THREATS TO TIMELY COMPLETION OF CONSTITUENCY DEVELOPMENT FUNDED SCHOOL FACILITIES IN KENYA: A CASE OF KISII CENTRAL SUB-COUNTY

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Abstract
The enactment of the constituencies' physical infrastructure funding law by the Government of Kenya, also called the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in 2003 through an Act of Parliament was hailed as a major milestone in devolving financial resources from the central government to regions across the country. Over 70 per cent of the CDF allocations have been channeled to the construction of school facilities. Despite the massive allocation, most school projects have either stalled or are several years behind schedule. Although there have been attempts to address implementation challenges facing CDF sponsored projects, little emphasis has been laid on the relative importance analysis of factors influencing completion duration of CDF sponsored school projects. Financial challenges and political interference were the greatest threats to timely completion of school facilities. Enforcing the revised edition of the CDF Act of 2013 and exclusion of the constituency's political class from the CDF management is hereby proposed.
Key words: School facilities, time-overrun, constituency development fund

1.0 Introduction

The Constituency Development Fund (CDF) was established in 2003 through a legislation. The program is a devolved funding model that seeks to channel 2.5 per cent of the national government revenues into constituencies to support social development and infrastructural projects at the grass-root level (Republic of Kenya, 2003). In every budgetary year, three quarters of CDF is equitably distributed across the nation's 290 constituencies while the remaining quarter is apportioned based on constituency's poverty index (Republic of Kenya, 2008). The constituency development fund has uplifted communities out of poverty and supported expansion and growth of school facilities since its inception a decade and half ago.

1.2 Constituency Development Fund in Construction of School Facilities in Kenya

In Kenya, since 2003, sixty thousand CDF projects have been established throughout the country at an approximate cost of Kshs. 71B (TISA, 2015). Almost half of these projects that is 46.29 per cent are erected in educational institutions (TISA, 2015). The allocation of financial resources towards education explains the growth spurt in the number of secondary school as shown in table 1.

Table 1: Number of Public Secondary Schools from 2003 to 2007

Year	No. of Public Secondary Schools
2003	3583
2004	3622
2005	3624
2006	3635
2007	5127

Source: EMIS Unit, MoE Nairobi (2008)

The number of public secondary schools significantly increased by 58 per cent over a five-year period from 3583 in 2003 to 5127 in 2007. This increase is attributed to the CDF investments into the subsector. The exponential expansion of educational infrastructure has improved access and participation rates in primary and secondary schools through construction of new schools and expansion of the existing ones (Mwangi, 2011). Other supportive infrastructure such as laboratories and libraries have been built using the constituency development funds (Olendo, Olel & Agak, 2016).

The contribution of CDF to the education sector cannot be over emphasized. However, the speed of construction of school facilities and the time overrun continues to generate debate among scholars and social commentators. Most of the school project are 2-3 times behind the planned duration, while others have stalled (Kiprono, Kemei & Rotich 2015; Mburu and Muturi, 2016). A reputable daily newspaper column, *Nation Editorial,* decried the implementation status of CDF sponsored projects in schools and the academic loss occasioned by such delays on learning. The paper stated, 'nine years after the inception of CDF, stalled projects and ghost projects still haunt the nation' (Daily Nation, 2012).

School facilities in Kitui, Nairobi, Machakos and Kisii Counties are yet to be concluded. Nearly half the number of audited projects in Machakos, Kitui and Nairobi counties are yet to be delivered while a number of incomplete projects still show presence in Kisii Central Sub-County; despite being initiated at the advent of CDF (TISA, 2015). Table 2 below shows some of the schools with ongoing projects in Kisii Central Sub-County.

Table 2: Ongoing School Projects in Kisii Central Sub-County since 2003 as at 1/2/2015

Project name	Project Activities	Financial year	Status
Tambacha Sec	3 Classrooms	2003-2004	On going
Kenyoro Sec	Classrooms, library	2003-2004	Ongoing
Matieko	3 Classrooms	2004-2005	Ongoing
Metembe	4 Classrooms	2004-2005	On going
Engoto	3 Classrooms	2004-2005	On going

Source: CDF website at www.cdf.go.ke/project-monitoring?view=constituency&id=207.

It is evident from table 3, that school projects have either stalled or are incomplete. It is against this background of continuous delay in delivering school projects within an appropriate time that this study sought to investigate the threats of timely completion of the CDF school facilities using Kisii Sub-County as a case in point. Various studies have investigated the factors influencing project completion duration using multiple regression analysis and measures of correlation (Mburu & Muturi, 2016; Nakitare, 2016; Oyalo & Bwisa, 2015). Little emphasis has been laid on the threats to

successful completion of school projects within the planned duration using the relative importance index. This study was an attempt to fill this gap.

2.0 Literature Review on Threats to Timely Completion of Projects

Previous studies have attempted to explain the causes of delay in construction projects. In Taiwan, analyzed data collected from A/E engineers revealed that client initiated changes at the planning and design stage was the major cause of project delays in the building construction industry (Yang & Wei, 2010). Similar studies in Jordan by Sweis et al (2008) observed that too many change orders and review requests by the client were the major causes of delay in large commercial buildings. Other owner initiated delays included; excessive bureaucracy, design errors and slow decision-making process.

Fugar and Agyakwah-Baah (2010) in Ghana found that under estimating a project's overall cost, poor site management, under estimating the project's expected completion time, shortage of materials, ever rising cost of materials collectively and individually led to project time overrun in building projects. Little experience and poor site management were attributed to the contractors.

Lack of financial resources is a major cause of delay across many studies. Talukhaba (1999) in an investigation of factors causing project delays in high rise buildings in Nairobi found that client's financial position determined the pace of construction works and contributed to over 70 per cent of causes of delay. The study further revealed that project's inaccurate estimates, variations and price increases worsened clients' financial predicaments. In Lagos, Ameh and Osegbo (2011) studied causes of delay in building projects and found that inadequate finances scuttled the construction speed in Nigeria's commercial city. Most projects halted mid-stream as clients ran short of funds to see projects through to the end.

In another related study, Chan and Kumarasway (1997) identified client's managerial ability and decision-making as factors of delay. They observed that the client as a leader was instrumental in timely project delivery. As a leader, the client influences the whole construction team towards speedy delivery of project mission and by mobilizing the said team towards project success. They found that leadership failure manifested itself in poor supervision, slowed decision-making process and indecision. Sometimes, constructors could wait for instructions from the clients which were never forthcoming.

The challenge of clients' inexperience in handling building construction projects extended projects completion duration in Kuwait (Koushki et al., (2005). Clients with prior building knowledge understood challenges and risks faced during construction time. Consequently the owners employed mitigation measures well in advance to minimize their effects on projects schedules unlike clients who handled the projects for the first time. In a similar study on the influence of client's construction experience on time overrun, Leung et al. (2004) reported that there was an inverse relationship between client's experience and delay time. The same study reported that clients' experience in construction matters was instrumental in properly briefing the construction team on the owner's expectations.

Pilferage and theft of construction materials is another factor that was cited to cause delay in most projects. In a study on the influence of pilferage of equipment in the UK construction industry, Smith and Walmsley (1999) found that theft of materials on site delayed construction works. Theft

of materials interrupted construction speed because replacing some of the lost materials and equipment could not be immediate. In Australia, Jeffrey (2001) in a study of 247 residential buildings reported that about 70 per cent of residential construction sites reported some form of theft, significant enough to delay construction speed. A thriving black market for stolen construction materials exacerbated the situation. The most commonly stolen items were timber and cement. In the same study, most theft cases took place over the weekends when most staff of construction sites were away on weekend break and the items were left unattended.

Nakitare (2016) investigated factors influencing completion rate of projects funded by the Constituency Development Fund in secondary schools in Kwanza Constituency, Kenya. Using a correlational data analysis approach the researcher found that availability of funds and technical competence had strong positive correlation with timely completion of projects in schools. In a study of water projects in Kinangop constituency, Mburu and Muturi (2016) similarly observed that project financing, monitoring and evaluation and community participation were positively correlated with project completion rate.

In another study of the factors influencing the rate of completion of CDF projects, effective participation of community members from planning stage through to project execution fully explained the project completion duration in Ainamoi Constituency in Kenya (Kiprono, Kemei & Rotich, 2015). In addition, donors withdrew financial support to projects under sponsorship due to mismanagement and corruption. Such withdrawal of funds by the project donors negatively contributed to the delay witnessed in CDF projects in the constituency.

In Kakamega County, Kanda, Muchelule and Mamadi (2016) established that there was a positive but weak correlation among client related factors such as financial capacity, owner interference and poor decision making. Contractor related factors had a strong positive correlation with timely project completion.

From the literature reviewed, the rationale for this study is driven by two factors: First, most studies dwelt on delay factors influencing the completion duration of large commercial buildings but not public school projects. Second, most of the Kenya studies established a correlation between the independent variables and dependent variables. For instance, availability of funds was strongly related to project completion time. This study intends to study the threats to timely completion of constituency development funded secondary school projects in Kenya using the Relative Importance Index.

3.0 Research Methodology

The researcher used case study design. The design was appropriate because Kisii central has high number of incomplete and stalled school projects. It was important to uncover the factors behind the delay within the sub-county. Case study design is considered when the focus of the study is to answer ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions (Yin, 2003). The researcher can also use case study when he/she wants to cover certain contextual conditions and factors responsible for the occurrence of a given phenomenon (Baxter and Jack, 2008). The purpose of this study was to investigate threats to timely completion of school facilities in Kenya, using Kisii sub-county as a case study.

Qualitative case studies uses a multiple variety of data sources to explore the phenomenon (Creswell, 1998). Primary data was collected using survey questionnaire from 18 secondary school head-teachers. Relevant secondary data was also obtained from various statutes and books. Qualitative data provided supportive explanations to the findings reported in the quantitative phase of data collection. Deviant or extreme case sampling was used to inquire into unusual conditions responsible for extreme project delays in selected schools. The purpose of deviance sampling is to gather facts about extreme outcomes of a study and try to illuminate reasons behind the deviance

(Patton, 1990). In this study, school projects that were 6, 7, 8 and 9 years behind schedule were considered extreme cases and it was appropriate to find out reasons behind such extreme lateness. In addition, 2 board chairmen from whose schools that were 8 and 9 years behind schedule were also interviewed to give their perspective as the school management. A fund manager of the CDF representing the committee responsible for allocating funds at the constituency, (also called the Constituency Development Fund Committee) was purposively selected to provide information on the subject of inquiry. According to Teddlie and Yu (2007), purposive sampling allows the researcher to select the sample he/she feels knows much about the subject of inquiry.

Quantitative data was obtained using cross sectional survey design. A questionnaire instrument developed by the researcher and piloted for reliability was used. The questionnaire had a Likert scale with 4 indicating 'very important', 3 – 'important' 2 – 'somewhat important', 1 - 'not important' seeking the head-teachers views on threats to timely completion of school projects identified from literature. The researcher administered the questionnaires to schools. Of the 24 schools identified, 18 head-teachers responded by completing their questionnaires representing 75 per cent response rate. Data analysis was done using Relative Importance Index (RII). The RII was used because it fitted the purpose of investigation. According to Johnson and LeBreton (2004), RII assists in determining the contribution of each predictor variable to the criterion variable. The RII analysis reveals the specific area (variable) that contribute the most to the criterion variable through ranking and helps decision makers re-set priorities for the distribution of scarce resources to that particular area which require speedy intervention (Lundby & Fenlason, 2000).

Relative Importance Index (RII) = $\frac{\sum W}{AxN}$

Where W= weight given to teacher factor by respondents e.g, 1,2,3,4
A = Highest weight i.e. 4
N= Total number of respondents i.e. 18

Chileshe, Haupt and Fester (2007) categorizes the calculated RII value obtained into three: high, medium and low. The most important cause of delay has the highest RII value of between 0.8 – 1.0. Those between 0.6-0.79 are categorized as medium. Low RII values of between 0.2 and 0.59 are least important.

Findings and Discussion

Eighteen secondary school head-teachers provided quantitative data for this study. Of this number, all the head-teachers in the study had a minimum bachelor of education degree in training.

Table 3: Distribution of Head-teachers according to Academic Qualification

Academic Qualification	Frequency (n)	Percentage
Diploma	-	-
Bachelors	13	72
Masters	5	28
PhD	-	
Total	18	100

Source: Field Data (2016)

Despite the fact that all head-teachers had a basic degree in education, the study sought to find out if the school leaders had a formal training in project management. Table 4 shows that majority of

head-teachers lacked formal training in project management tasks. About 4 out of 5 head-teachers are not trained on managing projects in schools.

Table 4: Training of Head-teachers in Project Management

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Formal Training	4	22.3
No Formal Training	14	77.7
Total	18	100

Source: Field Data (2016)

When asked on whether training on project management positively impacted on completion and timely implementation of project related tasks, one head-teacher remarked,

> ..of course training equips teachers with the necessary skills required in the whole aspect of project management. Head-teachers need this training urgently. But we are sometimes reluctant to enroll for project related courses other than the training organized by the ministry of education officials on school infrastructure development.

Threats to Timely Completion of School Facilities

Table 5 shows the analyzed responses from the closed ended sections of the questionnaire after the application of RII formula.

Table 5: Threats to Timely Completion of School Facilities in Kisii Central sub County

Serial no.	Threats	N	RII	Rank
1.	**Financial**		**.923**	**1**
	Insufficient funds /little disbursement from CDF	32	0.904	
	Delay in financial remittances from CDF	32	0.987	
	Diversion of funds for personal gain by the school head	32	0.879	
2.	**Monitoring and Evaluation**		**.685**	**3**
	Delayed inspection by Ministry of Public Works Officials	32	0.746	
	Irregular meetings of project review committee	32	0.689	
	Delayed implementation of project review meetings	32	0.621	
3.	**Head-teachers' Management Skills**		**.475**	**5**
	Thieves taking away construction materials on site	32	0.528	
	Lack of project management skills	32	0.533	
	Slow decision-making process by the head-teacher	32	0.364	
4.	**Community Participation**		**.655**	**4**
	Lack of effective involvement of parents in project planning	32	0.674	
	Lack of effective involvement of parents during project execution	32	0.636	
5.	**Political Influences**		**.815**	**2**
	Local area politicians exert pressure on the choice of contractors	32	0.762	
	Local area politicians influence procurement decisions	32	0.788	
	Change of political leadership	32	0.897	

1) Financial Challenges

The respondents ranked first the financial group of challenges as the greatest threat to timely completion of school projects. According to Chileshe, Haupt and Fester (2007), a Relative Importance Index of 0.923 is most important factor. Thus, the major cause of time overrun in school projects was financial. In this category, insufficient funding and delayed remittances were the greatest barriers to speedy conclusion of school projects. The findings supports Alaghbari et al., (2007) who observed that insufficient funding extended the initially planned project duration because limited funds hinder clients from meeting the projects' financial obligations as scheduled.

The interviewed participants in this study acknowledged that lack of continuous financial flow from the CDF slowed the pace of construction. One head-teacher said,

> Too much paper work and auditing queries slow down the disbursement process because the head-teacher must file progress reports which among others include financial reports to unlock disbursement of the subsequent tranche. Head-teachers must prudently account for every tranche received. That is when succeeding tranches are sent to school account.

The study also found that insufficient funding was occasioned by the policy of financial disbursement of tranches to schools. Section 13 of the CDF Act 2013 is explicit on the disbursement of monies from the Constituency Development Fund Committee (CDFC) in the constituency. It states:

> The CDF shall at its discretion, determine the quantum of installments to various projects in the constituency taking into account the disbursement received and the requirement of different projects.

The decision on the quantity of funds to allocate towards a project in a school in one financial year and subsequent amounts to disburse to the same school for projects in the coming years is the prerogative of CDFC. The CDFC has discretionary powers over the quantum allocations and exercises it as it deems fit. In a given financial year it can reduce or spread the financial allocations too thinly to cover as many secondary school projects.

Finally, mismanagement and diversion of funds for private use by head-teachers was reported to contribute to slow construction speed. There was a feeling among heads of school boards that their head-teachers were involved in financial impropriety. Respondent 118, one of the heads of the school boards observed:

> I have a deep feeling that funds allocated to the laboratory project were mismanaged by the head-teacher. The amount disbursed from the CDF to our school could have done much more than what we see. You cannot convince me that a tidy sum of Sh 200,000 can only mount a foundation without erecting a wall for a classroom.

This findings is similar to Talukhaba (1999) who emphasize that the main cause of delay in building projects is diversion of funds for private use by parties in charge of the construction process. These parties include constructors and clients.

2) Political Interference

Interference with the disbursement process by the MP was the second greatest threat to timely completion of school projects, and is within the category of most important factor with RII of .815. Political interference with school projects begin with the identification and selection of members of

CDF committee in the constituency. The CDF Act 2013 assigns the responsibility of identifying CDFC members on the newly elected Member of Parliament. Section 24 empowers the MP to initiate this process of electing and appointing new CDFC members 45 days after the election of a new MP. The study found that the appointed CDFC members were more often not impartial in the discharge of their duties but made decisions that promoted and protected the interests of the area MP.

Loyalty to the sitting Member of Parliament by members of CDFC led to unfair and inequitable distribution of financial resources to public secondary schools. This supports findings by KIPPRA (2006) in which most CDF projects were found concentrated in the Member of Parliament's political support base. The study noted that the incoming Members of Parliament ignored the projects initiated by their political rival and predecessors, and most particularly when these projects fell outside their support base. When interviewing the head-teachers as to why political leadership was instrumental in the completion period of a project, head-teacher number 234 quipped:

> …..projects delay because most of them are initiated towards the tail end of the MP's five year term to win votes. During the four years, most MPs are not very keen on these projects. That is why when the incumbent loses to his rival, projects initiated towards the end of his term are likely to stall.

The study also found that school project funding process is a political process and head-teachers sought the support of the area MP for his/her school projects to gain uninterrupted funding. It was observed that even with the support of the MP, the school management still had to be in sync with powerbrokers around the MP. These power men/women held considerable sway on the MPs thinking and determined who got the funds for school projects. A school head-teacher at logger heads with the MP backers could be blacklisted and denied funding for the rest of the MPs term.

Another dimension of political interference surfaces when an MP colluded with contractors. In some schools, the local MP instructed head-teachers to ensure that contracts and contraction materials were awarded to specific tenderers in total breach of procurement and tender regulations. This is similar to Ogana (2012) study who observed that politicians influenced financial allocations to school projects in Migori sub County.

3) Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and Evaluation had an RII of 0.685 hence the third ranked factor accounting for school project delays. Head-teachers identified two methods of monitoring and evaluation; internal supervision carried out by the head-teacher and external supervision done by the Ministry of Public Works official. Although head-teachers were in schools during construction time, the study observed that head teachers used Management by Walking Around technique. In some schools, project management committee members were invited by the head-teacher who would take them round on an inspection tour of the on-going project to confirm, by walking around, that the project was on course. Formal project audit meetings were irregularly held. There were no project monitoring and schedule control charts.

In addition, getting the technical endorsement from other arms of government particularly from the engineers of the Ministry of Public Works was slow and cumbersome thus causing delays in project implementation. The study noted that engineer supervisors or inspectors from the Ministry of Public Works often delayed to report for inspection at the time they were needed most. Most of them

reported assessing the progress of the work five to six months late. This is similar to IEA's (2005) study which decried the delays occasioned by the bureaucratic nature of enlisting technical input from one government ministry to another. Delay in inspecting work at the right time was interpreted to mean that there was poor monitoring and evaluation of project progress.

4) Community Participation

Community participation ranked fourth important threat to school projects development and completion. With an RII of 0.655, it was a classified as 'medium' according to the classification given by Chileshe, Haupt and Fester in 2007. However, the findings supports Ngigi (2015) that there is low levels of community participation in CDF projects in Kenya. Low participation among parents in CDF projects is occasioned by unwillingness of head-teachers to fully involve teachers in CDF management. The fund manager in charge of projects said;

> Although community participation is a mandatory requirement as enshrined in the Constitution, the participation of locals in planning, execution and supervision of projects in general in most cases is below average. Members of the public do not raise alarm when things do not progress as planned. Either they fear or nobody is involving them fully as required by the law.

5) Head-teacher's Managerial Skills

Head-teacher's management skills was ranked the least important threat to timely completion of school projects. It had an RII of 0.475. This supports the findings of Lock (2000) that project success is a managerial function that depends on human factors, project leadership, top management support and alertness. Head-teacher's leadership style, slow decision making process are some of the factor which affected timely project completion. Some head-teachers took long to write project audit reports and call for project evaluation meetings.

There were also incidences of failure to safeguard construction material from thieves. Cement, iron sheets, iron nails, timber, bricks were the most commonly pilfered during construction. The interpretation of the theft cases was that it slowed down the construction process because construction time was spent in replacing stolen items. This finding supports Jeffrey (2001) who reports that theft occurs at construction sites when there is inadequate security measures and ineffective inventory control policies.

Conclusion

The above findings point out clearly that the most important threats to timely completion of school facilities in Kisii Central sub-County include financial management and political interference while the head-teacher's managerial skills posed least threat. As long as the school facilities remain incomplete, the learners will continue to lack essential facilities needed to support learning. The facilities suffering delays include libraries, laboratories and classrooms. Many studies link improved academic performance to the effective use of these facilities. However, some of the facilities cannot be used for learning due to the time overrun.

Recommendation

The paper focused on identifying threats to timely completion of school projects in Kisii sub County. Some of the recommendations include: First, the CDF board in the constituency should fund the already initiated projects to completion. Section 25 (2) of CDF Act 2013 should be fully implemented. It reads in part: ''…..ongoing projects shall take precedence over all other projects.''

Secondly, the Kenyan parliament should enact stricter laws to deal with convicted persons found to have diverted the CDF funds for private use. Courts should also pass hefty sentences to corrupt persons embezzling the financial resources from the CDF kitty to act as deterrence to people with criminal intent. Third, the government should second Ministry of Public Works engineers to the Ministry of Education to cut the bureaucratic delays associated with making requests to the Ministry of Works for engineers. The engineers should work under the District Education Officers to enhance their response time in monitoring and evaluation. Fourth, MPs should play their oversight role in the management of CDF projects by ensuring that the monies allocated for the projects are effectively used as intended.

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