and_Judgment_of_Senior.11.aspx)

Mahamud, Z., YUSUF (Ph.D), D. M., & Ogolla, P. (2019). FACTORS AFFECTING IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENT PROJECTS IN MVITA CONSTITUENCY OF MOMBASA COUNTY. *Strategic Journal of Business & Change Management*, 6(3), Article 3.

<https://doi.org/10.61426/sjbcm.v6i3.1358>

*Makueni-NGCDF-2021-2022.pdf*. (n.d.). Retrieved January 28, 2025, from

<https://www.oagkenya.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Makueni-NGCDF-2021-2022.pdf>

Matete, J. B., Wangaruro, J., & Owino, G. E. (2023). CONSTITUENCY DEVELOPMENT FUND AS AN INSTRUMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN KAKAMEGA COUNTY, KENYA. *Reviewed Journal of Social Science & Humanities*, 4(1), Article 1.

<https://doi.org/10.61426/rjssh.v4i1.63>

McCoubrey, H., & Morris, J. (2000). The UN between Paradigms: Regional Devolution of Peace Support. In *Regional Peacekeeping in the Post-Cold War Era* (pp. 48–64). Brill Nijhoff. [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004482616\\_006](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004482616_006)

Miano, E. N., & Nairobi, U. O. (2016). *Factors Influencing Community Participation In Cdf Funded Projects: A Case Of Mathira Constituency, Nyeri County, Kenya*.

Misuko, N. (2016). *Effect of Constituency Development Fund on Socio-economic Development in Mbeere South Constituency*. 182–189.

- Morton, S., Bandara, D., Robinson, E., & Atatoa-Carr, P. (2012). In the 21st Century, what is an acceptable response rate? *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, 36, 106–108. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1753-6405.2012.00854.x>
- Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) review & underutilization of 15% MIG for sport and recreation: Department of Cooperative Governance briefing | PMG.* (n.d.). Retrieved January 29, 2025, from <https://pmg.org.za/committee-meeting/21229/>
- Musgrave, R. A. (1971). Economics of Fiscal Federalism. *Nebraska Journal of Economics and Business*, 10(4), 3–13. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40472398>
- Mwangi, J. K., Ben Maisiba Nyang'wara, & Jackson Lemomo Ole Kulet. (2015). *Factors Affecting the Effectiveness of Monitoring and Evaluation of Constituency Development Fund Projects In Kenya: A Case of Laikipia West Constituency.* 6. *Naivasha-NGCDF-2021-2022.pdf.* (n.d.). Retrieved January 28, 2025, from <https://www.oagkenya.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Naivasha-NGCDF-2021-2022.pdf>
- Nankoris, T., & Gakuo, P. M. C. (2018). Influence of Community Participation in Projects Identification and Project Design on Completion of CDF Funded Projects in Matapato South Ward, Kajiado Central Constituency, Kenya. *Journal of Entrepreneurship & Project Management*, 2(2), Article 2. <https://www.stratfordjournals.com/journals/index.php/journal-of-entrepreneurship-proj/article/view/150>
- Nzioka, K. M. (2023). *Monitoring and Evaluation Practices and Performance of National Government Constituencies Development Fund Projects: A Case of Mbooni*

- Constituency, Makueni County, Kenya* [Thesis, University of Nairobi].  
<http://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke/handle/11295/167488>
- Oates, W. E. (1999). An Essay on Fiscal Federalism. *Journal of Economic Literature*, 37(3), 1120–1149. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2564874>
- Oisanga, S. N. (2022). *Assessment of the Ng-cdf Project Management Structure on Performance of Ng-cdf Projects in Kenya; a Case Study of Public Secondary Schools in North Mugirango Constituency in Nyamira County* [Thesis, University of Nairobi]. <http://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke/handle/11295/162737>
- Olsen, W. (2012). *Data Collection: Key Debates and Methods in Social Research*. SAGE Publications Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781473914230>
- OYALO, N. (2015). FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE COMPLETION OF CDF FUNDED PROJECTS IN KANGUNDO CONSTITUENCY. *Strategic Journal of Business & Change Management*, 2. <https://doi.org/10.61426/sjbcm.v2i2.122>
- Ozili, P. (2022). Decentralized finance research and developments around the world. *Journal of Banking and Financial Technology*, 6. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42786-022-00044-x>
- Pinto, J. M. de R. (2021). The Education System of Brazil: Financing of Education in Brazil. In S. Jornitz & M. Parreira do Amaral (Eds.), *The Education Systems of the Americas* (pp. 265–289). Springer International Publishing.  
[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-41651-5\\_21](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-41651-5_21)
- Prud'homme, R. (1995). THE DANGERS OF DECENTRALIZATION. *The World Bank Research Observer*, 10(2), 201–220. <https://doi.org/10.1093/wbro/10.2.201>

Roberts, P., & Priest, H. (2006). Reliability and validity in research. *Nursing Standard (Royal College of Nursing (Great Britain) : 1987)*, 20, 41–45.

<https://doi.org/10.7748/ns2006.07.20.44.41.c6560>

Robertson, O., Awuor, F. O., & Okotto, L.-G. (2020). *Efficacy of Constituency Development Fund (CDF) Projects on Community Welfare in Kenya: A Case of Nambale Constituency* (SSRN Scholarly Paper 3730588).

<https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3730588>

Robinson, O. C. (2014). Sampling in Interview-Based Qualitative Research: A Theoretical and Practical Guide. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 11(1), 25–41. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2013.801543>

Said, H. A., & Gakuu, P. C. (2020). An Assessment on Factors Influencing Completion of National Constituency Development Fund, Projects: A Case of Public Secondary Schools in Mombasa County- Kenya. *Journal of Entrepreneurship & Project Management*, 4(1), Article 1.

<https://www.stratfordjournals.com/journals/index.php/journal-of-entrepreneurship-proj/article/view/408>

Sangwan, V., & Parkash, D. B. (n.d.). Empowering Rural Transformation: Assessing the Impact of MPLADS Funds Utilisation on SAGY Initiatives in Chandigarh's Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana Village. *IJFMR - International Journal For Multidisciplinary Research*, 6(2).

<https://doi.org/10.36948/ijfmr.2024.v06i02.16225>

Sekaran, U., & Bougie, R. (2010). *Research Methods for Business: A Skill Building Approach*. John Wiley & Sons.

Setiawan, T. (2024). The Emerging of Patron-Client Relationship in Contemporary Peasant Social Movement Articulation. *European Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*, 1, 41–53. [https://doi.org/10.59324/ejahss.2024.1\(4\).03](https://doi.org/10.59324/ejahss.2024.1(4).03)

Shore, C. (2016). States of dependency or patron-client relations?: Theorizing precarity in academia. *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, 6(1), 127–130. <https://doi.org/10.14318/hau6.1.008>

Sima, M., Liang, P., & Qingjie, Z. (2023). The impact of fiscal decentralization on economic growth: A comparative analysis of selected African and OECD countries. *Heliyon*, 9(9), e19520. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e19520>

Sugal, D. A. (2017). AN ASSESSMENT OF THE FACTORS INFLUENCING THE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CDF PROJECTS IN BALAMBALA CONSTITUENCY.

The Role of NG-CDF in Kenya's Economic Transformation. (2025, January 27). *National Government Constituencies Development Fund*. [https://ngcdf.go.ke/our\\_news/the-role-of-the-national-government-constituencies-development-fund-in-kenyas-economic-transformation/](https://ngcdf.go.ke/our_news/the-role-of-the-national-government-constituencies-development-fund-in-kenyas-economic-transformation/)

Theesfeld, I., Schleyer, C., Hagedorn, K., Callois, J.-M., Aznar, O., & Olsson, J. (2010). The Institutional Dimension in Policy Assessment. In *Environmental and Agricultural Modelling: Integrated Approaches for Policy Impact Assessment* (pp. 37–59). [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-90-481-3619-3\\_3](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-90-481-3619-3_3)

Treisman, D., Bannerjee, S., Bloom, S., Rushakov, A., Keat, P., Thank, R., Cox, G., Frye, T., Kraay, A., Geddes, B., Keen, M., Kiser, E., Rose-Ackerman, S.,

Camoes, P., Przeworski, A., Rosenthal, J.-L., & Brinegar, A. (2002).

*Decentralization and the Quality of Government.*

Tsofa, B., Molyneux, S., Gilson, L., & Goodman, C. (2017). How does decentralisation affect health sector planning and financial management? A case study of early effects of devolution in Kilifi County, Kenya. *International Journal for Equity in Health*, 16(1), 151. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12939-017-0649-0>

*Tsubura – The Politics of Constituency Development Funds (CD.pdf.* (n.d.). Retrieved January 28, 2025



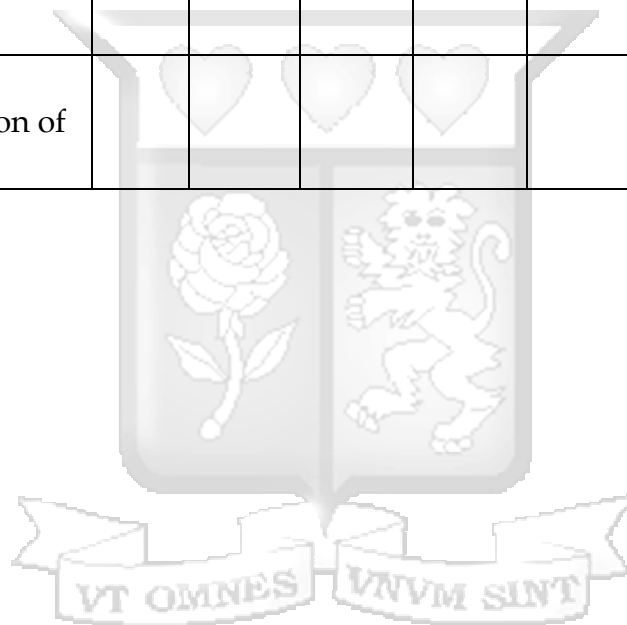
## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Interview Guide

1. How effective is the current legal and institutional framework governing NG-CDF in ensuring accountability and transparency?
2. What are the main governance and financial management challenges affecting the implementation of NG-CDF projects at both national and constituency levels?
3. How does the role of Members of Parliament (MPs) influence project selection and implementation, and what mechanisms can enhance oversight and accountability?
4. How transparent and efficient is the funding allocation process for NG-CDF, and what measures can be adopted to improve financial accountability and prevent corruption?
5. To what extent does independent oversight from institutions such as the National Treasury, the Controller of Budget, the Auditor General, and the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC) contribute to ensuring proper fund utilization?
6. What are the key factors influencing the success or failure of NG-CDF-funded projects, and how can project management be improved?
7. How effectively do CDF Fund Managers, Project Management Committees (PMCs), and local community leaders contribute to project selection, monitoring, and decision-making?
8. What barriers hinder meaningful public participation, especially for youth, women, and marginalized groups, in the planning and execution of NG-CDF projects?
9. How does NG-CDF compare with county government development initiatives, and what opportunities exist for harmonization and coordination?
10. What policy and structural reforms are needed to strengthen NG-CDF's impact, efficiency, and sustainability in Kenya?

## Appendix 2: Time schedule

|   | Monthly Activities                      | Sep 2024 | Oct 2024 | Nov 2024 | Dec 2024 | Jan 2025 | Feb 2025 | March 2025 | April 2025 |
|---|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|------------|------------|
| 1 | Development of proposal                 |          |          |          |          |          |          |            |            |
| 2 | Literature review                       |          |          |          |          |          |          |            |            |
| 3 | Presentation of proposal                |          |          |          |          |          |          |            |            |
| 4 | Proposal Verification                   |          |          |          |          |          |          |            |            |
| 5 | Pre-test                                |          |          |          |          |          |          |            |            |
| 6 | Data collection                         |          |          |          |          |          |          |            |            |
| 7 | Data analysis                           |          |          |          |          |          |          |            |            |
| 8 | Report writing/presentation of findings |          |          |          |          |          |          |            |            |



### Appendix 3: Budget

| Personnel            | No. | Rate Per day | No Of Days | Total          |
|----------------------|-----|--------------|------------|----------------|
| Research Assistant   | 1   | 5,000        | 6          | 30,000         |
| Data Analyst         | 1   | 5,000        | 5          | 25,000         |
| Local Transport      |     | 12,000       | 5          | 60,000         |
| Printing & Photocopy |     | -            | -          | 30,000         |
| NACOSTI              |     |              |            | 1,000          |
| Miscellaneous        |     |              |            | 4,000          |
| <b>Total</b>         |     |              |            | <b>150,000</b> |



## Appendix 4: Introduction Letter

Ole Sangale Rd, Madaraka Estate  
P. O Box 59857 - 00200, Nairobi, Kenya  
Cell: +254 703 034 414/6/7  
X/Twitter/Tiktok: @SBSKenya  
Facebook/LinkedIn: Strathmore University Business School

Email: [sbsinfo@strathmore.edu](mailto:sbsinfo@strathmore.edu) or visit [www.sbs.strathmore.edu](http://www.sbs.strathmore.edu)



Thursday, 20 February 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

**RE: FACILITATION OF RESEARCH – MWAKUWONA DANSON MWASHAKO**

This is to introduce Danson Mwashako who is a **Master's in Public Policy and Management (MPPM)** student at Strathmore University Business School, admission number MPPM 152774. As part of our MPPM Program, Danson is expected to do applied research and undertake a project. This is in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the MPPM course. To this effect, he would like to request for appropriate data from your organization.

Danson is undertaking a research paper on "**A Critical Appraisal of National Government Constituencies Development Fund Act 2015: Challenges And Policy Options.**" The information obtained from your organization shall be treated confidentially and shall be used for academic purposes only.

Our MPPM Program seeks to establish links with industry, and one of these ways is by directing our research to areas that would be of direct use to industry. We would be glad to share our findings with you after the research, and we trust that you will find them of great interest and of practical value to your organization.

We appreciate your support and shall be willing to provide any further information if required.

Yours Faithfully,

Njoki Kiagiri.  
Manager – Graduate Programs.  
Strathmore University Business School

Strathmore University Business School is a Proud member of:



## Appendix 5: Ethics Approval



7<sup>th</sup> March 2025

Mr Mwakuwona Danson,  
danson.mwashako@strathmore.edu

Dear Mr Mwakuwona,

**RE: A Critical Appraisal of National Government Constituencies Development Fund Act 2015: Challenges and Policy Options**

This is to inform you that SU-ISERC has reviewed and **approved** your above **SU-masters** proposal. Your application reference number is **SU-ISERC2730/25**. The approval period is from **7<sup>th</sup> March 2025 to 6<sup>th</sup> March 2026**.

This approval is subject to compliance with the following requirements:




- i. Only approved documents including (informed consents, study instruments, MTA) will be used.
- ii. All changes including (amendments, deviations, and violations) are submitted for review and approval by SU-ISERC
- iii. Death and life-threatening problems and serious adverse events or unexpected adverse events whether related or unrelated to the study must be reported to SU-ISERC within 72 hours of notification.
- iv. Any changes anticipated or otherwise that may increase the risks or affected safety or welfare of study participants and others or affect the integrity of the research must be reported to SU-ISERC within 72 hours.
- v. Clearance for the export of biological specimens must be obtained from relevant institutions.
- vi. Submission of a request for renewal of approval at least 60 days prior to the expiry of the approval period. Attach a comprehensive progress report to support the renewal.
- vii. Submission of an executive summary report within 90 days of completion of the study to SU-ISERC.

Before commencing your study, you will be expected to obtain a research license from National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI) <https://research-portal.nacosti.go.ke/> and obtain other clearances needed.

Yours sincerely,

**Mr Ambrose Rachier,**  
**Chairperson; SU-ISERC**

## Appendix 6: NACOSTI License

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <br><b>REPUBLIC OF KENYA</b>   | <br><b>NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR<br/>SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY &amp; INNOVATION</b>                           |
| Ref No: <b>921188</b>   | Date of Issue: <b>27/February/2025</b>   |
| <b>RESEARCH LICENSE</b>   |  |
|    |  |
| <b>This is to Certify that Mr., Danson Mwashako of Strathmore University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Nairobi on the topic: Critical Appraisal of NG-CDF Programme: Factors Influencing Implementation for the period ending : 27/February/2026.</b> |  |
| License No: <b>NACOSTI/P/25/416591</b>  |  |
| <b>921188</b><br>Applicant Identification Number  | <br>Director General<br><b>NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR<br/>SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY &amp;<br/>INNOVATION</b> |
|   | Verification QR Code<br>  |
| NOTE: This is a computer generated License. To verify the authenticity of this document,<br>Scan the QR Code using QR scanner application.  |  |
| See overleaf for conditions   |  |