

Citation: Wambiya, A. O; Atoni, R & Ogula, P. (2021). Performance of Education Sector Projects Funded by the National Government Constituency Development Fund and County Government in Alego Usonga Constituency, Kenya. *Journal of Popular Education in Africa*. 5(4), 23 – 37.

**Performance of Education Sector Projects Funded by the National Government
Constituency Development Fund and County Government in Alego Usonga Constituency,
Kenya**

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Abstract

This study sought to find out the performance of education sector projects funded by the National Government Constituency Development Fund and those funded by County Government Fund in Alego Usonga Constituency, Kenya. The study was guided by the following the research question; - What is the performance of the education sector projects funded by each of the two sources of funds? The study used cross sectional design methodology. The data was collected through the use of Questionnaires, Interview Schedules, Document Analysis Guide and Observation Checklists. Random sampling procedure was used to select Project Managers, Project Beneficiaries, Contractors, Project Management Committee Members and various institutional heads. Validity was determined by consulting three experts for their qualified opinion. Reliability was determined through the use of test retest technique. Frequencies, percentages, standard deviations, mean scores, were used to analyze descriptive statistics. Hypothesis was tested using independent t-test. The finding was that NGCDF projects perform better in timely availability of funding for project implementation, proper communication and accommodation of political interests while County Projects perform better on stakeholder's participation, observation of regulatory frameworks and proper monitoring and evaluation of the projects according to this study. This finding will help the stakeholders in both the National Government and the County Governments in deciding where to prioritize education sector funding in line with their areas of better performance.

Key words: Performance of education, national government, county government

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Introduction

The education sector funding policies and procedures vary from country to country, world over, as highlighted in their National development plans and are a reflection of the importance attached to education in those jurisdictions. While some countries have national funding of education sector projects, others are funded through devolved structures including states, counties or municipalities within nations. The performance of those education sectors is believed to be linked to their sources of funds empirically.

A research study on “Public education finance systems in the United States and funding policies for populations with special educational needs” (Verstegen, 2011) for example, found that different States in the United States of America provide funding to public elementary and secondary school districts within their borders using one of the four traditional finance formulae advanced by theorists in the early 1900s, including, Foundation Programs, District Power Equalization Systems, Full State Funding, and Flat Grants. Additionally, States have combined several formulae into Two-or Three- Tiered Systems. The apportionment scheme, state foundation school programs (FSP), was used by 38 states. When States employing a foundation program as part of a combination funding approach are added to states supporting education through these Strayer-Haig schemes, the total number of states using foundation formula to pay for elementary and secondary education rises beyond a supermajority to 45 States. New York, Indiana and Michigan shifted to a foundation program for funding public education. Clearly this is the program of choice for states allocating funding to school districts within their borders according to the study.

According to a report by the European Commission on ‘Decentralisation in Education Systems’ written on its behalf by (The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2017), there is only limited evidence that decentralisation alone increases education quality. However, the more the process focuses on quality issues and the closer decentralisation actions are to the school/community, the more likely it is that decentralisation, combined with other needed inputs, will contribute to raising education quality (Bernbaum, 2011). Recent European Commission work on financing mechanisms for inclusive education also suggests that more decentralised systems appear to create a greater opportunity for developing innovative forms of inclusive education. These systems have more flexible learning and support and strengthened school governance according to this report (The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2017).

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Transferring responsibility and authority for education services to local or provincial governments may result in increased accountability and efficiency. This is because it shortens the distance between parent and policy-maker or policy-maker and school. It may also strengthen parental demand for greater quality and/or improve managers' capacity to implement programmes (Weidman, 2011). Further, centralised governance and management systems in education may fail to involve key stakeholder groups in decision-making hence weak democratic political legitimacy. This reduces the stakeholders' capacity to implement decisions resulting into low professional legitimacy. The above authors note that these deficiencies can add up to a 'legitimacy crisis' in centralised systems. Other studies mentioned below have assessed the performance of projects funded by decentralised funds with varied outcomes discussed here below.

From the (The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2017) report, it is apparent that improved performance of projects funded through decentralised systems have been reported as a result of greater involvement of locals, the flexible nature of such projects, the extent of satisfaction of local demands, their opportunity for innovation and the increased accountability and transparency associated with such projects. Decentralisation has also led to enhanced quality of projects implementation.

A study conducted to 'determine the influence of Constituency Development Fund (CDF) on Secondary school education development in Likuyani Constituency; Kakamega County in Kenya (Obwari, 2013) used descriptive survey research design and recorded some key findings on the performance of education sector projects in light of National Government Constituency Development Funds.

Statement of the Problem

The education sector projects supported by National Government Constituency Development Fund and County Government of Siaya in Alego Usonga Constituency in the Financial Years 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 have registered different performance indices according to the Auditor General's report (GoK, 2019). Such projects have included infrastructure establishments in the form of pre-primary school classrooms and provision of education bursary to students in secondary and tertiary institutions of learning, village polytechnics among others as specified in part nine of the fourth schedule of the Constitution of Kenya 2010.

While the National Government Constituency Development Funds support establishment of classrooms infrastructure in primary and secondary institutions (NGCDF Act, 2012), classrooms infrastructure for early childhood development are funded by County Governments (County Government Act, 2012). However, bursary award and scholarships are awarded to secondary, tertiary and university learners by both funds. Other education sector projects that the County Government have supported include engagement of tutors in early childhood education centres and vocational training centres, establishment of workshop halls in vocation training centres and pit latrine construction in early childhood centres and vocational training centres. The National Government Constituency Development Fund also support purchase of school

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buses in local secondary schools and construction of administration blocks and science laboratories in various secondary level learning institutions (CoK, 2010)

There has been a growing public debate locally on which one performs better between education sector projects supported by National Government Constituency Development Funds (NG-CDF) and those supported by County Governments since the advent of devolution in Kenya in the year 2010. While the critics think the two secondary sources of funds whose primary source is the National Treasury of Kenya are a duplication of each other and should be merged, the proponents argue that each has a distinctive role, supplements each other, targets different aspects of decentralization and hence the need to have each continue independently.

Empirically, supporters of decentralised education systems argue that these decentralised systems can improve quality and satisfy local demand due to better information about local needs. Such systems can also give more democratic control, participation and choice for families. There are studies that point out that increased competition among localities can lead to greater efficiency (The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2017). Moreover, in terms of reform, creating smaller, more flexible units may help to overcome the inertia and bureaucracy of larger systems.

Various studies have been conducted on the influence and impact of the National Government Constituency Development Fund and County Government Funds but no particular study has specifically compared the performance of the two specific funding sources particularly among the education sector projects. While these various studies have been conducted to establish factors that influence the performance of education sector projects supported through National Government Constituency Development Funds and those supported through the County Government in Kenya, no study have been done to compare the performance of the education sector projects on the basis of sources of funding. This study therefore sought to compare the performance of the education sector projects funded by National Government Constituency Development Fund with those education sector projects funded by the County Government in Alego Usonga Constituency in Siaya County, Kenya. With the knowledge of which source of funding ensures better education sector project performance, stakeholders will be better informed on areas of investment focus moving into the future.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions; -

1. What is the performance of education sector projects funded by the National Government Constituency Development Fund and County Government in Alego Usonga constituency?
2. What factors promote the performance of education sector projects funded by National Government Constituency Development Fund and County Government in Alego Usonga Constituency?

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3. What factors hinder the performance of education sector projects funded by National Government Constituency Development Fund and County Government in Alego Usonga Constituency?
4. What should be done to improve the performance of education sector projects funded by National Government Constituency Development Fund and County Government in Alego Usonga Constituency?

Review of Related Literature

According to a report by the European Commission on ‘Decentralisation in Education Systems’ written on its behalf by (The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2017), there is only limited evidence that decentralisation alone increases education quality. However, the more the process focuses on quality issues and the closer decentralisation actions are to the school/community, the more likely it is that decentralisation, combined with other needed inputs, will contribute to raising education quality (Bernbaum, 2011). Recent European Commission work on financing mechanisms for inclusive education also suggests that more decentralised systems appear to create a greater opportunity for developing innovative forms of inclusive education. These systems have more flexible learning and support and strengthened school governance according to this report (The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2017).

Transferring responsibility and authority for education services to local or provincial governments may result in increased accountability and efficiency. This is because it shortens the distance between parent and policy-maker or policy-maker and school. It may also strengthen parental demand for greater quality and/or improve managers’ capacity to implement programmes (Weidman, 2011). Further, centralised governance and management systems in education may fail to involve key stakeholder groups in decision-making hence weak democratic political legitimacy. This reduces the stakeholders’ capacity to implement decisions resulting into low professional legitimacy. The above authors note that these deficiencies can add up to a ‘legitimacy crisis’ in centralised systems. Other studies mentioned below have assessed the performance of projects funded by decentralised funds with varied outcomes discussed here below.

A study on ‘Factors affecting successful completion of National Government Constituency Development Fund Projects in Laikipia County, Kenya’ (Ndirangu, C. & Gichuhi, D., 2017) found that having all other specific objectives at zero, a unit increase in timely funding, stakeholders’ participation, project management skills and project monitoring led to an increase in successful completion of National Government – Constituency Development Fund (NG-CDF) infrastructure projects. The study which adopted a cross-sectional survey design had a target population of 524 NG-CDF projects in Laikipia County. A sample of 53 NG-CDF projects was taken. It further showed that timely funding has a higher influence to the successful completion of NG-CDF projects followed by project management skills, stakeholders’ participation, and project monitoring respectively.

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The study recommended that the project fund manager should develop a clear schedule of funds on all the cycles of the projects and have dedicated qualified staff members who are able to create the situations of the successful timely project planning and implementation. A guided policy framework to be developed was also recommended to capture participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) for projects which would enhance stakeholders' involvement. The government should also empower the NG-CDF stakeholders and Project Management Committee (PMC) members by training them. PMC members should allow all NG-CDF projects to formally go through the five phases of project management. The outcome of the study would help enlighten fund managers and project management committee members in constituencies on the need for successful completion of national government constituency development fund projects and how to ensure this happens through robust stakeholder participation and enhanced project management skills.

'Critical success factors influencing the performance of development projects: An empirical study of Constituency Development Fund projects in Kenya' (Debaduyuti A. & Ngacho B., 2017) has also served to reveal key insights on the performance factors for infrastructure projects funded by National Government Constituency Development Fund. The design of the survey involved identification and extraction of relevant items of project success from the existing literature.

The study was carried out in 24 constituencies located in the Western Province of Kenya. Out of 4,000 projects undertaken between 2003 and 2011, those projects were considered as target projects which were involved in the construction of educational facilities, health facilities, light industries and agricultural markets. It was found that only 586 projects were involved in the construction of the above facilities and thus they qualified as target sample projects in the present study. The research team identified three categories of target respondents, namely clients, consultants and contractors. To evaluate the reliability of the survey instrument, a pilot survey was carried out through personal interviews with five contractors, four consultants and 21 clients, who were working on ongoing construction projects. Twenty-four field investigators were selected, one each for each of the 24 constituencies that constitute the Western Province. Simultaneously, all three categories of respondents including clients, consultants and contractors were identified and data collected subsequently. The scores provided by the respondents were fed into Statistical Package for Social Scientists software (version 20) and scientifically analyzed.

The study found that, in order to ensure the success of a large construction project, its critical success factors need to be formulated based on specific Key Performance Indicators and, accordingly, resources need to be committed on those critical success factors. The performance of large construction projects is, by and large, evaluated on the traditional three key performance indicators. These key performance indicators are, in turn, affected by a number of success variables. The study also revealed that project time and cost performance are influenced by success variables such as project characteristics, procurement system, project team performance,

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client characteristics, contractor characteristics, design team characteristics and external conditions.

As regards the quality of construction projects, the research findings revealed that success variables such as design changes, lack of quality systems, contractor selection, ineffective use of information technology and inter-organizational interactions significantly influence the quality of construction projects. In addition, inadequate details in drawings and rigidity in project design, lack of technical expertise, and unavailability of right materials or right equipment in the construction site also affects its quality according to the findings.

A study of “The Influence of Constituency Development Fund (CDF) on Education service delivery in public day secondary schools in Manyatta Constituency, Kenya” (Njoka, 2010) reviewed the various education sectors to which CDF has been directed such as infrastructural development (classrooms, offices, laboratories, office blocks, libraries), enrolment, performance (examination, extra - curricular activities), staffing (academic and nonteaching staff) student and staff satisfaction. The purpose of the study was to assess the impact of CDF on education service delivery in Manyatta constituency. A descriptive survey was used in the study. The target population for the study consisted was 27 - day secondary school principals. A researcher-filled interview schedule was used to gather data from the sampled school heads and documents analysed. Observation schedule was used to gather information from the physical projects funded by CDF in the day secondary schools. Data collected was analysed using descriptive statistics, that is, percentages, mean and frequencies. Data was presented in the form of frequency distributions, tables, bar graphs and pie charts. In the study 25 (96.2 %) day secondary schools were CDF funded. Most of the schools had received the least amount of the CDF amount most which seemed to be used in infrastructural development. All the Principals reported that CDF fund had a great impact on the performance of the students which was confirmed through document analysis. Enrolments rate had also been increasing as a result of the support received. Majority of the principals were, however, not satisfied with amount allocated in their schools.

The findings of the study revealed that there are numerous challenges encountered in management of CDF funds by the principals in their schools e.g. political interference, inadequate amount allocation, poor management and lack of transparency which have hindered the performance of such projects hitherto. This study, therefore, confirmed that there are still daunting challenges with regard to CDF funds availability, accessibility, allocation and utilization in schools. The findings suggest key improvements in the fairness in the fund distribution, transparency, lack of political interference and putting good management committee in place. These factors have hindered performance of education projects in decentralised units and deserve attention.

Another study, ‘Determinants of Implementation of County Government Projects: A Case of Infrastructural Projects in Kilifi County, Kenya’ (Abdulrahman Abdalla & Dr. Moses Otieno, September 2017) aimed at drawing lessons that can help improve project implementation was guided by the main objective of examining how project manager competency influence

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implementation of infrastructural projects. The study also set out to determine how community participation, project certification and project funding influence implementation of infrastructural projects funded by County Governments. A survey of literature had indicated that implementation of infrastructural projects experiences a number of influences including project manager's competency, community participation in projects identification and implementation, project certification and project funding in prioritization of projects.

The study analyzed the determinants of project implementation in Kilifi County specifically. The study adopted a descriptive survey design using questionnaires which were a quick way of obtaining information and cost effective within a short period of time over a target population of 60 from three sub counties in Kilifi County and the return rate was 83.33%. Purposive sampling technique was used to target all the target population because of technical knowhow with data collected analyzed using statistical packages for social sciences (SPSS) 20.0. Spearman Rank Co-efficient was used to test the hypotheses.

The findings of the study showed project manager's competency to be an effective strategy in implementation of infrastructure project in Kilifi County with community participation in project implementation of the infrastructural projects building trust and reducing resistance to implementation of the projects by the local community in Kilifi County. This is the reason that improved relationships among stakeholders was observed as important after carrying out participation of local community on projects implementation of infrastructure projects in Kilifi county. Project certification also showed to determine the implementation of infrastructure projects in Kilifi County with experienced certified project managers effective on implementation strategies that would ensure projects success hence making them better placed in terms of project implementation than uncertified project managers without similar experiences. Project funding showed a positive relationship in terms of implementation of the infrastructure projects in Kilifi County and the relationship was significant at 0.05. This was seen as either funding is availed in good time, sufficient as well as good flow of funds in the projects to finance project activities. The study recommended that all the four factors should be embraced in project implementation and suggested for further research.

It is therefore sufficient to recommend that ensuring better performance of education sector projects require promotion of democracy, transparency and accountability in the exercise of power, fostering national unity by recognizing diversity, enhancing people's self-governance during implementation of the projects, enabling communities manage their own affairs, protecting and promoting interests and rights of minorities and the marginalized and ensuring equitable sharing of resources.

Methodology

The study employed cross – sectional survey research design, The target population of the study included Alego Usonga National Government Constituency Development Fund Manager because of his significant role as the holder of the Authority to Incur Expenditure of all National Government funded projects. All Members of the National Government Constituency

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Development Fund Committee formed the study population due to their decision-making role in the project identification, budget development and monitoring and evaluation of projects implementation. Members of the Project Management Committees of all education sector projects undertaken within the Financial Years 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 in Alego Usonga Constituency were part of the target population due to their day to day involvement in the management of the projects at the site level.

All Contractors of the said projects formed the study population due to their involvement in the procurement processes and project execution upon award. Institutional administrators of the project locations were also involved as they form part of the administrative processes in the project execution. The target beneficiaries of the projects formed the study population due to their involvement in the project's implementation and monitoring as bystanders and as benefactors.

Simple random sampling was used to select participants. Questionnaire, interview schedules, observation checklist and document analysis guide were the data collection instruments. To guarantee the validity of the research instrument results, three experts were consulted. Frequencies, percentages, mean scores, standard deviations were used to analyse descriptive statistics while independent t-test was used to test hypothesis.

Results

Projects completed on schedule

The study compared the period National Government and County Government projects started and when they were completed as seen against the actual planned period of the project's completion based on the budgeted plan. The finding was that most of the NGCDF projects were completed on schedule at 57% as compared to County projects at the rate of 43% completion on schedule. This agrees with (Weidman, 2011) in his assertion that, "transferring responsibility and authority for education services to local or provincial governments may result in increased accountability and efficiency." This is because NGCDF shortens the distance between parent and policy-maker or policy-maker and school compared to County Funds. It may also strengthen parental demand for greater quality and/or improve managers' capacity to implement programmes. The management of NGCDF projects are generally closer to the projects as compared to the County Funded projects hence this finding. Some of the most likely reasons for NGCDF performing better than County Funds on the rate of completion, according to the participants, were timely availability of funds for project execution, active existence of monitoring and evaluation subcommittee within the larger NGCDF committee to provide closer oversight, closer patronage by the area member of parliament and vibrant project management committees. The following figure shows information on projects completed on schedule

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PROJECTS COMPLETED ON SCHEDULE

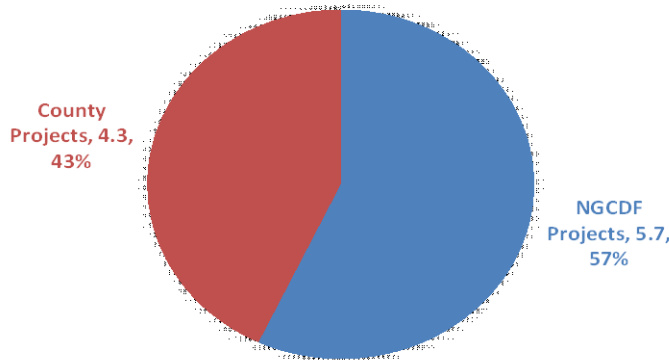


Figure 1: - Projects completed on schedule

Source: - Field Survey Data 2020

Projects completed within budget

This sort to compare whether the original budget was the ultimate expenditure on the project as at the time of project completion. While most County projects were completed within the budget at 4 out of 10, most NGCDF projects sort funding variations at 4 out of every 10 projects reviewed. This finding is in agreement with (Gathoni & Ngugi, 2016) who found that NGCDF tend to seek budget variations due to the ease of funds reallocation during the implementation period, the faster availability of funding in NGCDF

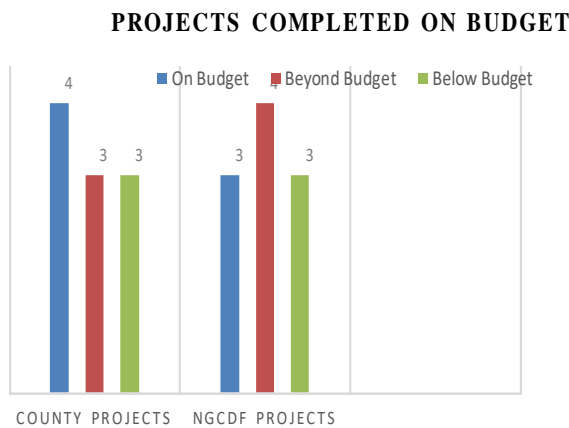


Figure 2: Projects completed within budget

Source: - Field Survey Data 2020

projects and the flexible implementation cycle of NGCDF projects. The rigorous process of development of Bills of Quantities and the

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participatory nature of the budget development process between the County Executive and the County Assembly have ensured that County Projects stick to agreed budgets throughout the implementation period hence minimum variation.

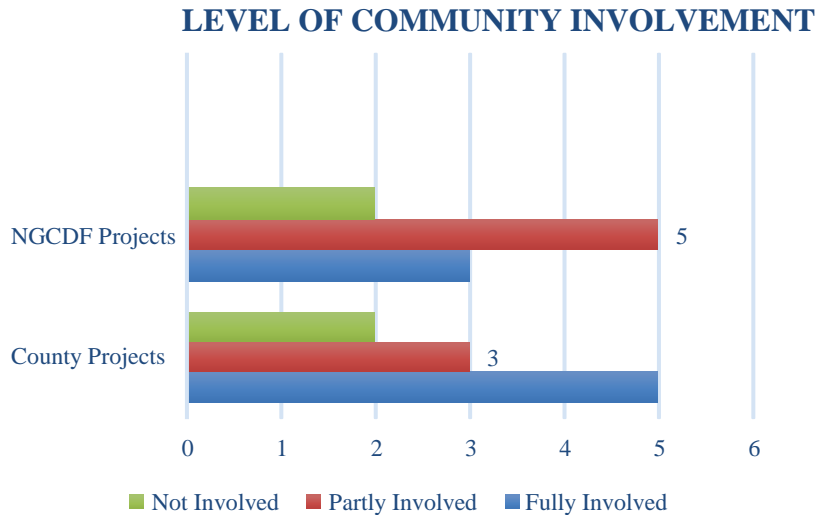


Figure 3: - Level of community involvement

Source: - Field Survey Data 2020

Level of community involvement in the project implementation

Most of the stakeholders and beneficiaries of the projects in the education sector funded by Counties expressed full involvement in the implementation process at 5 out of every 10 against just 3 of those fully involved in NGCDF projects implementation process out of every 10 projects. A majority of 5 in every 10 of those interviewed expressed part involvement in NGCDF projects implementation process. This can be attributed to (County Government Act, 2012) that spells out a rigorous public participation schedule and requirements for counties. Apart from an elaborate project identification and prioritization public participation process, the act also has provisions for public involvement in the implementation process and monitoring through various civil society entities to ensure members of the public get value for money.

Timely availability of project funding for project implementation

Up to 76% of those involved in NGCDF Projects implementation expressed satisfaction with the timely availability of funds for project implementation as compared to only 42% level of satisfaction with the timeliness of County project funds. Most of those interviewed (58%) decried the delay of County funds release from the treasury as negatively affecting

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implementation. These findings agree with the findings of (Ngigi S. & Nekesa B., 2019) on ‘Devolution in Kenya; The Good, The Bad and The Ugly’ where they found delayed disbursement of funds to counties as one of the greatest impediments to project implementation in the Counties. These delays have been occasioned by stalemate in the Senate on the Division of Revenue Allocation Bill enactment into law, the push and pull between the National Treasury and the Controller of Budget offices and controversies around the Commission for Revenue Allocation formulae between the Council of Governors and the legislative arms of government charged with approval process. These delays have resulted in low absorption rates in counties, delayed project execution and huge rollover of funds to subsequent financial years.

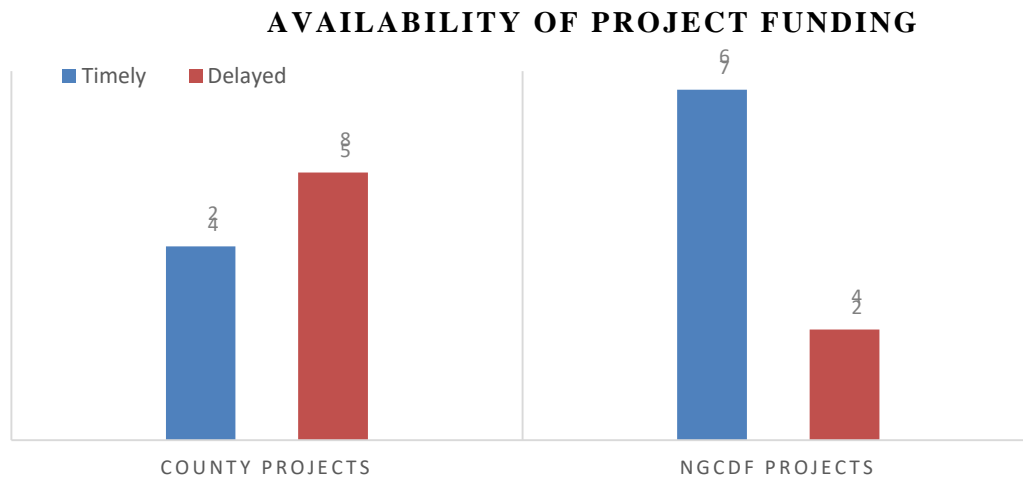


Figure 4:- Timely Availability of Funding

Source: - Field Survey Data 2020

Level of Satisfaction with the Quality of Work on the project

Of those interviewed, a majority of 70% expressed satisfaction with the quality of work done by the County funds compared to 60% expressing lack of satisfaction with the work done by the NGCDF. Some 30% were unsatisfied with county funds projects. Those expressing satisfaction mentioned quality materials, adherence to construction standards, and manpower with adequate capacity as their reasons for satisfaction. These findings sit well with (CGS - CIDP, 2018) which envisions quality workmanship in its vision for the County. The rigor of monitoring associated with internal audits and external supervision have also been associated with the perception of improved quality of work reported. The findings of (Debaduti A. & Ngacho B., 2017) on the critical success factors for NGCDF projects, however, extol quality of work as its critical success factor.

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Figure 5:- Level of Satisfaction with the Quality of Work

Source: -Field Survey Data 2020

Current completion status of the project

Assessed based on completion status, 4 in every 10 of the County funded projects were complete while 6 out of every 10 NGCDF projects were complete. The others were either ongoing, abandoned or not started as shown in the bar graph with most county projects at 2 compared to 1 out of 10 of NGCDF projects not started. Further probing revealed that this was due to the bigger magnitude of the County Fund projects and the delayed funding mechanisms to support small time contractors to take off. This finding is supported by (Gikonyo, 2008) which found the completion rate of the then CDF projects at higher levels of 73% compared to other government funded projects. (Wanyonyi S. & Muturi W., 2017) also mention delayed funding, implementation bureaucracy and prolonged procurement processes as the main factors delaying completion rate of county projects. Apparently, Counties also recorded higher rates of abandoned project at three for every ten projects. According to the respondents, contractors abandon such county projects due to flawed procurement processes discovered after the award, lack of contractor capacity noted after the award and failure to conduct environment impact assessment before project award and take off.

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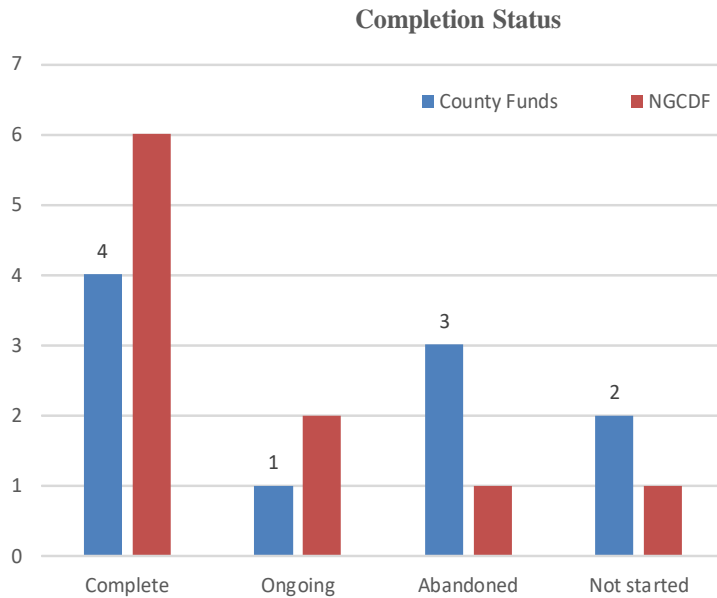


Figure 6: - Current Project Completion Status

Source: - Field Survey Data 2020

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Conclusion

This article has discussed the performance of education sector projects funded by the National Government Constituency Development Fund and those funded by County Government Fund in Alego Usonga Constituency, Kenya. The article established that NGCDF projects perform better in timely availability of funding for project implementation, proper communication and accommodation of political interests while County Projects perform better on stakeholder's participation, observation of regulatory frameworks and proper monitoring and evaluation of the projects according to this study. The article will help the stakeholders in both the National Government and the County Governments in deciding where to prioritize education sector funding in line with their areas of better performance.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the education sector projects funded by NGCDF and County Funds should foster transparency and accountability in the exercise of power, recognize diversity of stakeholders in the implementation process, enhance people's self-governance throughout the project life cycle to enable communities manage their own affairs, protect and promote interests and rights of minorities and the marginalized and ensure equitability in resource sharing in order to perform optimally.

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