

**“Outcomes and challenges of grassroots participation in CDF
Projects: A case study of Dagoretti Constituency”**

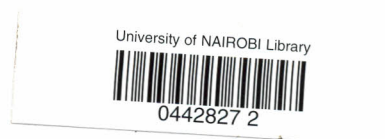
By

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Masters of Arts in Sociology (Rural Sociology and
Community Development)

University of Nairobi

2006



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
EAST AFRICANA COLLECTION

ABSTRACT

The Kenya Constituency Development Fund (CDF) is an initiative by the Kenyan government that promotes the decentralization policy and with the intention of involving community into development at the grassroots level. It was established under the CDF Act, 2003. Barely three years into the program, the fund has generated a lot of debate. There is a glaring lack of institutional checks and balances on the funds management at constituency level. The CDF has been the subject of numerous wrangles pitting MPs against voters, (The Standard, 17th July, 2005). This makes one want to ask, why is it that there are so many controversies about CDF? And what are these controversies?

Looking at controversies and complaints over the misuse and mismanagement of the constituency development fund by the constituents, it is very clear that the development beneficiaries may not be participating in the management of the fund or have inadequate information about the operations of the CDF. The question that arises therefore is what prevents or makes it difficult for the grassroots to participate? Who stands to benefit if they participate and who loses?

This situation justifies the need to carry out this study. The study aims at establishing the outcomes and challenges of grassroots participation in the implementation of CDF in Dagoretti Constituency. It employed oral interviewing; in-depth interviewing of key informants and site visit methods of data collection besides documentary review of CDF documents. From the study findings, it was evident that only a few people in the constituency are fully aware of CDF operations in Dagoretti and these few people are the ones involved in CDF projects prioritization and implementation. Many people know that there are CDF projects being implemented in their constituency through the big signs that are erected by the contractors but majority cited selective involvement of grassroots in operations of the initiative. The respondents argued that the lack of involvement has created an environment for corruption which bred mistrust among the residents and thus the infighting and complaints from some community members.

The initiative is good but just like other government's initiatives, it was implemented in haste without creating awareness among community members and training of the CDF leaders. There is room for reviewing the implementation process of CDF at the constituency level and making it realize the intended objective.