

ABSTRACT

Despite centralized planning for economic growth, inadequate distribution of resources has continued in Kenya. Various strategies have been adopted including lately, decentralized development through establishment of the Constituency Development Fund (CDF). However, queries have been raised over effectiveness of the CDF projects on community welfare. This study sought to address this gap. The study was anchored on the theory of decentralization and guided by four objectives, namely: to identify and describe CDF projects addressing community welfare; to examine the impact of CDF projects on community welfare; to examine the factors that influence the efficacy of CDF projects; and to assess people's attitude towards CDF projects. A cross-sectional survey design was adopted for the research. The research sampled 398 respondents from a target population of 94,637 from both the general public and CDF officials. Questionnaires and interviews were used to collect primary data - both qualitative and quantitative. Descriptive statistics, mainly percentages, frequencies, mean averages and standard deviation were used to analyze quantitative data for sample characteristics. Pearson Chi-square test (χ^2), Spearman's Correlation (r) and Symmetric Measure Gamma statistics have been used to infer from sample to population to test relationships. Content analyses have been used for qualitative data. The study established that a diversity of projects are funded by CDF depending on the immediate need of the community. However, projects funded in Education, Health, and Water and Sanitation are the most prioritized and have a strong and significant ($\chi^2(1) = 15.854, p = 0.000 < 0.05$; $\chi^2(1) = 13.534, p = 0.000 < 0.05$; and $\chi^2(1) = 9.136, p = 0.010 < 0.05$ respectively) influence on the welfare of the community. Community attitude towards CDF is negative. A perceived poor leadership and community participation have a strong positive association ($r = -0.55, p = 0.000$ and $r = -0.51, p = 0.001$ respectively) with negative attitude. Leadership has a strong and significant $r = 0.56, p = 0.000$ influence on effectiveness of CDF projects, the same to community participation $r = -0.53, p = 0.000$. However, project planning, equitable spatial distributions as well as political interference have significant positive but weak ($r = 0.49, p = 0.000$; $r = 0.42, p = 0.000$; and $r = 0.39, p = 0.000$ respectively) influence on the effectiveness of CDF projects. The result suggests that addressing leadership and community participation are key to changing the attitude as well as making CDF projects more effective. The study recommends that CDF be sustained, the identified challenges be mitigated and civic sensitization conducted to ensure CDF projects effectiveness.